

The *Camellia*
REVIEW



Front Cover: ‘Elegans Splendor’ *C. japonica*

‘Elegans Splendor’ is a beautiful sport of ‘C. M Wilson’. The very large flower is a light pink edged white with serrated petal edges which won the “Best of Show” at the Southern California Camellia Council show in 2018.

Photo Credit: Bradford King

Inside Cover: ‘Pagoda’ (‘Songzlin’) *C. reticulata*

Photo Credit: Bradford King



Published by the Southern California Camellia Society
socialcamelliasociety.org

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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

The Geroge Lewis “Best of Show” Trophy by Beth Stone and Bradford King	6
Camellias Call to Us by Bradford King	10
Innovative Ways to Grow and Display Camellias by Bradford King	12

DEPARTMENTS

What’s New in the Southern California Camellia World by Bradford King	18
What Might We Expect From Nuccio’s Next Season by Anne Dashiell	23
Camellia Species: <i>C. edithae</i> by Bradford King	25
The Higo Treasures From Japan: ‘Ozeki’ by Bradford King	26
From the Archives: The Enigma of Egao by Bill Donnan	27
Parting Shot: White Mermaid by Bradford King	30

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Thoughts From The Editor Bradford King, Editor

The camellia show season is finished here in Southern California so we have included photos of several of the show winning flowers which includes the cover image of ‘Elegans Splendor’ which was “Best of Show” at the Southern California Camellia Council Show. It was entered by Tom and Libbie Stull who get their names on an engraved plaque on the wooden base that holds the Lewis Cup. The cover story explains the history of this perpetual cup which was last awarded in 2004.



This issue of the Camellia Review again reports on “What’s New In The Southern California Camellia World”. Anne Dashiell’s article is a scoop as she was able to get Tom Nuccio to discuss some of their camellias that show promise and are being evaluated for future release in her article “What Might We Expect From Nuccio’s.” In addition, the accompanying photos by Steve Dashiell give the reader a glimpse of what they look like. The Higo show winning bloom of ‘Ozeki’ highlighted in “Higo Treasures From Japan” gets you to think about adding this beauty to your collection, while the fish tail like foliage camellia

‘White Mermaid’ in “Parting Shot” would spruce up the garden landscape.

This brings us to spring care of your camellias. This season we returned to drought conditions even with the March rain. Lack of moisture is a key issue for all your plants especially camellias. This spring and summer we must continue to provide adequate moisture by keeping camellias moist and not letting them dry out. In dry and hot days over 85 degrees, afternoon sprinkling is an excellent strategy.

Spring is the best time to prune camellias. Always remove dead and crossed branches in order to open the plant for air flow through the branches. Reducing unnecessary branches and leaves will also assist in keeping camellias from losing moisture through foliar evaporation.

Spring is the time to begin fertilization once they break dormancy and sprout new leaves. I begin early April with a commercial fertilizer made for camellias and azaleas and continue fertilizing every 45 to 60 days with cottonseed meal as it will not burn the leaves. The use of Miracle-Gro (as foliage spray or soil drenching) for acid loving plants every two weeks is also an excellent method which should only be repeated 3 or 4 times or you can expect leaf damage from this “hot” fertilizer (a nitrogen level of 30).

Camellias in pots will need extra care such as frequent watering and more frequent smaller amounts of fertilizer. One strategy is to double pot them which reduces loss of moisture and helps the roots stay cooler than when in a single pot. Also, potted camellias may be moved to more shade or amassed in one area for easy care.

In conclusion the “bad news” is that we have drought conditions which makes plants more vulnerable to disease and insect damage such as spider mites; the good news is that the drought has reduced the amount of petal blight. Therefore, help break the cycle of petal plight for which there is no cure by picking up all spent camellia blooms.

We are always looking for camellia articles and writers to publish. Deadlines for submitting articles to Editor Bradford King (bdk@usc.edu) are FALL: September 1, 2018, WINTER: December 1, 2018, SPRING: February 1, 2019.

