

The *Camellia*  
REVIEW



Front Cover: 'Silver Anniversary' *C. japonica*  
Photo Credit: Bradford King

Inside Cover: 'Betty Ridley Var' *C. japonica*  
Photo Credit: Bradford King



Published by the Southern California Camellia Society  
[socialcamelliasociety.org](http://socialcamelliasociety.org)

Bradford King, Editor [bdk@usc.edu](mailto:bdk@usc.edu)

Kristina Hooper, Production Editor [khoop3r@gmail.com](mailto:khoop3r@gmail.com)

Barbara Council, Membership

Southern California Camellia Society, PO Box 1312, La Canada, Ca., 91012

© 2019, all rights reserved.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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

### FEATURES

Camellia Popularity by Bradford King	5
Creative Camellia Names by Bradford King	10
Camellias Named for Cities in Southern California by Bradford King	15
From My Window by Bradford King	18

### DEPARTMENTS

What's New in the Southern California Camellia World by Bradford King	20
Camellia Species: <i>C. transnokoensis</i> by Bradford King	23
The Higo Treasures From Japan: 'Yamato Nishiki' by Bradford King	24
From the Archives: Know Your Nurserymen - Nuccio Brothers	25
Parting Shot: Yellow Camellia Look-Alikes by Bradford King	30

*The 2017 Camellia Nomenclature published by the Southern California Camellia Society can be purchased on Amazon for \$20. Visit Amazon.com, click on books and search "2017 Camellia Nomenclature"*

### An Invitation to Join

Annual membership - \$35 includes subscription to *The Camellia Review*, three issues per year.

Sponsoring member: \$50 Sustaining member: \$100 Patron member: \$150

Send payment to Southern California Camellia Society,  
PO Box 1312, La Canada, Ca., 91012  
Memberships can also be paid online at [socialcamelliasociety.org](http://socialcamelliasociety.org).

## BOARD OFFICERS

President	Bradford King	bdk@usc.edu
Vice-President	James Fitzpatrick	JJF4849@yahoo.com
Treasurer	Beth Stone	bethstone@earthlink.net
Recording Secretary	Carol Stickley	cstickley@gmail.com
Corresponding Secretary	Alexis Slafer	aslafer@ca.rr.com
Membership	Barbara Council	barbjaponica@outlook.com

## DIRECTORS

Anne Dashiell	anne@dashiell.net
Joey Goldfarb	joeyhe@aol.com
David MacLaren	dmaclaren@huntington.com
Micheal Nealon	mikenealon@icloud.com
Susan Stull	susan.stull@icloud.com

## Thoughts From The Editor Bradford King, Editor



Winter is camellia time! Most of the sun loving camellias have bloomed out with the shade loving *japonica*, hybrids and *reticulata* taking over center stage in the garden. By adding blue and yellow annuals like low growing pansies, flower colors not seen with camellias, the winter garden palette is enhanced.

In Southern California we hope for rain but must plan for drought by watering trees and plants especially camellias. This year why not attend a camellia show. They occur every weekend from January 12 until March and are well worth it. If you have never entered a show bring your blooms and enter the novice category. Volunteers will help you identify and stage your flowers.

The Camellia Review article “Camellia Popularity” seeks to answer the question “Why are some camellia cultivars widely accepted and sought after in one part of America but rarely seen in another?” Another interesting topic is camellia names discussed in “Creative Camellia Names”. You may enjoy some of the beautiful

camellias with creative and artistic names. The Japanese use many picturesque names for their camellia introductions. This is illustrated in the article “Higo Camellia Treasures from Japan.” ‘Yamato-Nishiki’ means “Brocade of Japan.”

You might notice that in “Parting Shot: Look-Alike Yellow Camellias” the names are very different—more so than their blooms. The “From The Archives” is an interesting article about the early history of Nuccio’s Nurseries by Ernie Pieri originally published in 1962 when the Camellia Review cost one dollar.

By reading “What’s New in the Southern California Camellia World” you may learn what is occurring in The Huntington, Descanso Gardens, The LA Arboretum and Nuccio’s Nurseries. For example, did you know that electric light shows have become major attractions in Botanical Gardens across America. Two such events are held locally—one in the L.A. Arboretum and another at Descanso.

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, 2019. FALL: September 1, 2019, WINTER: December 1, 2019.

## Camellia Popularity by Bradford King

Why is it that some camellia cultivars are widely accepted and sought after in one part of America and rarely seen in another? There are many highly desirable and admired camellias grown in the Southeastern states that we hardly ever see in Southern California. A great example is ‘Cile Mitchell’ which has a large light orchid pink rose form to formal double flower. It was introduced in 1992 by Hulyn Smith, a prolific hybridizer from Georgia. This non-*reticulata* hybrid is a top winning camellia show flower winner in the Southeastern States but one that has not been seen at the camellia shows in Southern California. Is it grown by anyone in California? I don’t know but I have never seen it here. It competes favorably with the more widely grown camellias like ‘Buttons ‘N Bows’ and ‘Spring Daze’ that win both in the South and California. Why is this?



