

THE
Camellia
REVIEW





INSIDE COVER: 'INTERLUDE' Photo by Bradford King

FRONT COVER: 'STARS 'N STRIPES' Photo by Bradford King

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THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR

FALL: A TIME TO HARVEST

BY BRADFORD KING

Fall is especially welcomed this year after a hot summer with 11 straight days with temperatures over 100°. These very high temperatures stress, and in some cases, destroy plants.

Fall is also the time to harvest camellia fruit. Pods open late summer and fall revealing their seeds. I recommend placing jewelry bags on pods to collect the seeds you wish to germinate. If you don't harvest seeds, remove pods to reduce pressure on your camellias. However, if you miss some or just don't want to remove pods, it isn't a problem. For more on ca-



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mellia care, see this issue’s article “What to do in the Garden.”

Fall is a wonderful time to visit Descanso Gardens, especially the Japanese Garden, whose creative layout features fall blooming *C. sasanqua*. “Descanso Gardens: A Peaceful Place” in this issue discusses the gardens, past and present.

Camellia names are fascinating. Hundreds of camellias are named for women. “Lovely Camellia Misses” in this issue describes some favorites. In addition, “Camellia Namesakes” pairs images of a camellia flower with the inspiration for its name.

The SCCS website has videos highlighting fall blooming camellias as well as why and how to gib camellias.

Fall welcomes the camellia flowering season and the resumption of in person Southern California Camellia Society meetings. The November Society meeting was a field trip to Nuccio’s Nurseries, where Jim Nuccio showed and discussed the beautiful fall blooming sun camellias.

Looking forward to seeing camellias in bloom...



‘HUGH EVANS’ AT DESCANSO GARDENS



**SPRINGTIME IN DESCANSO TULIPS
AND A RED BUD TREE**

CAMELLIA NAMESAKES

BY BRADFORD KING

Some camellias share characteristics with other objects, such as color and form, which gives them their name. In some cases, they have a symbolic connection.

‘White Bouquet’ illustrates color as a camellia named for the floral display “Bouquet.” I won ‘White Bouquet’ at a camellia society raffle. This is one way to acquire camellias that you may not have on your bucket list. A bouquet of pure white flowers can make an impressive sight. White is a positive color associated with peace and security. It is the traditional color worn by brides which was the color of the flowers my granddaughter held at her wedding.

There are a few camellias named after types of candies. Examples include: ‘Candy Cane’, a medium formal double white flower striped red; ‘Candy Apple’, a medium to large semidouble to loose peony very dark red; ‘Lemon Drop’, a miniature to small white flower with a lemon toned yellow center, and ‘Buttermint’, a miniature creamy white to pale yellow. ‘Buttermint’ has a cluster blooming formal double to rose form double flower with profuse



A WHITE WEDDING BOUQUET



‘WHITE BOUQUET’



BUTTERMINT CANDIES



'BUTTERMINT'

flowers that look like a collection of yellowy butter mints. The color, shape, and multiple blooms make us think about the sweet taste of a Buttermint candy.

'Candy Mint' and 'Peppermint Candy' have bright colorful flowers named for sweet mint flavored candies. 'Candy Mint' has a miniature to small anemone pink flower with many darker pink and red stripes on its petaloids and petals.

'Peppermint Candy' has a medium semidouble flower with bright clean red stripes and flecks on the white petals just like a peppermint candy. Most peppermint candies are white with red stripes, but the classic chocolate peppermint makes a delicious ending to a meal. Peppermint has a soothing taste that can help with digestion.

The New Year's Rose Parade usually includes 40 flower covered floats, 20 marching bands, and 17 equestrian groups with a total of 450 horses.



