The Camellia REVIEW

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Cover Photos	2
Invitation to Join	3
Officers and Directors	4
Thoughts from The Editor by Bradford King	4

FEATURES

Appreciating Ralph Peer by Bradford King	5
Scientific Discoveries That Have Informed Camellia Growers by Bradford King	8
Prolonging Camellia Bloom Life Update by Don Lesmeister	13
Investigating Potassium Permanganate by Bradford King	14
Cute Baby Camellias by Bradford King	18

DEPARTMENTS

What's New in the Southern California Camellia World by Bradford King	21
Camellia Species: *C. grijsii* by Bradford King	25
The Higo Treasures from Japan: 'Asagao' by Bradford King	26
From the Archives: The McCaskill Mutations by Ernie Pieri	27
Parting Shot: Dr. Clifford Parks by Bradford King	30

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Thoughts From The Editor

Bradford King , Editor

This December felt like summer with day time temperatures in the 80's and no rain. The high temperatures triggered camellias to bloom early which is a mixed blessing. Great to see flowers but fears that some varieties will be bloomed out before the camellia show season ends.

The cover story Appreciating Ralph Peer documents the contribution of Ralph Peer especially the importation of the Yunnan camellias to America.

This issue highlights scientific discoveries that inform us about growing and showing camellias. In addition, Don Lesmeister gives us an update on his use of Potassium Permanganate (PP) to prolong cut camellia flowers. Don's ideas generated a study Investigating Potassium Permanganate which supports that dry PP is just as effective as PP in a liquid solution to prolong cut camellias.

Department articles highlight outstanding camellias. Specifically, camellia species is illustrated by *C. grijsii*; Higo Treasures from Japan by 'Asagao'; and Parting Shot by 'Dr. Clifford Parks' and 'LASCA Beauty'. The archives article reports on the contributions of Vernon McCaskill especially the sports he introduced. It is also interesting to read what this pioneer camellia nursery man tells us about where and how these genetic mutations are discovered on a plant.

This issue also has an article that reports on "What's New in the Southern California Camellia World". This includes Nuccio's Nurseries, Descanso Gardens, The Huntington and a little gem, the Storrier Stearns Japanese Garden.

We are always looking for camellia articles and writers to publish. Deadlines for submitting articles to Editor Bradford King (bdk@usc.edu) are SPRING: February 1, 2018, FALL: September 1, 2018, WINTER: December 1, 2018.

Appreciating Ralph Peer
by Bradford King

The Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens in San Marino California and Ralph Peer have collaborated for many years in developing a world class camellia collection. The Peer family has continued this relationship. They arranged to have the oldest documented camellia, 'California', moved from Park Hill to the Huntington in 2004 and in 2017 donated his book collection to the Library. Who was Ralph Peer?

Ralph Sylvester Peer
Ralph Peer (May 22, 1892 – January 19, 1960) was an American talent scout, recording engineer and record producer in the field of music in the 1920s and 1930s. He attended Kansas City high school, and later the University of Chicago Naval Reserve Officer's Training. After the war, he joined the recording industry. In 1924, he supervised the first commercial recording session in New Orleans, Louisiana, recording jazz, blues, and gospel music groups.

He is credited with what is often called the first country music recording, Fiddlin' John Carson's disc "Little Old Log Cabin In The Lane"/"That Old Hen Cackled and The Rooster's Goin' To Crow". In August 1927, while talent hunting in the southern states with Victor Records he recorded both Jimmie Rodgers and the Carter Family in the same session.

Ralph went on to publish and record other country and jazz artists and songs through his company Southern Music Publishing Company for example Fats Waller, Louis Armstrong and Count Basie. The company became influential in the 1930s, and success came through Peer's introducing Central American music to the world. Peer published songs such as "Deep In The Heart Of Texas ", "You Are My Sunshine" and "You're Nobody Till Somebody Loves You". When rock 'n' roll came along he published hits by Buddy Holly, Little Richard, and The Platters. He was elected to the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1984.

Ralph Peer was active in the camellia societies in the Los Angeles area. In the 1950's he helped found the Los Angeles Camellia Society serving as the first President. He was a State Director from California to the American Camellia Society board of directors from 1954 to 1958. He served as ACS President from 1957 to 1959. He established the Ralph Peer *Sasanqua* award for the American Camellia Society. He financed J. Robert Sealy's book on the Genus Camellia.