‘Cile Mitchell’



## INTRODUCTIONS BY HOMEYER

Dr. Walter Homeyer from Macon Georgia introduced 'Frank Houser' in 1989. It is the most popular *reticulata* along with its variegated form in America. They are the biggest winners in camellia shows throughout the U.S. the last fifteen years. While his 1973 'Betty Ridley' wins show points in the Southeast, it is not seen in Southern California shows. Why is this? 'Betty Ridley' has a lovely medium to large pink formal double flower introduced in 1973. Dr. Homeyer used 'Felice Harris' as the pollen parent. Howard Asper introduced 'Felice Harris' a large semidouble pale orchid pink flower with fluted petals as a *C. reticulata* hybrid in 1976. The mother according to the International Camellia Registry was imported to America in 1930 by Star Nursery, Montebello, California as 'Narumigata'. The pollen parent was listed by Aster as *C. reticulata* hybrid 'Buddha'. The original ACS registration form shows he has a question mark after the listing because the plant label had been lost. Subsequent investigation has revealed the pollen parent was an unknown *C. japonica* not 'Buddha'. This cultivar looks and grows like a *japonica* because of its paternal inheritance. This required the nomenclature research committee to move 'Felice Harris' into the non-*reticulata* section of the Camellia Nomenclature; consequently, also moving its children 'Betty Ridley', 'Betty Ridley Variegated' and 'Virginia Womack' to the non-*reticulata* section. 'Betty Ridley' and 'Betty Ridley Variegated' are propagated by Nuccio's Nurseries who confirm the plant and flower grow like a *japonica*. Now that 'Betty Ridley' is available in California perhaps it will win in local camellia shows.



*'Betty Ridley'*



*'Edna Bass Var.'*

In addition, Dr. Homeyer introduced 'Edna Bass' in 1992. This very large red semi double to peony form flower wins its share of show points. However, none of these points come from camellia shows in Southern California. In fact, I have

no recollection of seeing it in any recent local show. In the 2017 “Judges have Spoken!” the best show blooms in the very large *japonica* class were ‘Lauren Tudor’ 65 points, ‘Edna Bass Variegated’ 60 points; ‘Charlie Bettes’ with 39 and ‘Edna Bass’ with 19. In the eight camellia shows held in Southern California we didn’t even have entries of these four winners. Why is this?

### BEST WHITE CAMELLIAS

Several camellia shows in the Southeast have a “Best White Class”. The usual winners are the large to very large loose peony to peony formed ‘Mellissa Ann’ and the semi double ‘Charles Bettes’ They also win regularly in the *japonica* classes. We have no “Best White Class” in Southern California camellia shows. We also don’t see either of these cultivars in their respective *japonica* classes. Why is this?



*‘Mellissa Ann’*



*‘Charles Bettes’*

The miniature white flower which shades to pink of ‘Tiny Princess’ isn’t impressive in a show cup that can seem to swallow it but with some petals and petaloids standing in the center it does look like a princess. The plant can be impressive when covered in these tiny formed flowers. This cultivar was bred by K. Sawada and is a popular plant in the southeast that we rarely ever see locally.

### MISSING IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

We also don’t see ‘Kiku-Toji’ a small deep red flower blotched white in Southern California. It has been available in Japan since 1895 and wins points at camellia shows in the Southeast. Why don’t we see ‘Punkin’? ‘Punkin’ has a rose-pink flower with outer petals that shade lighter in the center of this small tiered formal double hybrid with incurved petals. It was introduced in 1966 in Northern

California by Novak, yet this cultivar is rarely seen in Southern California. It wins many show points in southeast camellia shows but not here. In fact, it won 75 points in 2017 while 'Freedom Bell' a cultivar popular throughout the States won 37. Why is this?



*'Tiny Princess'*



*'Punkin'*

Speaking of tiered formal double camellias, we don't see 'Les Marbury'; which has a pink and white flower or 'Les Marbury Red' in California but they win points in other areas of the country with their clear bright colors. In general, I am not attracted to the tired formal double flower form, but these two cultivars have changed my mind. They look great!



*'Les Marbury'*



*'Les Marbury Red'*



## FAMILIARITY INFLUENCES POPULARITY

In general, I think popularity is highly influenced by familiarity. Unless a new song, band, actor, movie, cereal, drink or camellia is publicized it will never gain a following. Millions of dollars for advertisement and public appearances do this for thousands of products and entertainers. Every year the TV show “American Idol” creates new stars. The winners and even the losers are interviewed on other TV programs and discussed in magazines like “People.” There is limited publicity for plants. In addition, even major commercial nurseries catalogues tout seeds, annual flowers, perennials and trees but many have no camellias listed. Traditionally camellia cultivars gain popularity in the camellia world at camellia shows and camellia society meetings. More recently web sites and digital photography has helped increased interest. Books and magazines certainly help once people become interested in camellias.

There are at least three factors that are involved in camellia popularity. First and foremost, the cultivar must reliably produce beautiful flowers that are distinct from other camellias. Second it should be an attractive and relatively easy plant to grow. Third it must be available in sufficient numbers. Size is not a key to popularity but clear bright colors and distinguishing markings seem to help. Popular show flowers winners tend to have more complicated forms with very few outside the species class having single flowers.