CANDY CANES



'CANDY CANE'



'CANDY MINT'



MINTS

This is an annual event held in Pasadena, California, that everyone should see once in person. There is a Grand Marshal selected to lead the parade. According to Wikipedia, the Disney family is the only family to have more than one member serve as Grand Marshal—Walt Disney in 1966 then his nephew Roy E. Disney in 2000. Louis Zamperini was selected as the Grand Marshal for the 2015 Tournament of Roses Parade. His life was documented in the book and movie entitled “*Unbroken*” about his imprisonment as a Japanese prisoner of war during World War II. He would die of pneumonia six months before the parade was set to begin. Rather than select a new Grand Marshal, the Tournament announced that it was “committed to honoring him as the Grand Marshal of the 2015 Rose Parade.” A riderless white horse with the stirrups backwards, a tradition to symbolize a fallen soldier, led the parade that year.



'PEPPERMINT CANDY'



PEPPERMINT CANDY



'GRAND MARSHAL'



WHITE RIDERLESS HORSE LEADING THE 2015 ROSE PARADE

The medium to large full rich deep red peony flower of 'Grand Marshal' is a top variety. The variegated form is also very desirable, especially when it has uniformed moire markings.

In 1955, Dr. Clifford Parks registered *C. reticulata* 'Crimson Candles'. It has small single rose red flower and numerous candle shaped light red buds. It is also cold hardy and booms late season on a vigorous upright plant. Since it produces many identical flowers, it does well in trays of like blooms even though it is a small single flower.

Originally crimson meant the color of the kermes dye produced from an insect—*Kermes vermilio*. Today it is typically used for a slightly purplish red color between red and rose.



'CRIMSON CANDLES'



CANDLES



'TWILIGHT'



GOLF COURSE AT TWILIGHT

Twilight is that time between night and sunrise, or between sunset and night, produced by a diffusion of sunlight which, depending on dust and moisture, has subtle color tones like the early morning image taken before any golfers take to the course. The camellia 'Twilight' has a light blush pink hue on the petals of this medium to large formal double flower.

Springtime is a joyful time of new growth brought on by increased daylight, showers, and mist. I see Mount Wilson every morning when I walk the dog. It is a peak in the San Gabriel Mountains within the Angeles National Forest in Los Angeles County, California. The summit is easily identified by the substantial number of antennae as part of the Mt. Wilson Observatory even when covered in clouds and mist on a spring morning. 'Spring Mist'



'SPRING MIST'



MT. WILSON COVERED WITH MIST



'SPRING DAZE'

has a small sweet scented semidouble blush pink to white flower. It grows vigorously upright in an open manner blooming late winter and spring. Its fragrance is sweet and light with dozens of flowers which makes it a wonderful landscape camellia.

I love the flower and the name 'Spring Daze' for this small colorful non-reticulata hybrid. The bloom is at times a formal double but more frequently an open rose form double flower.

Spring days bring warmth and life to the garden as well as increasing the human spirit. A photo captures just one moment in time. Tick Tock..., another moment of time, and there are the iconic spring tulips framed by two red bud trees in bloom at Descanso Gardens in Southern California. Tick Tock.





'MISS LILLIAN'

LOVELY CAMELLIA MISSES

BY BRADFORD KING

There are 40 *C. japonica* beginning with “Miss” of which a dozen refer to cities or beauty pageants. In addition, there are seven “Miss” *C. reticulata*, five “Miss” nonreticulata hybrids, and two “Miss” *C. sasanqua*.

Traditionally, a beauty contest focused on the physical attributes of female contestants. They have evolved to include talent, intelligence, and personality. Organizers set the standards, including age range, marital status, and clothing. Adult and teen pageants focus on makeup, hair, gowns, swimsuit modeling, and personal interviews. Camellia shows are also beauty contests judging flowers based on their size, form, color, and condition. In fact,

the best exhibitors carefully groom their entries and artfully arrange leaves as meticulously as pageant contestants do their hair and makeup.

Recently at camellia shows in the southeast, the biggest winning Miss is ‘Miss Lillian.’ She was introduced by Gordy in 2001 and awarded the Kathryn and Les Marbury Award in 2007. The small to medium formal double is creamy white with pink on the petal edges.