He and his wife Monique Iverson Peer were married on January 11, 1940. Ralph Peer II, their heir, was born April 9, 1944. In the late 1940s Ralph took an avid interest in horticulture, growing, and becoming an expert on, camellias. Shortly after Descanso Gardens imported the Chinese Yunnan *reticulata* to the America, Ralph Peer also received a shipment of the Yunnan *reticulata* cultivars. Over time he generously shared these cultivars with local growers, Descanso Gardens and The Huntington Botanical Gardens. These 1948 imports from China to the United States are the beginning of growing and hybridizing new *reticulata* hybrids.

The Yunnan *Reticulata*

Ralph Peer wrote in the Northern California Camellia Bulletin (Vol. 8 #1 1954) how he ordered the Yunnan *reticulata* cultivars. He was on his way to China in December 1948 when he met Mr. Hazelton, an Australian nurseryman. Hazelton had ordered *reticulata* plants from Professor Tsai which he had yet to receive. Peer telegrammed Professor Tsai. Tsai wrote back listing the 20 varieties using his English translation of the Chinese name. The price was $15 each with 5 varieties costing twice this amount. When Peer met Dr. Yu in London in April 1950, Yu had his own translation of the original Chinese cultivars. In addition, Dr. Yu reported that 19 of the original cultivars were old dating to 900AD. One was a cross of 'Butterfly Wings' x 'Peony Flowered' made by Professor Tsai. This cultivar 'Maye Taohong' was named in America 'Professor Tsai'.

'Professor Tsai'

'Butterfly Wings'

The Huntington Appreciates Ralph Peer

As I walked through Elegans Way in the North Vista camellia collection I came to *Reticulata* Knoll a gentle rise which when Mr. Huntington bought the property in 1902 had a magnificent specimen of *C. japonica* 'Pink Perfection'. It was enjoyed for over a hundred years before storms with very high winds toppled the Live Oaks that shaded it were blown down resulting in the demise of this wonderful specimen. Therefore, this knoll needed to be replanted. In 2017 a dozen of the Yunnan *C. reticulata* originally imported by Peer were planted among several of the mature Yunnan *reticulata* that were planted in the 1950s from grafts supplied by Ralph Peer. They planted 'Buddha', 'Butterfly Wings' ('Houye Diechi'), 'Cornelian' ('Domanao'), 'Crimson Robe' ('Dataohong'), 'Juban'('Chrysanthemum Petal') 'Shot Silk' ('Dayinhong') 'Pagoda' ('Songzlin') and 'Tali Queen' (Dali Cha').

'Cornellian'

'Shot Silk'

The Huntington placed a bronze plaque "In appreciation of Ralph S. Peer" in the *reticulata* knoll to honor the man responsible for helping distribute the Yunnan *C. reticulata* to America.

Scientific Discoveries That Have Informed Camellia Growers

by Bradford King

Scientific discoveries are the result of the application of the scientific method which is a way to ask and answer questions by making observations and doing experiments. There are some key scientific discoveries that have enlightened hobbyist and increased our camellia knowledge. In addition some discoveries have informed and influenced how we grow and show camellias.

THE DISCOVERY OF GIB

The discovery of gibberellins led to gibing camellias for home decoration and entering blooms in camellia shows. Briefly this is what happened. Gibberellins were first recognized in 1926 by a Japanese scientist, Eiichi Kurosawa, studying diseases in rice-- a major agriculture crop in Asia. He learned that filtrates from cultures in which the fungus Gibberella fujikurai had been grown contained material which, when applied to plants, increased their height and other growth responses. Interest in gibberellins outside of Japan began after World War II. In the United States, the first research was undertaken by a unit at Camp Detrick in Maryland studying bean seedlings. Interest in gibberellins spread around the world as the potential for its use on various commercially important plants became more obvious. For example, research that started at the University of California, Davis in the 1960s led to its commercial use on Thompson seedless table grapes throughout California by 1962.

Gibberellic acid (gib) when it is purified, is a white to pale yellow solid powder. Since gib regulates growth, applications of very low concentrations can have a significant positive impact while too much may distort flowers and destroy plants Gibberellins have a number of effects on plant development by stimulating rapid stem and root growth and increasing seed germination rate. Foliar spraying of Thompson grapes will produce earlier and larger crops. However foliar spraying of camellias is not recommended as it will most likely kill the plant.