## REGIONAL POPULARITY

Why are some camellia cultivars popular in one country or region of America? One factor is where a camellia is introduced. If introduced in the US, it is most likely to be first distributed locally. Many cultivars are just distributed to family and friends, never gaining more wide spread interest. Some camellias bred and propagated by nurseries in the South never are seen in California. This is even more likely if the cultivar was bred in Australia or New Zealand. However, choice cultivars do become desired internationally. For example, ‘Nicky Crisp’ a hybrid seedling from New Zealand and ‘John Hunt’ from Australia are admired worldwide. In addition, there are numerous southern bred camellias that are also popular in California— ‘Glen 40’ from Alabama, ‘Frank Houser’ from Georgia, ‘Miss Charleston Variegated’ from South Carolina and ‘Lady Laura’ from Florida just to note a few.

The main reason a camellia cultivar becomes popular in California is that it is propagated here in the state. Today in California, Nuccio’s Nurseries is the main camellia nursery. They began in 1935 and continue to introduce new camellias and propagate hundreds of wonderful cultivars. In the last twenty-five years al-

most all camellia plants in California have come from this world-famous source. Yes, large growers like Monrovia Nurseries distribute camellias but they sell a very limited number of camellia cultivars to the public but not the rare and diverse varieties sought by camellia enthusiasts. Before 1985 Kramer Brothers, McCaskill as well as over 30 other small nurseries now out of business, introduced interesting new camellias in California. Some of their introductions can be found throughout the U.S. In Southern California we get almost all our camellias from Nuccio's especially in the last twenty-five years. In other words, if they don't propagate a cultivar it is unlikely to be seen here. There are many very good nurseries and camellia breeders in the east, but unless they do mail order, or the California grower is highly motivated to get cuttings or scions from the other coast the cultivar is never seen here.

## Creative Camellia Names by Bradford King



*'White Bouquet'*

Some camellias have been named to honor famous people. The older European camellias often use titles like Baron, Duchess, King and Queen that don't resonate with Americans seeking independence from these traditions. A great many camellias in America are named for family and friends reflecting the importance of these relationships for people registering a new variety. On the other hand,

nurseries most typically name their introductions to help identify and market the plants to the public. Let's enjoy some of the beautiful camellias with creative and artistic names.

'Button's N Bows' has a small formal light pink flower that shades to a deeper pink on the petal edges. Pink is a classic feminine color and so is the name which brings to mind an image of a school age girl formally dressed for a party or church with bows in her hair. Nuccio's introduced this *saluenensis* hybrid camellia in 1985. One of the most famous paintings in the Huntington Botanical Garden and Art Galleries is "Pinky" a lovely oil painting by Lawrence of a young girl in a light dress and hat with pink flowing ribbons. She may not have buttons and bows but this masterpiece reflects the same beautiful youthful mood.

In 2006 Nuccio's registered 'White Bouquet' a medium to large semidouble flower that grown on a vigorous upright plant with somewhat loose growth. I won a plant in the Southern California Camellia Society raffle and have enjoyed the many pure white blooms. A bouquet is a collection of flowers artfully arranged in a vase. The trio of 'White Bouquet' blooms is a natural bouquet arranged on the bush by Mother Nature.



*'Button's N Bows'*



*'Angel Wings'*

Kramer brothers introduced 'Angel Wings' in 1979. This medium semidouble white washed with shades of lovely orchid pink has narrow up right petals that resemble wings. This beautiful pink camellia is another example of creative naming. Angels are spirits usually depicted in humanoid form with feathered wings and halos. They are found in various religions typically their roles include protecting and guiding human beings and carrying out God's task.

Other Nurseries have also invoked religious names for new camellias. Vernon McCaskill named a very large white semidouble *C. japonica* 'White Nun'. McCaskill Gardens introduced 72 *japonica* cultivars and 8 non-*reticulata* hybrids between 1930 and 1988. While Surina's Camellia Garden found the fitting name 'Cardinals Cap' for their cardinal red miniature to small anemone formed flower. The bloom's color and shape resemble a cardinal's cap.



*'White Nun'*



*'Cardinals Cap'*

In Asia a pagoda is a structure associated with a temple used as a place of worship. Originally pagodas came from India and spread to China with the expansion of the Buddhist religion throughout Asia. 'Pink Pagoda' has a large medium to large formal double flower.



*'Pink Pagoda'*



*'Grand Sultan'*



Sultan is an Arabic term meaning strength, power, authority which later came to be used as the title of rulers who claimed lack of dependence on any higher ruler. The name “Grand Sultan” is the name of a five star Golf and Tea resort in the capital of Bangladesh whose ads claim you will feel powerful and pleased to be treated as a sultan. The camellia *japonica* ‘Grand Sultan’ has an impressive large dark red semi double to formal double flower that came from Italy to Belgium in 1849 then to America as ‘Te Deum’.