The George Lewis “Best Of Show” Trophy by Beth Stone and Bradford King

George Lewis donated a perpetual trophy to the Southern California Camellia Council which was awarded at Council shows beginning in 1987. The George Lewis Trophy is a 14” diameter sterling silver bowl on a wooden base. The base reads like a “Who’s Who” of Southern California Camellias with an engraved name plate for each exhibitor who won “Best of Show” for their blooms from 1987-2004.

With only one trophy, many thought it was unfair for natural blooms to have to compete with treated blooms for best of show. At times, different head judges decided to have the judging team vote on just natural blooms; other years both treated and untreated. This controversy was finally resolved by the addition of a second trophy in 2002, a crystal bowl on a wooden base, for best treated bloom.

As time wore on, there was consensus within the members who put on the shows, that having a “Best of Show” was more trouble than it was worth. Controversy aside: One winner reminisces about the year he was awarded the George Lewis trophy. “It was a high honor, and I can recall distinctly the particular winning flower and the elation experienced in winning. I thought it was a high honor, and that the value was greater than the inconvenience.” Another member recalls that “George was much beloved”; and a third “The winner was given the trophy to take home to display for one year”. It was a real honor to win. Awarding the best of show continued to honor George Lewis who was loved by all....”

George Lewis

George earned a degree in Botany from Hampton University and was a U.S. Army veteran of World War II. He joined the Los Angeles County Department of Arboreta and Botanic Gardens in 1957. In 1970 he came to Descanso as assistant to then-superintendent Mark Anthony. Lewis became superintendent when Anthony retired in 1974 and continued in that job until his own retirement in 1990.

During those years Lewis brought many changes to Descanso. Working closely with the Guild and staff, he helped design display beds and established the first formal Spring Show with its mass plantings of tulips along the promenade. Lewis founded the “Plant Prop” program and spent many years teaching hard-working volunteers how to propagate and grow a wide variety of plants.

Best of Show winners from 1994 to 2004

The people who won the George Lewis trophy the last ten years it was awarded were the best growers of show camellias of that time and their winning blooms pictured here are examples of these outstanding natural varieties.



*1994 Mel and Bobbie Belcher
'Harold L. Paige'*



*1995 Jack and Ann Woo
'Dr. Clifford Parks'*



*1996 Milt and Marion Schmidt
'Eleanor Martin Supreme'*



*1997 Dale and Mary Kay Mittag
'Margaret Davis'*



*1998 Don and Dolores Martin
'Valentine Day'*



*1999 Les and Joanne Brewer
'John Hunt'*



*2000 Marvin and Virginia Belcher
'Junior Prom'*



*2001 Marilee and Don Gray
'Frank Houser'*



Libbie Stull with the Lewis Cup



*2002 Sergio and Elsie Bracci
'Frank Houser Variegated'*



*2003 Victor and Linda Rodriguez
'Tata'*



*2004 Dale and Mary Kay Mittag
'Carter's Sunburst'*



*2018 Tom and Libbie Stull
'Elegans Splendor'*

The Southern California Camellia Council voted fall 2017 to reestablish “Best of Show” at the Council show in 2018 and award the Lewis Cup to the best natural camellia bloom at the show. Tom and Libbie Stull won this prestigious award at the 2018 Council show with a magnificent bloom of ‘Elegans Splendor’ which is this issue’s cover photo.

Camellias Call To Us

by Bradford King

Camellias don't speak but they communicate in a way we can see and almost hear. In the fall the call to the garden is to see if the camellia pods have opened and are ready for harvest. In the winter the beautiful color of the flowers announce their presence and draw us outside.

The camellia *japonica* flower told a Victorian lover "My destiny is in your hands". The camellia stood for honest excellence. Its excellence lies in their beautiful blooms and evergreen foliage. It "boasts no fragrance and conceals no thorn" wrote an anonymous poet.