It has been reported that gib may be used for faster germinating a number of plant seeds especially in assisting with breaking seed dormancy. However my studies on camellia seed germination reported in the 2007 Camellia yearbook found that while gib solution did speed up the germinating process it produced week, spindly seedlings lacking adequate roots as compared with camellia seeds germinated without gib. Since camellia seeds generally germinate easily, there is no need to treat their seeds with gib.

In the United States gib is used to produce earlier blooming and larger camellia flowers. When a camellia "takes the gib" it produces a beautiful and striking large flower in 30 to 90 days with recent research finding the average time is 60 days when gib is in a 2% solution.

The person most responsible for popularizing the present method of gib application to camellias was Col. Frank Reed of Pasadena California. In the 1960's he reported extensively on his procedure of breaking off the vegative growth bud at the base of the flower bud and filling the resulting cup with a solution containing gib. This was a faster and more direct method of delivering a substantial amount of gib into the vascular system at the point where it is most effective. Camellia hobbyists became enthralled with camellia blooms treated with gib because they were ten to forty percent larger than normal and bloomed six to ten weeks sooner. The increased size became a problem at camellia shows. The show rules were revised to have two classes –treated and untreated flowers. As gibing became more widespread, many shows became "open" that is one class for treated or untreated.

'Grand Prix' Natural and Gibbed

WHY THERE ARE BLACK RED CAMELLIAS

The earliest well known dark red camellia came from Japan in 1829. 'Kuro-tsubaki', the "black camellia", has a small semidouble to peony form flower with irregular red stamens. It is a midseason to late blooming *japonica*. The intense pigmentation in the flower also extends to the stems, mid ribs and veins of the leaves as well as the roots. It is the seed parent of 'Night Rider' and 'Black Opal' both breed by OZ. Blumhardt of New Zealand. He used hybrid 'Ruby Bells' as the pollen parent. 'Black Opal' has a miniature to small flower with red filaments and gold stamens but is not seen often in America. 'Night Rider' has a small very black red semi double flower with heavy waxy narrow petals and irregular yellow anthers and reddish filaments. The plant is also very attractive with new growth a deep maroon. The roots are even red. The plant grows spreading and upright at a medium rate with small dark green leaves. This makes for a popular camellia with a striking flower.

Dr. William Ackerman, a plant geneticist and camellia breeder of fragrant and cold hardy camellias was doing extensive cytological investigation (the cellular study of the structure, function and formation of cells) of his cold hardy breeding stock. He accidentally discovered an abnormally long chromosome among the metaphase figures from root tips on several 'Kuro- tsubaki' x *c. saluenensis* hybrids. This led to a research question -- which parent gave the seedlings the long chromosome. When he conducted cytological examination of 'Kuro -tsubaki' he discovered that it was the donor of the long chromosome. The next step was to see if other hybrids involving 'Kuro -tsubaki' had inherited the long chromosome. He tested seven hybrids and found three of the seven did indeed have the long chromosome. These three cultivars also exhibited the intense black red pigmenta-

tion in stems, leaves, and roots just like 'Kuro- tsubaki'. The four that did not inherit the long chromosome also lacked the intense black red pigmentation. Dr. Ackerman reported in his book Beyond The Camellia Belt this research concluding that there is a direct correlation between the long translocation chromosome and the intense black pigmentation.

At left; Tom Nuccio shows the red roots of 'Night Rider'

Dr. Ackerman believes this abnormal chromosome is rare and may have occurred just once years ago in 'Kuro-tsubaki' with all hybrids having the dark pigmentation and roots inherited from the "black camellia".

'Kuro Tsubaki'

'Night Rider'

WHY 'TAMA -NO –URA' HAS A PICOTEED BORDER

Did you ever wonder what causes a camellia to have a white border? Tateishi, Ozaki and Okubo from Kyushu University, Fukuoka, Japan researched how the white border is expressed in 'Tama-No-Ura'. They "demonstrated that the white picoteed part lacked an accumulation of anthocyanins, and it was caused by the gene suppression of chalcone synthase." (International Camellia Journal 2010 page 114) Basically chalcone synthase are enzymes associated with organic compounds found in plants as a natural defense mechanism for example in the production of pigment. Anthocyanins are water soluble compartments of pigments that may appear red, purple or blue according to pH. Therefore, when the red

flower pigment compartments on the petal margins of 'Tama no ura' are suppressed it produces a white border.