When dining out in a four or five star restaurant after choosing your favorite entry, the dessert menu is presented. One of the treats one might find is Cherries Jubilee made with cherries, liquor flambéed and served over vanilla ice cream. When served at the table the flambéed liquor provides a brief dramatic flame that catches attention of all those nearby. It was first served to Queen Victoria at a Jubilee ceremony in 1887. The camellia ‘Cherries Jubilee’ looks as delicious as the dessert tastes and is an eye catching beauty with its burgundy red medium to large semidouble to loose peony form flower with red and white petaloids intermingled with yellow stamens. Yummy!



*‘Cherries Jubilee’*



*‘Funny Faced Betty’*

The ‘Betty Sheffield’ camellia has mutated at least 30 color variations. The one with the most interesting name is ‘Funny Faced Betty’. This cultivar has a medium to large pale pink that turns to a darker pink with occasional deeper pink stripes across the face of the flower which gives us the name. She is also known as ‘Charming Betty’ perhaps so her feelings can be spared.

Many of us talk or sing to our flowers even complementing them on their beauty and grace but so far none have spoken to me not even ‘Charming Betty’.

The bright pink small to medium formal double flower bred in Australia has an adorable flower so it was named 'Adorable'. It is a *C. pitardii* seedling that has become widely distributed in the camellia world.

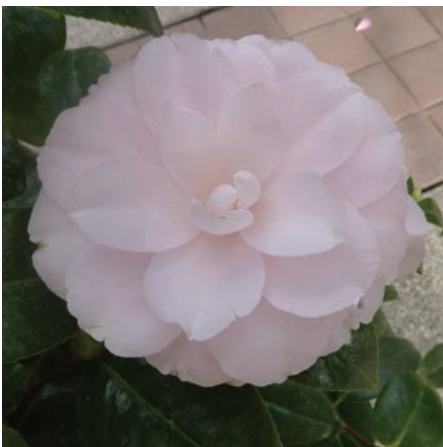


*'Adorable'*



*'Star Above Star'*

The *C. vernalis* 'Star Above Star' has a lovely white flower that shades to lavender pink on the petal edges with one set of petals superimposed over another that resemble one star over another star. Vernon McCaskill named this seedling as well as 'Cloisonné', 'Coronation', 'Demi Tasse', 'High Wide 'N Handsome', 'Kewpie Doll', 'Lady In Red', 'Little Red Riding Hood' and 'White Nun' getting my nomination for providing the most creative camellia names.



*'Sweet Dreams'*

Nuccio's Nurseries are just as imaginative with at least five Nuccio's who have contributed to the naming of over two hundred camellias the last 75 years. We end this piece with their lovely medium formal double pale orchid pink 'Sweet Dreams'.

See you later alligator; don't let the bed bugs bite or even better wishing you sweet dreams.

# Camellias Named for Cities in Southern California

By Bradford King

Four Southern California cities have had camellias named for them. The cities honored are Arcadia, Covina, San Dimas and San Marino.

## Arcadia

The city of Arcadia is best known for the Santa Anita race track and the LA Arboretum. Lucky Baldwin purchased 8,000 acres in 1875 of Rancho Santa Anita where he cultivated the land for farming, orchards and a ranch. He built the Queen's Ann cottage for his fourth wife and himself in 1886. Today this historic building is preserved in the arboretum. Baldwin was the first mayor of Arcadia when it was incorporated in 1903. Beginning in the 1930's Arcadia began to transition to the residential city it is today.

Meyer Piet raised his family with his wife Bev on Anokia Street in Arcadia. Meyer had a successful career in the aerospace industry and a passion for camellias. Meyer and his friend Lee Gaeta hybridized camellias in the nineteen seventies and eighties from Meyer's home. They registered sixteen new *reticulata* hybrids. Most of these were named for family members. In 1979 he named a salmon pink very large semidouble *C. reticulata* flower for his home town.



'Arcadia'



'Covina'

## Covina

This small city with beautiful mountain views of the San Gabriel Mountains began as a coffee plantation. Coffee proved to be unprofitable crop. Therefore, the land was sold and subdivided for homes. The city of Covina was incorporated

in 1901. Local farmers discovered that citrus grew well in the area. It was the main industry in the early 1900s. After world War II, the citrus industry faltered, and the city became more urban with high tech industry a mainstay of the local economy. The *camellia japonica* ‘Covina’ was introduced in 1888 by Dr. Burdick. The small rose red flower is semidouble to rose form double. It grows vigorously, blooms profusely and tolerates more sun than other *japonicas* which has made it a mainstay for landscaping in Southern California.

### San Dimas

The name comes from San Dismas Canyon in the San Gabriel Mountains which serve as background for the northern section of the city. San Dimas is named in Spanish for Saint Dismas, the “Penitent Thief” or the “good thief” mentioned in the bible at the crucifixion asking to be remembered when Jesus comes into his kingdom.