In 1848 Alexander Dumas published his best known novel *The Lady of the Camellias*. It was later adapted for the stage and premiered at the Théâtre du Vaudeville in Paris, France on February 2, 1852. The play was an instant success. Giuseppe Verdi immediately set about putting the story to music. His work became the 1853 opera *La Traviata*. In the English-speaking world, *The Lady of the Camellias* became known as *Camille* and 16 versions have been performed at Broadway theatres alone. The theme of *The Lady of the Camellias* is a love story between Marguerite Gautier, a "Courtesan", a woman "kept" by various lovers including a young provincial bourgeois, Armand Duval. She is named the "Lady of the Camellias" because when she wears a white camellia she is available to her lover and a red one when her medical condition (tuberculosis) precludes making love. Armand falls in love with Marguerite and ultimately becomes her lover, convincing her to turn her back on her life as a "Courtesan" and live with him in the countryside. This idyllic existence is broken by Armand's father, who, concerned by the scandal created by the illicit relationship and fearful that it will destroy his daughter's chances of marriage, convinces Marguerite to leave Armand who believes, up until Marguerite's death, that she has left him for another man.

Gabrielle Chanel, nickname Coco, was a fashion designer. Coco Chanel catered to women's taste for elegance in dress, with blouses and suits, trousers and dresses, and jewelry of simple design that replaced the opulent, over-designed, and constrictive clothes and accessories of 19th-century. She was familiar with Dumas's novel and the opera *La Traviata*. Therefore when Coco Chanel was given a camellia by her polo playing lover she fell in love with the camellia. She started pinning silk versions to her lapels, her hair and the blossoms found a home on the carved Chinese wooden folding screen coated in black-and-gold-lacquer in her apartment.

The camellia came to be identified with The House of Chanel, making its first appearance as a decorative element on a white-trimmed black suit in 1933. The camellia appealed to Chanel's taste of provocation due to its reference as the forbidden flower like Dumas courtesan without perfumes or thorns, the camellia seduces by its simplicity. Coco Chanel adored the pure white camellia for its form and perfectly ordered petals. The white camellias become her emblem, and the brand's signature, as it evokes the true spirit of Chanel.

In 1792, the white camellia *japonica*, 'Alba Plena,' came to England from Asia eventually spreading to the rest of Europe and America. This pure white formal double was most likely the camellia worn by Marguerite Gautier to signal her availability and later to serve as symbol of The House of Chanel.

Today the beautiful evergreen camellia continues to call you and me.



'Alba Plena'

Innovative Ways to Grow and Display Camellias

by Bradford King

Most camellias are grown in the ground as part of the home garden landscape. However, they do exceedingly well in pots. Nuccio's Nurseries grows seedlings and almost all camellias in standard black plastic containers. While in-the-ground and plastic pots are the most popular ways to grow camellias; there are also creative ways to grow camellias and innovative means of displaying blooms.

Colorful Containers

One of the easiest ways to grow camellias that improves the presentation is to place the black plastic container inside a more attractive container of your choice. This serves two purposes-- providing insulation in hot or cold weather as well as reducing loss of moisture. One advantage of pots is the ability to move them



'Jewel Box'

when in bloom to where they can be easily enjoyed. While potted camellia plants may be moved indoors for a special event, more than a couple of days indoors is not recommended. The dry warmer indoor temperature during the blooming season can be deadly to camellias which naturally like the sunny cool climate out of doors.

There are a wide variety of pottery and ceramic containers in a range of colors currently available. By choosing what you most enjoy you can make a creative display of your own. There are dwarf camellias like 'Jewel Box' that lend themselves to a small container placed on a table that

can be grown on the patio where they provide winter flowers and green foliage all year long. The white flower with small green foliage nestled in a black ceramic container looks attractive.

Foliage camellias like 'Ginyo Tsubaki' with its unusual small light gray leaves with heavily serrated edges make interesting container plants in a shady spot on the patio or similar location. It is a hardy slow grower with a small tubular red single flower.