'King's Cup'

'Tama no ura'

Some of the seedlings of 'Tama No Ura' will inherit differing amounts of the desired white border. Many will have small red flowers. The seedlings that inherit the white border also can pass the trait onto their seedlings. For example, 'Tama Peacock' X 'San Dimas' has produced a seedling with a white medium cup shaped flower with a burgundy central spot which I call 'King's Cup'.

'Tama Peacock' has also inherited from 'Tama-No Ura' the ability to set seeds readily making it an excellent seed parent.

CONCLUDING SUMMARY

The discovery of Gibberellic acid and how to use it to get earlier, larger and more beautiful camellia blooms has increased the fun and excitement of growing camellias to decorate the home or enter in a camellia show. The cytological investigation by Dr. William Ackerman has increased our understanding of the importance of chromosomes in determining what colors are inherited especially in this case the very dark red pigment in the flowers and roots of seedlings of 'Kuro- tsubaki'. Likewise, we are informed by Japanese researchers, Tateishi, Ozaki and Okubo who demonstrated the importance of gene suppression in producing white borders on the red flower of 'Tama- No Ura'. While we can't see these internal genetic processes with the naked eye, it is good to know that scientists are interested in investigating camellia plants and flowers.

Prolonging Camellia Bloom Life

by Don Lesmiester

This is to provide additional information to the April 2017 Camellia Review article regarding the prolonging of camellia bloom life. But first... while researching for another project, we found a very old article by Mr. Jack Greenberg of Dallas, Texas, which had initially prompted our use of potassium permanganate (PP). When I called Mr. Greenberg, his widow informed me that he had expired nearly 20 years earlier. A moral here is that if you have information to provide other camellia growers, send the information to one of the camellia publications. You never know how useful your information will be to other growers, even over 20 years later.

My wife, Joan and I had decided to attend the ACS National Camellia Show in Newberg, Oregon in 2017. This show was approximately 3 weeks after the Northern California Camellia Shows were completed. We would not have many, if any, blooms this late in the year, so we would need to prolong the life of camellia blooms. We would do so by using PP.

We used the same basic process as in the April 2017 article, with some new ideas. We had located a one-piece molded plastic cup at Party City to replace the cups we had been using. They are called "Two-part shot Glasses" and are packaged in quantities of 25 for around $10. These cups do not separate as our "homemade" cups and therefore works perfectly, without fear of spills. Next, we used DRY rather than the liquid PP used previously. The dry product can be retained in your camellia show boxes while traveling, while the liquid product makes you cringe at every bump in the road.....Remember the purple hands professor in school? The amount of dry PP we used filled the center cup around 3/4. About every 7-10 days, we stirred the PP, and replaced some or all if it became completely solid.

Some varieties do not respond well to this procedure after a couple of weeks and had to be discarded, before traveling to Oregon, some 700 miles away. We never kept records on which blooms we kept or discarded. This could be the subject for another story. But sufficient to say that once we reached our destination and entered the blooms the next day, MOST of our blooms held up. Many of them were well over 2 weeks old.

You can also prolong the bloom life of flowers for your home. If you leave your house warm at night when you go to bed, place the bloom in your vegetable crisp-

er along with a two-part cup of dry PP. You can remove your bloom from the crisper in the morning & place in your house. Be sure to cover the PP container with either a lid, or plastic wrap. This process can be repeated for several days. We hope this product works well for you also.

Investigating Potassium Permanganate

by Bradford King

Don Lesmeister in the 2017 Spring Camellia Review reported on his use of Potassium Permanganate (PP) placed in a container with fresh camellias stored in a refrigerator. He found the camellia flowers "looked reasonably good after 30 days". In this issue, Don provides an update for prolonging camellias bloom life specially using PP dry. In science one study builds on the observations and studies of others. Therefore, a study comparing the use of (PP) as liquid and dry was begun November 17, 2017.

METHOD

Two plastic containers with a wet paper towel with fiber filler on top were used. The wet paper towel was used to provide a moist environment within the closed container. Flowers were place on the filler so they were not in touch with any water. The flower stem was placed in a grape. Container number one had two table spoons PP mixed with four table spoons of water to make the liquid condition. Container number two had two tablespoons of PP dry which was the dry condition.