Like the other cities and towns in the San Gabriel Valley wheat and other Mid-western United States crops were planted first; then orange and lemon groves dominated the landscape. Four citrus packing houses and a marmalade factory were located in San Dimas at one time. The Sunkist name originated here, first spelled “Sunkissed.” Oranges were the major crop and business in San Dimas until the mid-20th century. San Dimas incorporated as a city in 1960. It is now known for its western art, equestrian activities and small-town feel. In the 1990s San Dimas was host to the Miss Rodeo California State Pageant. The week-long pageant was held in conjunction with the city’s Western Days and Rodeo, until the pageant moved to its new home in central California.



*‘San Dimas’*



*‘San Dimas Variegated’  
with moiré pattern*



Mr. C. W. Thomas wanted a red camellia to be named San Dimas to plant near city hall. In 1971 Nuccio's nurseries agreed to name a large red *C. japonica* 'San Dimas'. The flower is a wavy semidouble with occasional petaloids, it blooms early to midseason on an upright spreading plant with dark green foliage. The variegated version is very beautiful with the white markings contrasting with the red petals. Variegation is often white blotches but is most beautiful when in a moiré pattern which resembles water marks on the petals.

### San Marino

The City of San Marino originally consisted of orchards and vineyards. They were owned by early day pioneers-- Benjamin D. Wilson, George S. Patton and James De Barth Shorb. In the 1800s, this area was part of the California mission system. As the missions grew, a need arose for a grist mill to process grain. In 1816 a mill was constructed. Today the Old Mill (El Molino Viejo) is the oldest building in the city. San Marino's most famous resident was Benjamin D. Wilson, who, in 1854, established the Lake Vineyard Ranch. He was a Mayor of Los Angeles and served as a State Senator for two successive terms. When Wilson's daughter, Maria, married James De Barth Shorb, Wilson gave them the top knoll of his estate as a wedding gift. Maria and James built a home where the current Huntington mansion now stands.

Henry E. Huntington visited the Shorb estate and loved the location. He purchased this property in 1903. Today the Huntington Botanical Gardens, Library and Art Galleries are world famous. Wilson's daughter, Ruth, married George S. Patton, who became the first Mayor of San Marino, incorporating the area into the City of San Marino in 1913. He was also the father of General George S. Patton, Jr famous as "The fightenest General" in World War II. General Patton served as a decoy for the landing at Normandy. Hitler was convinced General Patton would lead the invasion and moved his troops to oppose him. This assisted the allies in the bloody but successful landing at Normandy Beach.

The *Camellia reticulata* 'San Marino' was introduced in 1975 by William Goertz, a camellia lover who lived in San Marino. The flower has a semidouble dark red bloom with heavy textured petals.



'San Marino'

From My Window  
by Bradford King

As I look out the kitchen eating area window to view the sun light up Mount Wilson in the distance, I see camellias in the foreground. Today a pretty 'Tama Peacock' turns her face in my direction. This *C. japonica* is arguably the best of the many seedlings from 'Tama no ura'. It grows upright and somewhat pendulous in growth habit. The Nuccio's report that it blooms mid to late season, but it blooms for me early to midseason with many lovely maroon semidouble flowers with a good white border. The maroon washes into the border rather than having a distinctive edge which makes it more attractive. In addition to producing many flowers it is an excellent seed setter for those interested in growing seedlings. Some of the seedlings will have various amounts of the picoted border but many others will not.



*'Tama Peacock'*



*Allen's Hummingbird*

My favorite view from the window where I sit to eat, answer emails and write articles is the birds perched among the camellia flowers. The male Rufus Hummingbird is the most colorful. Typical one male dominates the feeder keeping the larger 'Anna's Hummingbirds' at bay. He occasionally is chivalrous allowing a female to feed. The 'Anna's' congregate in large numbers on a back feeder. In Southern California these two hummingbirds are all year residents.

During winter we feed other birds who take the food from the feeder and seek protection in the camellias. The Lesser Goldfinch flock to the thistle feeder and the house finches, scrub jays, white crowned sparrows the sunflower feeder. The Yellow Rump Warblers, Kinglets and Bewick Wren look for insects in the camellia bushes. In March as the camellia season is winding down, we look for the

return of the Hooded Oriole who also feeds on sugar water in the hummingbird feeders. The male usually comes two weeks before the females. He is scouting for food, nesting areas and contesting a territory waiting for a partner. They typically nest in the palm trees among the dead fronds that provide protection for the babies. When the young fledge they join their mother on the hummingbird feeders before migrating to Central America.



*Lesser Goldfinch*



*House Finch*



*Hooded Orioles*

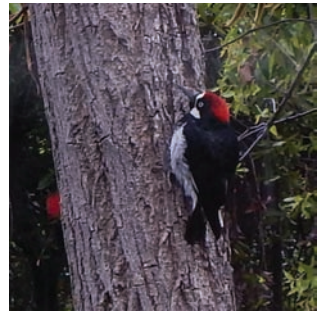
When the camellias bloom in the cool of winter, we open the shutters in the bedroom letting sunlight illuminate and warm the room. This makes my day as I see a mass of flowers blooming on ‘Kramer’s Supreme’ and ‘Shishi Gashira’. They are both outstanding landscape camellias. They were planted by the previous owner about 50 years ago and reliably bloom every year. ‘Kramer’s Supreme’ has large to very large red peony flowers borne on a vigorous compact upright plant.