'Ginyo Tsubaki'



'Shibori Egao Corkscrew' Bonsai

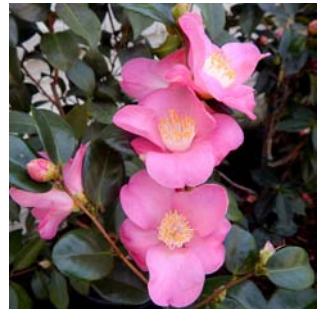
Hanging Baskets

An interesting way to grow certain camellias is in hanging baskets. Those with pendulous growth habits look best as the branches flow and sweep downward. Initially I grew several in hanging baskets lined with coconut matting. They looked good with their black metal shaped baskets and brown matt holding

Camellias with unusual growth habits and pretty flowers also make wonderful additions to a patio. 'Egao Corkscrew' and 'Shibori Egao Corkscrew' are good examples. 'Egao Corkscrew' has zig-zag branches and a medium pink flower. The pink mottled white variegated flower of 'Shibori Egao Corkscrew' with its corkscrew branches is both interesting and attractive in a pottery container. It

takes more sun than a typical *japonica* so may be grown on a patio or picnic table as decoration.

Fragrant camellias are a good choice for entry ways, patio and near seating areas where their scented flowers can be enjoyed. The best choices are 'Koto-No-Kaori' and 'Minato-No-Akebono' as they have many pleasing scented blooms even when the plants are small. 'Koto-No-Kaori' has a small single rose pink flower borne on an upright lacy growing plant. 'Minato-No-Akebono' has a single miniature light pink flower toned darker pink that blooms on an upright somewhat open plant.



Koto-No-Kaori

a plant with dark green foliage and pink flowers. However, they dried out quickly in the cocoa mats and struggled if not watered daily in the heat of the summer. A hanging basket loses more moisture than a regular pot due to its full exposure to sun and wind. I found plastic containers more forgiving especially those with a water saving lower compartment.



'Sweet Emily Kate'



Espalier Camellia for sale at Nuccio's

Espalier

Espalier is a trellis or framework of stakes which traditionally has fruit trees or other ornamental trees attached to it. However, *Camellia japonica* and *sasanqua* adapt very well to being trained as espalier. An espalier is especially attractive, useful and effective in small places. In the ground or container grown espalier is a wonderful addition where it can make an attractive privacy screen from neighbors, the children's play area or to hide trash cans and storage sheds. Nuccio's Nurseries and Lincoln Avenue Nursery, to name two local establishments, offer a number of espaliered camellia varieties. They are well grown and ready to bloom in a range of colors. In a sunny area a *sasanqua* cultivar would do well and in dappled sunlight a *japonica*.

Bonsai

Bonsai is the art of growing a miniaturized tree or bush in a small dish by rigorous pruning of roots and branches. In Japan the Higo camellia is frequently grown as bonsai. Traditionally a scion of the desired Higo is grafted on a wild camellia root and placed in a beautiful pot. This makes the bonsai appear old. The leaves and flowers are the same size when grown as a bonsai or in the ground.

Today in America a camellia bonsai can be found for sale through the internet.

However, it is more fun and creative to make your own. Three and five gallon camellias are root and foliage pruned to fit in a ceramic pot of your choice. Details on how to do this can be found in my articles in the American Camellia Society website. Bonsai camellias require significant care if they are to survive long term. However, the beauty of a small camellia in full bloom in a well-matched dish is a special treat. The zig-zag growth of ‘Corkscrew Egao’ and ‘Shibori Egao’ lend themselves to an informal bonsai form with minimal need to train them. Other *non-reticulata* hybrids like ‘Nicky Crisp’ make good bonsai.



‘Nicky Crisp’



‘Ohkan’



Benten foliage bonsai

Higo camellias on their own roots make excellent bonsai as can be seen in the image of ‘Ohkan’. The foliage camellias also make good displays throughout the year as a bonsai.