Three cultivars with gibed flowers had two flowers each which served as match pairs one was placed in each of the two containers. This included 'Maroon and Gold', 'Cupcake' and Villa de Nantes'. The pairs of flowers were very similar in appearance, were gibed the same day in October and bloomed the same day in November. Four 'Little Slam' natural blooms (nontreated blooms) were harvested with two placed in each container.

A gibed bloom of 'Button's N Bows'; and 'Cabernet' were placed in the container with liquid PP and a gibed 'Happy Harlequin' and a 'Mansize' were placed in the solid PP container. To control for the influence of inserting a grape on flower stems four camellias were placed in the container with no grapes on their flower stems. They were an untreated 'Tata' and gibed 'Tama Peacock', 'Cup Cake' and 'Mrs. Tingly' The covered containers were placed in a refrigerator registering 40 degrees temperature.

RESULTS

After two weeks, the containers were opened. The PP wet box had a 'Button's N' Bows' that looked good. The 'Villa da Nantes' fair, 'Cup Cake' looked good but had a mark on one petal and the two 'Little Slam' were in fair condition. The PP dry had a very good 'Mansize', and a good 'Maroon and Gold, 'Cupcake', 'Happy Harlequin' and 'Ville de Nantes.' The dry PP container with flowers without grapes all looked good.

The container covers were replaced and the boxes returned to the refrigerator. After 23 days, the containers were reopened. Look at the results in the following photos.

PP wet

PP dry with grapes

PP dry without grapes

Please note that several flowers have moldy stamens except the flowers without grapes. All the grapes also had "mold". There appears to be no advantage in using grapes.

The use of standard cups filled with a solution of water and "Florallife Crystal Clear" was studied. Four white 'Tata' blooms were refrigerated with dry PP for two weeks and remained in good condition. One small 'Tata' was placed in the container without water, it too remained in good condition.

Concluding Remarks

The use of PP either dry or wet helps reduce appearance of aging in cut flowers with or without a grape placed on the flower stem for two to three weeks. Quality of flowers was variable with some showing mold and brown marks but others still looking good. In conclusion, the use of dry PP was as effective as wet PP. Therefore, it is concluded dry PP is easier and much cleaner to use. If you have a green thumb and wish to avoid the dreaded brown fingers; it is highly recommended to use dry PP to keep cut camellia flowers fresh when stored in a refrigerator in cups containing a flower preservative.

Fingers stained by PP

Cute Baby Camellias

By Bradford King

Babies are cute, adorable and loveable. Many of us have "Baby Books" with photos, locks of hair and even baby teeth tenderly compiled by our Moms. This tradition seems to have died out. However, it has been replaced with masses of digital photos shared on Facebook with family and friends. There are no doubts; babies are cute. In the camellia world there are a few very cute miniature camellias and some adorable small beauties.

CUTE BABIES

Seven miniature camellia flowers are as cute as babies. In 1949 'Baby Sargent' was introduced. The flower is a dark red full peony that resembles Professor Sargent. Magnolia Gardens introduce 'Professor Charles Sargent' in 1925. Charles Sprague Sargent was an American botanist who became professor of arboriculture at Harvard in 1879 and the first Director of the Arnold Arboretum.

'Baby Sargent'

'Baby Doll'

A camellia we no longer see is 'Angel Baby' a white semi double. It was introduced in 1968 by Pieri of San Gabriel California. Unfortunately, there are hundreds of camellia varieties no longer popular many lost or hidden in someone's garden. This frequently is the case when the variety was introduced by a grower who only propagated a few for family and friends. Those that are propagated by a nursery are much more likely to become popular. A good example is Nuccio Nurseries introduction 'Baby Doll'. It has a cute light pink anemone flower that was registered in 1992 and continues to be popular.

'Baby Sis Blush Var'

'Baby Sis Pink'

In 1958 Shackelford registered 'Baby Sis' which has a white single flower with a pink stripe and a mass of central petaloids. This loveable miniature has mutated several times producing cultivars that are winners at camellia shows. Don Bergamini, a recent President of ACS from Martinez California, saw a different flower on 'Baby Sis'. He marked the branch it was growing on and observed that it had the new flower for three years before naming it 'Baby Sis Blush'. It has a fine white edge on each of its blush toned petals which makes a very cute flower. Don recently found a variegated form of this flower. 'Baby Sis Blush Variegated' has a flower that is a show winning baby.