‘Miss Charleston Variegated’ is one of the biggest show winners in America, especially when it keeps a formal double form with a bud center. When it is a loose peony flower, it is still beautiful but not a show winner.

‘Miss Charleston Variegated’ was named to commemorate the city, which was founded in 1670 as Charles Town honoring King Charles II of England. Today, it is known for its history, well-preserved architecture, restaurants, and friendly people, all of which have made it a popular tourist destination.

There are camellias that have been introduced to honor beauty pageants and the women who compete in them. This is illustrated by ‘Miss Tulare’, a wonderful *C. reticulata* hybrid that takes its name from the Tulare County California pageant which is sponsored by Visalia Charter Oak Lion’s Club. Every year they crown a lovely young woman “Miss Tulare.” This cultivar has a beautiful large to very large bright rose red flower that can be fully peony, rose form double, or formal double. M. W. Abramson introduced this cul-

**I agree with
Claude Monet
when he said,
“I must have
flowers, always
and always.”
—Bradford King**



‘MISS CHARLESTON VARIEGATED’



‘MISS TULARE’



'Miss Ed'



'MISS SAVANNAH' Photo by Gene Phillips 'MISS LYLA' Photo by Gene Phillips

tivar in 1975. It is a seedling of *C. reticulata* 'Crimson Robe' ('Dataohong') that first bloomed in 1973. There are only a few formal double reticulata flowers or for that matter rose form doubles which is one reason this camellia is highly valued. It certainly is eye-catching when the bright red flower is in top form. It is especially beautiful when it holds its bud center.

The two *C. sasanqua* "Misses" are 'Miss Ed', which has a miniature to small light pink flower with lavender and deep pink overtones, and 'Miss Penderlea', which has a medium semidouble white flower with coral pink edges and ruffled petals.

'Miss Savannah' has a large blush semidouble flower with rounded petals that are wavy and upright in the center where they become fluted. Savannah is a grand historic town alongside the Savannah River which revolves around formal antebellum architecture and low country swamps and mammoth live oak trees tangled with Spanish moss. Judge Arthur Solomon, a Chatham County commissioner from 1914 to 1960, was an enthusiastic camellia collector. Judge Arthur Solomon is honored at Coastal Georgia Botanical Gardens at the Historic Bamboo Farm, where visitors can enjoy over 900 camellia cultivars on the Judge Arthur Solomon Camellia Trail, built by members of the Camellia Society in 2017. Judge Solomon was also a noted 20th century camellia breeder. One of his most beautiful was 'Miss Lyla' which was registered in 1961. 'Miss Lyla' has a large semidouble to rose form double white flower with pink markings. The petals are fluted and tend to swirl with some central crepe petals. It is valued for its colorful markings and large size which are not common with nonreticulata hybrids.



‘CHOJI GURUMA’

WHAT TO DO IN THE CAMELLIA GARDEN

BY BRADFORD KING

AUTUMN

Autumn, also known as fall, marks the transition from summer to winter when daylight shortens, and the temperature cools. One of its main features is colorful fall foliage. For camellia people, autumn is the beginning of the camellia season. The sun loving *C. sasanqua* spectrum cultivars begin to bloom continuing into winter. This includes the inter species crosses historically listed as *C. hiemalis* and *C. vernalis*.

The key camellia care this season is to ensure the camellias remain moist, never allowing them to dry out. It is also important to remove debris in your garden so insects, their eggs, and larva have less opportunity to survive the cold winter months.

The harvesting of camellia pods that you have observed swelling are ripening in the fall. Using an onion bag, old nylons, or a jewelry bag around the seed pod is the best way to ensure seeds are not lost. The seeds may be placed directly in a pot or a germinating container. If the parents are known, label and keep those seeds together. For example, ‘Tama no Ura’ X ‘Royal Velvet’ indicates the seed parent is the former and the latter is the pollen parent. If



'TAMA PEACOCK' WITH A BEE

you only know the seed parent, label them too, e.g., 'Frank Houser' X ?. It is interesting and helpful to know the parents. However, some of the most beautiful camellia cultivars' parents are unknown.