*‘Kramer’s Supreme’*



*‘Shishi Gashira’*



*Acorn Woodpecker*

‘Shishi Gashira’ (Lions head) has a small semidouble flower that blooms profusely on a compact busy plant. This *C. heimalis* cultivar originated in Japan and is widely distributed. It tolerates sun and has a sweet musky scented flower that the bees love which produces an abundance of small dark brown seeds. The camellias are partially shaded by a Golden Trumpet tree which at times features an Acorn Woodpecker looking for food.



# What's New In The Southern California Camellia World

by Bradford King

## THE HUNTINGTON BOTANICAL GARDENS

The Southern California Camellia Society (SCCS) and The Huntington have a long history of cooperation dating from 1942 when William Hertrich was superintendent. SCCS donated new camellia cultivars and Hertrich evaluated and propagated them. This cooperation continues today with the forty seventh annual camellia show February 9 & 10, 2019. This premier show features camellia entries from San Diego to Sacramento. David MacLaren, curator of the Asian gardens, runs a camellia sale that features dozens of camellias, some are hard to find varieties in large sizes.



*'Julius Nuccio'*



*'High Fragrance'*

A new path that begins at the entrance to the Japanese garden and ends at the Boone Gallery honors Nuccio's Nursery. It is planted with Nuccio introductions featuring 'Nuccio's Gem', 'Julius Nuccio', and 'Giulio Nuccio' to name a few. In addition several hybrids like 'High Fragrance' by James Finley and 'Tulip Time' registered by David Feather provide a peaceful place to sit and enjoy camellia flowers.



*New Stone Gathering Place*



## DESCANSO GARDENS

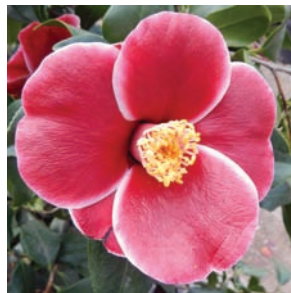
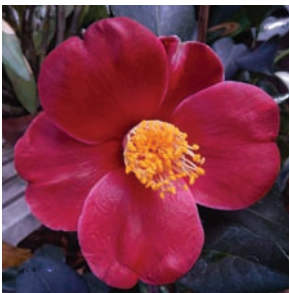
The entrance circle at the garden has been redone featuring attractive stone work. The original circle is planted with drought resistant plants many indigenous to California. The new curved stone wall demarks a gathering place for speakers and tours. These improvements provide a nice welcome to the garden. It is a pleasure to introduce Richard Troche, the new camellia horticulturist. He has been hired to replace Wayne Walker and to oversee the extensive camellia collection at Descanso. Welcome Richard.



*Richard Troche & Rachael Young*

## NUCCIO'S NURSERIES

This camellia season Nuccio's Nurseries has introduced two new *Camellia japonica* cultivars that I believe you would enjoy growing. 'Tama Velvet' which has a medium to large dark red semidouble flower with a white border of varying width. The growth habit is medium, upright and spreading. It blooms early to midseason. This is the eighth seedling from 'Tama-No-Ura' Nuccio's has introduced. The color is like their award winning cultivar 'Royal Velvet' but smaller with a nice border. My five gallon purchase already has buds which should produce show quality flowers as a medium single, tray of three like blooms or an option for a tray of six Nuccio introduction.



*'Tama Velvet' like many of the "Tamas" has a range of color forms like the three shown here*

'Stop!' has a large red anemone flower with white petaloids. It may need to have some size before it sets buds but it is a very fast growing camellia which helps. It

blooms mid to late season on an upright open plant. It has a very showy flower which promise to win show points. Tom Nuccio recommend planting it where the dramatic bloom will be easily seen. When in bloom you will want to stop and enjoy the flower; therefore mine is planted in the front garden.

On a recent visit to the nursery I discovered they are selling several varieties of rhododendrons this year. I chose a well budded pink cultivar. The challenge in Southern California is where to grow them. They like shade and dislike our hot dry summers. I have 'President Roosevelt' thriving for 15 years where it gets no direct sun but receives sunlight most of the day. In Descanso they grow and bloom in the heavy shade under the live oaks among the Clivia.



*'Stop'*



*Garden d'Lights*

## LOS ANGELES ARBORETUM AND BOTANIC GARDEN

Throughout America public gardens are offering special high tech light festivals seeking to draw a wider audience that are also financially beneficial to the gardens. Descanso Gardens the last three years has sponsored a light festival entitled "Enchanted Forest". This fall the Arboretum added a special evening event the "Moonlight Forest". It provided an experience in art, culture, and discover . It features crafted lanterns depicting animals, flowers, and figures from Chinese legends. The lanterns reflect three themes; Nature, Children's Garden, and Chinese Culture, all of which embrace the mission of the Arboretum. Skilled artisans from China's Sichuan province created this program.