'Baby Sis' also mutated a lovely pink sport aptly named 'Baby Sis Pink' There are many camellias that don't produce sports and a few that do many times. These mutations are due to genetic changes in one or more of the plants branches. While not well understood, we get to enjoy some wonderful new varieties like the cute 'Baby Sis' mutations.

ADORABLE SMALL BEAUTIES

There are several good camellias with names that refer to babies. They too are little, cute and perky. A good example is Nuccio's loveable introduction 'Baby Pearl'. This small variety was named after another of Nuccio's introductions 'Nuccio's Pearl' which is a medium sized bloom. They both have white washed flowers in shades of orchid pink with a lovely border.

In camellia shows the *japonica* varieties are entered in classes based on their size. Two of the strong contenders to win points in the small class (2.5 to 3 inches) are 'Little Babe' and 'Little Babe Variegated'. They have small dark red rose form to

formal double flowers with the variegated one having lovely white markings. This camellia has gained popularity as a camellia show winner since its introduction in 1974 by W. M. Harrison of Pensacola, Florida. 'Little Babe' and its variegated form was awarded the Katheryn and Les Marbury Award in 1992.

'Baby Pearl'

'Little Babe Variegated'

'Little Man' a small medium white formal double was introduced in 1953. It has attracted a following continuing to win camellia show points. Many times a young male is addressed as "Little Man" which has a positive connotation referring to his size or maturity. Rudy Moore from West Covina California, a long term curator of camellias at the Huntington Botanical Gardens, named a miniature to small anemone soft pink flower with creamy white petaloids 'Little Michael' for his son in 1981. Today Michael Moore is a mature man. 'Little Michael' was awarded the John A. Tyler Jr. miniature Award in 1994 and the Kathryn and Les Marbury Award in 1998.

Hulyn Smith was a prolific camellia hybridizer, American Camellia Society President, friend and mentor to other camellia growers. While he loved all camellias, his passion was large red camellias the bigger the better. Therefore, when a pretty miniature to small formal double dark red with back edged petals bloomed, he was not impressed. He threw this seedling in a nearby creek. Fortunately, it was rescued by others. He registered it in 2001 and named it 'Tudor Baby' his name for one of his granddaughters. When this very good flower is variegated the contrast of white cloud like markings on the dark flower makes it outstanding. 'Tudor Baby Variegated' was awarded the Kathryn and Les Marbury Award in 2006.

'Tudor Baby' photo by Gene Phillips

'Tudor Baby Variegated'

CONCLUSION

The most frequent camellia flower is a medium (3 to 4 inches) semidouble with many hobbyists attracted to flowers that are five or more inches. There are also beautiful rose form double and formal double flowers. The small formal doubles like 'Little Babe' and 'Tudor Baby' illustrate that "good things come in small packages". The anemone flower accounts for ten percent of the camellias with many miniature and small flowers just like 'Baby Sis' and her sports. The beautiful miniature and small camellias are like babies; loveable, adorable and cute.

What's New In The Southern California Camellia World

By Bradford King

There is always something new and interesting happening in the Southern California camellia world. It may be a new camellia cultivar introduced by Nuccio's Nurseries, additions to the camellia collection at the LA Arboretum, Descanso Garden or The Huntington.

While the Nuccio Nurseries did not announce a new camellia cultivar in their 2017- 2018 catalogue; they usually have camellias not listed that catch our attention. This happened in November when we saw the largest Camellia *sasanqua* flowers we had ever seen. All the beautiful blooms of 'Mountain Moonrise' were an impressive four to five inches. It is a good bloomer when it becomes a large plant. Tom Nuccio was clear that it doesn't bloom when the plant is small but mine looks great growing and blooming among other sun camellias.

Nuccio's Table at a Descanso Show

'Mountain Moonrise'

Camellia Show Ayres Hall

The Los Angeles Arboretum has added a wide variety of camellia species to its collection. The plantings are an easy walk from the entrance in an area that is not well traveled by visitors. The Southern California Camellia Society will hold its third camellia show in Ayres Hall on February 21 and 22.

The Huntington Botanical Gardens has added a wide variety of camellias in the west entrance to the garden and over a dozen of the Yunnan *C. reticulata* originally imported from China by Ralph Peer. There is a new plaque in the North Vista "*Reticulata Knoll*" commemorating Peer's contribution.