DISPLAYING CAMELLIA FLOWERS

At the Southern California Camellia Society shows the blooms are shown in small cups. This produces a fair and efficient way to judge the many flowers entered. One can use these type of cups to display camellias at home but there are other more attractive containers and vases to display the flowers. Two improvements can be seen at the local camellia shows. First, usually the fragrant, yellow and cluster blooming camellias on the Nuccio’s display table are exhibited in small green bottles. This makes for added depth and height to the blooms.



'Bunny Ears'

The other improvement also seen at Camellia shows is when the flowers in their cups are placed into crystal. For example, three perfectly matched miniature 'Shikibu' flowers fit nicely between the candles in the following photo.

The use of flowers at the dinner table adds beauty to the occasion. Central flowers need to be short enough for people to see and converse with other people across the table. A beautiful camellia in a family treasure helps remember family no longer with us as we enjoy conversation and a delicious meal.



Trio of 'Shikibu'

A clear art bowl decorated with Gingko, maple and poplar leaves etched in the glass with a large *reticulata* 'Frank Houser' camellia add to the ambiance of the living room. It is fun to be able to use art glass, collectables and vases you are fond of to display camellia flowers.

A camellia bloom in a vase adds to a special occasion. The bright red color of 'Grand Slam' in a small vase fits well with other Christmas decorations. The use of antique cut glass or newer pieces is welcomed into the home during the winter months adding warmth and beauty to the home. This is illustrated with the pink double bloom of 'Showboat' with its incurved petals contrasting with a candle holder's clear petals holding the floating flower.



Flower arranging with camellias has become a part of the last three camellia shows in Southern California. The beauty and creativity improves the show as can be seen in the two photos. Flower arranging with camellias can also be done for the home providing innovative pieces of art.

'Frank Houser'



'Grand Slam'



'Showboat'



Examples of Camellia Flower Arranging

What's New in the Southern California Camellia World by Bradford King

We begin this tour of what's new in the camellia world in Southern California with Nuccio's Nurseries. The Nuccio' display table at camellia shows is very popular. Visitors get a chance to look at 75 to 100 varieties placed close together on two tables which makes a beautiful display. The fragrant camellias are the most popular. There are several sprays in green bottles of 'Spring Mist', 'Koto-no-Kaori', 'Minato-No-Akebono' and several flowers of 'High Fragrance'. Occasionally 'Scented Gem', 'Fragrant Pink' and 'Scentuous' are also on display.



'Scentuous'

The experienced camellia growers look to see what is new. At the council show we saw 'Pearl Maxwell Coral' which is a new sport from 'Pearl Maxwell' that Nuccio's sells that is not in their most recent catalogue.

In addition, the bluish pink large flower with ruffled petals labeled as 'Blue Twilight' has striking color. It is a Dr. Clifford Parks introduction registered in 1965 which is not often seen. It is a *reticulata* hybrid crossed with a *Williamsii* seedling of 'Williams Lavender' which gives this *reticulata* a unique bluish tint.



'Pearl Maxwell Coral'



'Blue Twilight'

This year the Camellia Festival at Descanso Gardens was during the entire month of February, rather than one weekend. During the last weekend in February 2018, George Harrison presented a camellia flower arranging demonstration in the patio, and Southern California Camellia Council members Brad King and Jim Fitzpatrick conducted one hour walking tours of the Descanso camellia forests.



George Harrison doing the camellia floral arrangements demonstration

Camellia floral arranging has recently become a part of several camellia shows which adds new and creative opportunities. This year Beth Stone won Designer's Choice with Barbara Counsel taking first place in the Line Design class at the Council Show.



1st Place Line Design



1st Place Designer's Choice

The west entrance at The Huntington Botanical Gardens has new plantings of azaleas and camellias that bloomed this year for the first time. We are greeted by 'Spring Mist' with its lovely scent and sweet small blush flower that shades to a very pale pink in its center. It was bred by Dr. Clifford Parks.



'Spring Mist'



C. compressa

Camellia compressa is a species unfrequently seen that originates in China and can be found among these new plantings. The large single flower is pink with occasional white markings on its petals. The large petals are very pretty but are soft and floppy at least on this young specimen.