## Camellia Species: *C. transnokoensis*

by Bradford King

This Chinese species was first scientifically described in 1919. It is characterized by tiny slightly fragrant white flowers with buds showing a red spot which when there are masses makes an attractive display. The foliage is small and narrow which provides lacy looking plant. The plant grows slowly and can reach twenty feet over time. It has been used in breeding cluster blooming hybrids.



*C. transnokoensis*



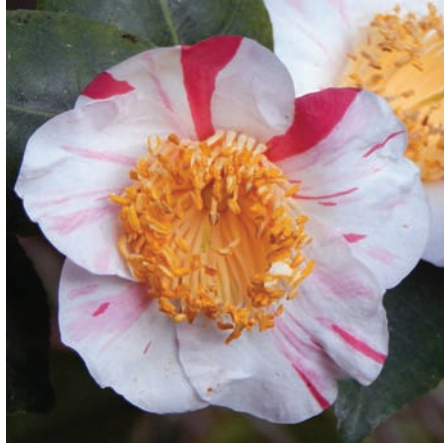
'Sweet Jane'



'Sweet Jane' arrangement

Ray Garnett from Australia introduced two *transnokoensis* hybrids of interest for their cluster blooming characteristic. 'Transtman' is a miniature single with a pale pink flower with deeper lavender pink on the edges of the petals. 'Sweet Jane' is seen more frequently in America. The lovely miniature peony to formal double pale pink center of the flower shades deeper on the outer petals. It grows vigorously and upright making it a good landscape plant. The floral arrangement shows three semidouble and a formal double not fully open which gives us a view of the range of forms of this little beauty.

# The Higo Treasures From Japan: ‘Yamato Nishiki’ by Bradford King



*‘Yamato Nishiki’*

In Kumamoto, Japan, there are six ornamental plants that have been developed and improved since the Edo period known as “the Higo six flowers”. They are Higo *japonica* camellias, Higo chrysanthemum, Higo morning glory, Higo iris, Higo herbaceous peony and Higo *sasanqua* camellias. They were cultivated and bred to produce unique models for each of these flowers. It has been said that they are the result of the spirit “mokkosu” which means perseverance and obstinacy, qualities necessary to bred and grow these flowers in a harsh environment. Today only the Higo *japonica* camellias are famous outside of Japan. Camellia enthusiasts may also be familiar with the much less well known Higo *sasanqua*.

The model Higo camellia flower is a single with just 5 to 7 large flat brightly colored petals with a mass of (100 to 250) circular stamens. One that reflects these characteristics is ‘Yamato-Nishiki’ (Brocade of Japan). It has a wonderful white flower striped red with white filaments and 200 to 210 stamens. It is an old cultivar from 1830 and an example of a first-class variegated Higo bloom. It is a flower that symbolizes the values of old Japan--poetry and grace with the contrast of the red stripes on a medium white bloom. It has mutated eight times examples include ‘Ohkan’ ( King’s Crown); ‘Showa-no-hikari’( Light of Showa); and ‘Kuni-no- hika’ ( Glory of the Nation).



## From the Archives: Know Your Nurserymen - Nuccio Brothers by Ernest (Ernie) Pieri

*(Editor's Note: This interesting article on Joe and Julius founders of Nuccio's Nurseries was first published in January 1962 when the Camellia Review cost one dollar. Photos by Bradford King)*

The Nuccio brothers, Joe and Julius, are native Californians. They lived in Los Angeles near Olympic and Vermont before moving to Alhambra. They got their love for plants from their father, who was a gardener in Alhambra. While going to Alhambra high school, Julius worked in Western Nursery, now the Daley Nursery, on Valley Boulevard near Marengo. It was during this period, in 1929, that the Nuccio brothers developed their desire to have a nursery of their own. As a start the boys, with their Dad, started a small general nursery in the back yard of their Alhambra home. While the boys were in high school, Joe showed the greater athletic prowess by being a star sprinter for the Alhambra High School track team, setting a record in the "B" Class 100 yard dash that still exists in the school record book.

It was during 1934 that the boys decided to start selling plants in a general nursery. They also started grafting and selling camellias. Julius learned to graft and did most of the grafting for Alvin Carter at his nursery on Bushnell Avenue in Alhambra. Both boys worked together in the nursery until 1940, at which time Julius was drafted by Uncle Sam to become a member of the U. S. Army. As luck would have it, during the famous Fish Bowl drawing for Alhambra, Julius was the number one draftee. The boys had six months before Julius was inducted in which to get rid of their nursery stock.

During the years 1934 to 1940, the brothers worked as silver men in several glass shops in Los Angeles. They worked on the night shift, so they could have time to work with their nursery during the day. Sort of working at night to make the day job pay. In the meantime, Joe had built a lathe house at his home in Santa Monica where he took many of their camellia stock plants until Julius could return to civilian life.