Ralph S. Peer appreciation plaque

'Dataohong' aka 'Crimson Robe'
a Peer introduction in 1948

Art in the Boddy House
Camellia Room at Descanso

The Southern California Camellia Society 46th annual show at The Huntington is February 10 and 11. The Huntington will have an excellent selection of large camellias for sale.

Descanso Gardens has rebuilt the bird watching area and the paths around the pond and waterfall. They have designated February as Camellia month. There are camellia shows January 27 & 28; February 17 &18 and February 24 & 25. Camellia shows are one of the most enjoyable way to see a wide variety of camellias. If you have a camellia and wish to have it identified bring a bloom or two and a few of its leaves for us to identify. A visit to the Camellia Room in the Boddy house is a good place to visit as it is located by walking through the camellia forest.

The Storrier Stearns Japanese Garden is a little gem located in Pasadena, originally designed in the mid 1930s. This private garden is only open to the public on Thursdays and the fourth Sunday of the month. It is best to get a groupon ticket and go on a Thursday as parking is limited in this residential area. The garden has recently been refurbished and a small art gallery has been opened this year. The garden is well planted with a variety of traditional Japanese plants including *C. japonica* cultivars, a lovely pond, fountain and teahouse.

Tea House at Storrier Stearns

Hiroshima Camellia

When an atomic bomb destroyed the city of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, it was predicted that nothing would grow in the ruins of Hiroshima for 75 years. The trees were scarred and blackened all around Hiroshima. Therefore, when green shoots were found on the burned trunks of some 170 trees, people were encouraged. Hope for recovery of the trees as well as for the country and its people was stimulated. Green Legacy Hiroshima, in partnership with the Rotary Club of Tokyo Yoneyama Yuai, are spreading seeds and plants of the 'Hibaku Jumoku' ("A-bombed trees") throughout the world. The Storrier Stearns Japanese Garden was chosen as the home of a second generation "A-bombed camellia" that descended from one of the trees considered lost after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. This Camellia *japonica* cultivar has not yet bloomed in the garden but is expected to produced red flowers. Twenty-seven countries have received these plants with two located in the USA. The other is in St Louis. The plants symbolize the resiliency of the human spirit and the need for peace as well as the interdependency of people around the world. The Storrier Stearns garden joins others in promoting the message of world peace represented by this camellia that survived the atomic bomb.

Camellia Species: *C. grijsii*

by Bradford King

C. grijsii plant

C. grijsii single bloom

C. grijsii was first described in 1879. It is native to China in the mountains near Fujian, Sichuan and Guangxi. It is a potential garden plant due to its fragrant profuse white flowers. The small flat flower blooms midseason on an upright somewhat columnar shrub with small, coarse leaves. The branches are smooth and rust-gray in color when mature. Young shoots are thin and have sparse hair. Scientists have found chromosome numbers of 2n = 30, 60, 75 and 90 in different plants. While this is not an issue for using it as a landscape plant it is a concern for breeding. It is expected that the best results would be obtained between parents with the same number of chromosomes.

Nuccio's Nurseries bloom hundreds of *C. grijsii* seeds with all most all identical to the parent. However, one had a little larger flower that retained the lovely fragrance. In addition, the leaves were larger and darker making for a nice landscape plant. They call it 'Grijsii Select'.

The Higo Treasures from Japan: 'Asagao'

By Bradford King

'Asagao' (Morning Glory) is an old variety registered in 1912. It has a wonderful medium to large pale pink flower with 140 to 170 yellow flared stamens with yellow-white filaments. The morning glory is one of the ornamental flowers highly valued in Japan. 'Asagao' has stamens describes by the Japanese as umejin. This means stamens are arranged like an apricot bloom in which the stamens flair out in the center like a sunburst. Stamens are the hallmark of a Higo and greatly appreciated when they spread out like the stamens on an apricot flower.

'Asagao'

The Japanese character for jin is translated as spirit. Since the Higo blooms in winter cold, ume is a symbol of a warrior's courage; therefore, umejin means a warrior's courageous spirit.

One interesting tradition was to lay Higo flowers on a warrior grave or to plant one nearby so that flowers fall decorating the grave. Due to this practice, old cemeteries have been a source for rescuing ancient Higo cultivars.