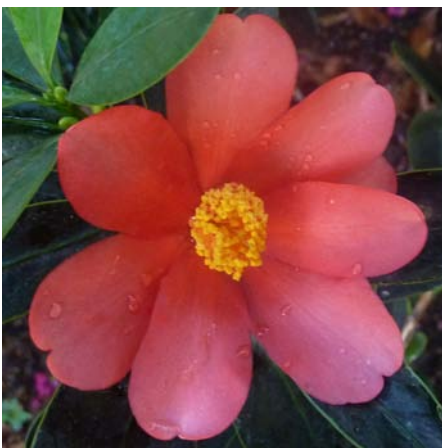
'Shinonome'



LASCA Peacock

The path leading from the east entrance to the back side of the camellia collection in the “North Vista” also has had new camellias added to the existing camellia species collection. Of major interest is a newly planted Higo ‘Shinonome’ because Franco Ghirardi in the Higo Camellia book states that this cultivar is lost and probably extinct. The Huntington has a mature plant of this cultivar in the Higo collection in the Japanese Garden. They have been grafting new plants to insure it will survive. The name means “Lost Clouds” in English. The flower has 6 to 7 white to blush petals with scarlet stripes and spots. It is a mutation from ‘Yamato-Nishiki’ with 180 to 100 stamens.

The Southern California Camellia Society tour of the new species collection in the LA County Arboretum on March 15 was led by James Henrich, curator of living collections. We were noisily greeted by the icon of the arboretum-- a magnificent Peacock.



C. azalea



C. pitardii

Jim explained that historically the arboretum made important contributions to plant breeding and introducing new camellias from 1957 to 1991. In Spring 2017 the Arboretum acquired and planted 67 species of camellia to restore the collection's diversity and to preserve species. The plants were donated by Tom Nuccio, Nuccio's Nurseries. The site for this collection has a high deciduous tree canopy. The soil is crumbly sandy loam which is optimal for camellias. The plants currently are between one and two feet. Many produced flower buds this season. Camellia *azalea* bloomed in June. It can bloom all year. In my garden it bloomed from June to March this year.

Society members appreciated the new species addition to the Arboretum collection and could view a few late blooming species such as *C. pitardii* variety *Pitardii*.

We thoroughly enjoyed Jim's informative talk and walking tour. We look forward to seeing the cultivars mature into erect shrubs and small trees over the years.



Jim Henrich with SCCS members

What Might We Expect From Nuccio's Next Season

By Anne Dashiell

This has been a funny year for camellias in Southern California; our warm winter made some bloom months earlier than usual, others dropped every bud or produced only small or misshapen blooms. 'Tudor Baby' and 'Tudor Baby Variegated', on the other hand produced stunning blooms, many of them quite a bit larger than usual. 'Ferris Wheel' bloomed early and well as did 'Hulyn Smith'.

At Nuccio's Nurseries it's time to think about what might be new introductions next year. No decisions have been made yet but on a recent visit Tom Nuccio showed me some of the possibilities. One attractive plant has been commissioned by the city of Newberg, OR and will be called 'City of Newberg'. It has a simple, slightly irregular pink bloom on an attractive, bushy plant. The plan is to use it in mass plantings in the city. While its blooms will probably not do particularly well at shows, it should make an attractive landscape plant.



'Giant Tinsie'



'City of Newburg'

Others which may find their way into next year's catalogue are #0505, also called 'Giant Tinsie', a big open plant with blooms just like 'Tinsie's' except much larger and #2017 a red and white striped bloom like 'Ferris Wheel' but somewhat smaller. There is no such thing as a blue camellia, but a few possible future introductions have a bluish tone. #0915 is a single, bluish red bloom with bright yellow stamens. #0805 has a distinctly lavender cast, this attractive, bushy plant is a seedling of 'Mahogany Glow' which likely accounts for its distinctive color. Finally, is a tiny new Tama seedling, possibly called 'Tama Pinwheel'.