In 1943, after looking around for a likely spot to start their new nursery, Joe with Julius' consent bought their location in Alhambra. The boys had looked at it and expressed a desire to own the place before Julius was drafted. When Julius returned to civilian life, he and Joe started to move their stock plants from Santa Monica to the new nursery site. The boys started their nursery with the greatest of hopes, but with some misgivings from Descanso Gardens Nurseries. The boys were informed they might start the nursery, but that the Descanso outlet

had a corner on the camellia market and were not about to let anyone else in on their business. The boys had a desire to own a nursery of their own, liked to work with and grow plants, and so went ahead with their nursery plans. They started with cuttings of the then well-established camellia varieties and grafted new varieties. In 1948 they branched out into the mail order business. You can see the Descanso nursery warnings had little effect on the Nuccio brothers. Descanso Nursery eventually moved, but the Nuccio Nurseries have remained. (*Editor's note Nuccio's nurseries moved to their present location in Altadena in 1947*)



Each year there seemed to be more buyers for the so-called common varieties of camellias. They carry the largest stock of *reticulatas* in Southern California. The boys also showed an interest in the camellia seeds and seedlings that were produced. They eagerly watched for them to bloom, to see if a new color or petal combination would develop that might take the fancy of the public eye. Many of these seedlings ended up as understock for their grafting work. However, not all of them had their heads cut off for grafting. In 1939 the boys found a nice red seedling which they named 'Katherine Nuccio' and a white formal, 'Primavera', which is being sold in New York during Easter as a corsage. These seedlings were to remain as numbers until about 1946, when the boys registered them under the names. About this time, several other seedlings began to show promise as show camellias. The first one 'Masquerade' won the Frank Williams cup in 1952. The most famous seedling from the Nuccio's Nurseries was first seen as a numbered seedling in 1953. It wasn't until 1957 that it was released to the public under the registered name 'Guilio Nuccio' in honor of the boy's father.



*'Guilio Nuccio'*



*'Guilio Nuccio Variegated'*

Since that time, it has variegated and is now sold as 'Guilio Nuccio Variegated' and 'Guilio Nuccio Special', depending upon the amount of white in the bloom. The camellia 'Giulio Nuccio' won the Margarete Hertrich award for the outstanding seedling in 1955 and the John Illges Award in national competition in 1959.

It was during the A.C. S. Convention in Los Angeles in 1956 that many of the big camellia names from the south came out here and visited the Nuccio Nurseries. Judge Solomon, a guest of the nurseries, saw a beautiful pink seedling which he liked and had the honor of naming 'Francis Solomon'.

In the fall of 1960 Nuccio's introduced a new seedling 'Silver Anniversary' celebrating the 25th year of the camellia business. (*Editor's note 'Silver Anniversary' is on the front cover*) They also introduced another seedling 'Cara Mia' during the same season. During the 1961 A.C. S. Convention in Disneyland, they introduced the new seedling 'Disneyland'. Since that time, they introduced a fine *japonica* seedling 'Alex Smith'.

They are also interested in growing miniature camellias as well as the larger bloom varieties. They propagated and introduced 'Tinsie' which was first seen in the camellia show sponsored by the Pacific Camellia society in 1951. This small camellia drew most of the attention at the show, and the nursery had a terrific run on 'Tinsie' camellia plants. (*Editor's note: 'Tinsie' was imported from Japan by Star Nursery in 1930 as 'Bokuhan'*)



*'Cara Mia'*



*'Disneyland'*

In addition to *japonica* and *reticulatas*, the Nuccio's became interested in *sasanquas*. They originated and propagated the seedling 'Show-A-Supreme' in 1957 and in 1960 after several years of blooming it they introduced 'Dazzler'. This last seedling has very good holding qualities and can be used successfully as a boutonniere. They also grow Azalea and other landscape shrubs.



*'Dazzler'*



*'Kickoff'*

We are happy to include the Nuccio Brothers Nurseries in our group of "Know Your Nurserymen" and salute them as true natives of California.





*Joe and Julius beside 'Kickoff' introduced in 1962*



*'Nuccio's Jewel'*

## Parting Shot: Look Alike Yellows

by Bradford King

It has been a dream of hybridizers to breed yellow camellias. Therefore, when look-alike yellow cultivars were bred they were introduced even though they were not distinctively different from each other. Two from Australia and one from New Zealand come to mind.

In 1965 a white flower with creamy to pale yellow petaloids was registered in Australia. Dr. Morey named it 'Gwenneth Morey'. It was a chance seedling of 'Edith Linton' which first bloomed in 1961. The medium anemone flower is similar in appearance but not identical to 'Brushfield's Yellow'. It too has a white flower with creamy yellowish central petaloids. It was bred by by Keith Brushfield, Australia.



*'Gwenneth Morey'*



*'Brushfield's Yellow'*

Les Jury used 'Gwenneth Morey' as the pollen parent to get 'Jury's Yellow'. It has a lovely white anemone flower with cream yellow petaloids that is widely grown. It blooms early to late on a compact upright plant. As the photos show they all have medium white flowers with different degrees of pale yellow petaloids that form an attractive anemone flower. However, an outstanding show entry shows an example of a very yellow 'Jury's Yellow'. Wow!

Since yellow is a rare camellia cultivar, the hybridizers registered them with their family names. Who can blame them!



*'Jury's Yellow'*



*An outstanding show entry of 'Jury's Yellow'*



*'Honeymoon'*





*C. japonica* 'Nuccio's Carousel' Photo by Bradford King