From The Archives: The McCaskill Mutations

By Ernie Pieri

(Editor's Note: This article by Ernie Pieri was first printed March 1973 in the Camellia Review. It was chosen for two reasons. First to remember the major contributions of Vern McCaskill, and second the importance of genetic mutations. As editor, I have omitted sections and provide photos to illustrate some of the McCaskill cultivars.)

Vern McCaskill of McCaskill Gardens, Pasadena was the originator of many fine camellias during his years as a camellia nurseryman. Many of them have been registered with the American Camellia Society as well as being listed in the Southern California Camellia Societies Camellia Nomenclature. Some of his more famous introductions include the large white flowers of 'Coronation' and 'White Nun'.

'White Nun'

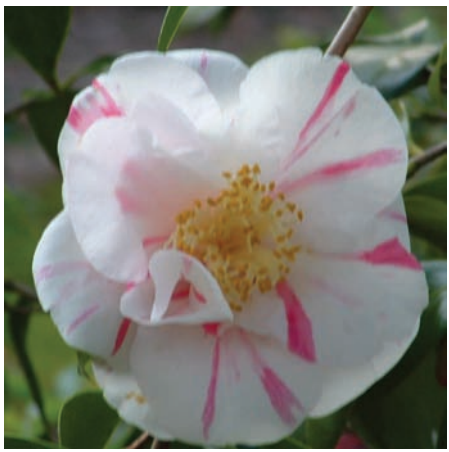
'Blaze of Glory'

The beautiful red flower 'Blaze of Glory' and 'Bali Ha'i' originated during the time when the musical South Pacific was so popular. Vern has named some of of his introductions for friends, 'Carroll Gale', and some because of their form, 'Cottontail' and 'Demi-Tasse'.

'Demi-Tasse'

'Cottontail'

Few of us know that in addition to his seedlings, he introduced mutations. 'Herme' started Verne on the mutation kick when he found and introduced 'Colonial Lady' in 1938. It is a medium semidouble white with rose stripes or flecks. His last, and probably most popular 'Herme' mutation is 'Spring Sonnet' which he introduced in 1951. It won the Frank Williams Award from the Pacific Camellia Society in 1951. It is a medium, semidouble pale pink with a darker pink margined bloom.



'Colonial Lady'

'Confetti Blush'

During the 1952-53 camellia season, he showed a mutation from 'Te Deum' which he named 'Jack McCaskill' and it was awarded the William Hertrick Award of the Southern California Camellia Society. Much to everyone's surprise and sorrow it was later found to be identical to 'Augusto L'Gouveia Pinto' a sport

of 'Grand Sultan' ('Te Deum') which was introduced in 1890 by Mr. De Silva of Portugal. Therefore, 'Jack McCaskill' is now used as a synonym of 'Augusto L'Gouveia Pinto'.

In 1971, he not only introduced another of his fine miniature seedlings 'Confetti', a variegated bloom but also two of its mutations. 'Confetti Pink' is a pink with an occasional pink striped edged white flower and a solid red colored flower, 'Confetti Red'.

When asked on what part of the camellia bush one is most likely to find a mutation, he stated that the most likely spot would be on the lower branches of the plant, on a small spindly twig that is partially covered by a branch hardly strong enough to carry the bloom, and barely large enough to graft.

Therefore, for those who look for mutations, remember that it will most likely be found down low on the plant on a spindly twig. Don't cut off the lower branches of the plant! Who knows....

Parting Shot:
Dr. Clifford Parks
by Bradford King

When Clifford Parks, Ph.D. was a young botanist working in the Los Angeles County and State Arboretum in Arcadia, California, he was breeding *reticulata* hybrids. Two that are widely distributed and popular today are 'Dr. Clifford Parks' and 'LASCA Beauty'. 'Dr. Clifford Parks' has a very large red flower. It is one of the cultivars with several forms - semidouble, anemone, loose peony and full peony. It is still a camellia show winner.

'Dr. Clifford Parks'

‘LASCA Beauty’ is also capable of winning show points with its lovely soft pink semidouble flower. LASCA are the initials Los Angeles State and County Arboretum. Dr. Parks has continued hybridizing when he moved to North Carolina but shifted to breeding cold hardy and yellow cultivars.

‘LASCA Beauty’

‘Moutancha’ Photo by Bradford King