Many factors go in to the selection of new introductions. It is likely that some of these plants will not make it to market next year or even for several years but it is interesting to see them and speculate about their future marketability.



'#2017'



'#0915'



'#0805'



'Tama Pinwheel'

Camellia Species: *C. edithae*

By Bradford King

C. edithae is a very late blooming camellia species that has medium rose form to formal double rose red flowers. It grows upright and very bushy with handsome dark green heavily ribbed leaves. New shoots are densely hairy and mature branches are gray brown and only slightly hairy. The flower buds are brown looking like spent flowers and grow singly at the tips of shoots and in leaf axils. It is native to China where it is called 'Dongnan Sancha'.



C. edithae flower and buds

In eastern China, it has been cultivated as an ornamental plant where a formal double dark red cultivar is called 'Momuda' (a place of worship) and a formal double pink variety is called 'Jiuqu'. "Jinqu" is a liquid mold used to ferment traditional Chinese alcoholic beverages. While we do not see these cultivars in America, Nuccio's Nurseries has introduced *C.*

edithae 'Heimudan' (Black Peony). It has a medium formal double salmon red flower that may occasionally be a rose form double bloom.



'Dongnan Sancha'



C. edithae 'Heimudan'

The Higo Treasures from Japan: 'Ozeki'

By Bradford King

Since Higo camellias have a single flat irregular shaped flower, they don't successfully compete at camellia shows. However, they have bright colors and a mass of beautiful central stamens which are highly valued in Japan and by discerning camellia growers. Therefore, the Southern California Camellia Council show has a special class for Higo Camellias. It is a fun and competitive class that provides an opportunity to enter a variety of lovely Higo blooms. A display of multiple Higo cultivars demonstrates the diversity and beauty of this form of *C. japonica* flowers.

Last year the winner was 'Ohkan' (King's Crown) which has a white flower with a rose red border which was highlighted in the fall issue of this publication. This year's winner, 'Ozeki' was entered by George and Karen Harrison. 'Ozeki' (Second class Sumo wrestler) has a large single rose pink single flower with flared stamens with occasional pinkish white petaloids. The plant grows vigorously, upright and open. The flowers typically bloom in midseason. The flower originated in Kumanoto Prefecture, Japan in 1979. The historical name for this area of Japan was Higo from which the flower gets its name.



'Ozeki'

From the Archives: The Enigma of ‘Egao’

By Bill Donnan

Photos by Bradford King



Cluster of ‘Egao’ blooms

Editor’s Note: This article is reprinted from the 1987 Camellia Review because ‘Egao’ continues to be a frequent winner in the species class at camellia shows. It is an excellent landscape plant that produces many lovely pink blooms on a vigorously upright somewhat spreading plant that tolerates full or partial sun.

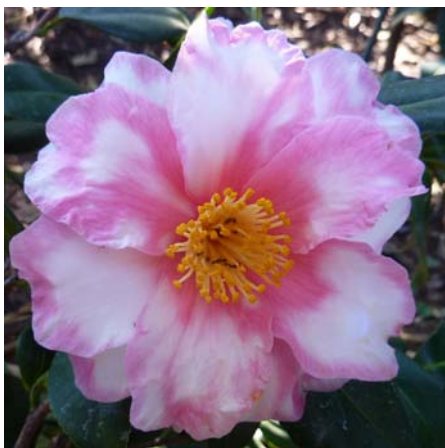
You have all heard the TV jingle that goes: “It’s a bird; it’s a plane; it’s superman!” Well I am going to tell you about a super camellia cultivar, namely ‘Egao’. One could easily paraphrase that jingle and exclaim; It’s a *vernalis*; it’s a *sasanqua*; it’s a higo!” and be partly right on all three counts.

However, if recent scientific analysis is correct, the camellia cultivar ‘Egao’ is a *non-reticulata* hybrid. But I am getting way ahead on my story. First, I want to tell you how ‘Egao’ came to California and that it is sweeping all the trophy awards in the species class in our California shows at the The Huntington, Temple City and Descanso Gardens Shows.

When Julius and Bonnie Nuccio made their first trip to Japan in 1977 they were looking for Satsuki azaleas. Naturally if they saw any good camellia cultivars they would try to get them also. When their good friend Terada found out that we do not have ‘Egao’ here in the United States he insisted that they import it. Thus, the cultivars ‘Egao’ and its variegated form ‘Shibori Egao’ along with ‘Tama-no-ura’, ‘Nan-ban-ko’ and a few others were shipped home to California. Scions were grafted and propagation began. The bloom is a medium to large deep pink semi double. The cultivar was introduced as a *sasanqua* in the fall of 1981 and it was not long before it began to sweep the Best Species trophy from many of our California camellia shows.



‘Egao Vernalis’



‘Shibori Egao’

This brings up the question –just what species is ‘Egao’? There is a Higo ‘Egao’. A ‘Egao Tsubaki’, ‘Egao *vernalis*’, and a ‘Egao *sasanqua*’ in the International Registration among the 30,000 entries. The 1981 Camellia Nomenclature and subsequent editions list ‘Egao’ as a *C. vernalis*. However, this book notes that *C. vernalis* is not a separated species but a cross between *C. sasanqua* and *C. japonica* which makes it a *non-reticulata* hybrid. Nuccio’s is aware of this but has always listed ‘Egao’ as a *C. sasanqua* because it blooms like one, looks like one and sets seed like one. What’s the saying: “If it looks like a duck, quacks like a duck, and walks like a duck; it’s probably a duck.”

When the American Camellia Society was looking for candidates for the Ralph Peer *Sasanqua* award; ‘Egao’ was nominated but was never registered and thus couldn’t qualify until its ancestry was known. Tom Savage lists it in the Camellia Registry as released in 1912 by Taniguchi. Whether this is the same cultivar we know as ‘Egao’ is open to question.

In closing, it occurs to me that we gain very little ground for the camellia hobbyist by trying to convert 'Egao' into a *non-reticulata* hybrid. Scientists have not ruled out that *C. vernalis* is a separate species. Therefore, we can continue to categorize 'Egao' and 'Shibori Egao' as a *C. vernalis* as listed in the Camellia Nomenclature and to enter it in the species class at camellia shows.

The camellia cultivar 'Egao' will continue to be an enigma and it seems appropriate to contend that as you pick one of its blooms and examine it closely, it stares up at you with a superior smirk. After all the name 'Egao' means "Smiling Face"!



'Shibori Egao Corkscrew'

Parting Shot: White Mermaid

Story and Photos by Bradford King

A mermaid is a legendary aquatic figure with a female human body and the tail of a fish. Mermaids are part of the folklore of many cultures and popular subjects of art and literature.

Christopher Columbus reported seeing mermaids in the Caribbean which were most likely sightings of the slow moving peaceful mammals we know as manatees who frequently carry their young cradled in their arms like humans do. It is surmised sailors seeing these unfamiliar creatures assumed they were a humanoid species and spread these accounts of their sightings when returning home.

The Hans Christian Anderson fairy tale “The Little Mermaid” was written in 1836 and made into an animated musical fantasy by Walt Disney Pictures in 1989. This Danish fairy tale is about a beautiful mermaid princess who dreams of becoming human. However, Mermaids are often associated with misfortune and death, luring ships off course onto rocky shoals.

The mermaid tattoo symbolizes sensuality, femininity, the moon, intuition, temptation, danger and dual nature. This tattoo first became popularized in the early 20th century by sailors. Since then, many women have adopted this tattoo design to represent their femininity, because the mermaid is perceived as a strong female figure.

Camellia japonica ‘White Mermaid’ is the white sport of the “Goldfish leafed camellia.” ‘Kinyoba-tsubaki’ was named for its leaves that resemble a fish tail and has a medium single pink red flower. When it mutated a white single flower, it was given the name ‘White Mermaid’ in the English-speaking world.



'White Mermaid'



C. japonica 'Sunnyside' Photo by Bradford King