The bees will pollinate camellias. Seed pods have one to nine seeds that can be germinated. Chance crosses have been used by the Chinese and Japanese for hundreds of year. Likewise, this is how most of the 200 cultivars originated at Nuccio's Nurseries came to be.



A COMPARISON OF NATURAL AND GIBBED 'BUTTONS 'N BOWS'



CAMELLIA HOLIDAY COLLECTION

WINTER

Winter is the season the planet Earth is farthest from the sun bringing colder weather and shorter days. This is also the holiday season when evergreen trees and poinsettia plants are used to decorate the home. However, few plants outdoors are in bloom except camellias. Camellia lovers celebrate the flowering *C. japonica*, *C. reticulata*, and nonreticulata hybrids. Camellias are unique in that they bloom in the winter when they are dormant. This is the season most looked forward to by camellia growers.

Since there are literally thousands of camellia cultivars with beautiful flowers, there is much to enjoy. For many camellia show people, December is the month to gib camellias. This produces larger and earlier blooms.

Natural and gibbed blooms provide flowers for decorating the home in the holiday season.

JANUARY

This is the month that many *C. japonica* will begin blooming. Therefore, it is possible to begin hybridizing. A controlled cross starts with identifying a flower bud getting ready to bloom. The petals and stamens are removed, leaving the female reproductive organ intact. The stigma is located in the center of the flower and, in most cases, is slightly taller than the stamens. When a flower bud is emasculated, it looks like the photo on the following



BUD WITH POLLEN



A GRAFT

page. It is ready for pollen from the camellia chosen to be the “Pollen Parent” to be placed.

FEBRUARY

This is typically peak blooming season for *C. japonica* and nonreticulata hybrids. Some early *C. reticulata* cultivars may also begin to exhibit their flowers. It is a beautiful time to take walks in the garden. It is also a good time to collect and store pollen if you do controlled crosses. If not, why not try it this year.

One of the most important activities is to graft camellias this month. What do you need? First, healthy root stock; second, scions from the plant you wish to replicate. I graft only camellias I can't get from camellia nurseries, especially those I am evaluating from my breeding program.

SPRING

Spring is the season where the axis of the earth increasingly tilts to the sun, so the amount of daylight increases. Temperatures are warming significantly causing new plant growth to “spring forth” giving the season its name. While many flowering plants will begin blooming this time of year, generally, camellia flowering has ceased. The camellia is breaking dormancy, and leaves are feathering. New camellia foliage is typically green with some cultivars having bronze or maroon leaves that eventually turn dark green.



'TAMA PEACOCK' NEW FOLIAGE WITH LADY BUGS

While camellias require little pruning besides removing dead stems and branches, spring is a good time to prune. Besides removing dead growth, remove crossed branches and shape the plant to your liking.

This season is the time to fertilize camellias. A commercial granular fertilizer for acid loving plants is a sound choice. Apply it sparingly in order not to burn the new leaves. One of the tried-and-true fertilizers is cottonseed meal because it won't burn foliage. Others will use liquid fertilizers for acid loving plants.

SUMMER

This is the warmest of the four seasons when the days are longest and nights are shortest with day length decreasing as the season progresses. The date of the beginning of summer varies according to climate, culture, and tradition, but when it is summer in the United States and Europe, it is winter in Australia and New Zealand. Summer in the U.S. includes the months of June, July, and August when only *C. azalea*, or its hybrid seedlings, bloom. If you wish to breed using *C. azalea*, this is the time to collect pollen and store it in the freezer.



STORING POLLEN

Descanso GARDENS: *A Peaceful Place*

BY BRADFORD KING

In the fall, a stroll in the Japanese Garden at Descanso Gardens features beautiful *C. sasanqua* cultivars growing under the shade of Coast Live Oaks. Other plants include black pine, flowering cherry, and Japanese maples. It was designed by Eijiro Nunokawa and opened in 1966. A curving path that leads to the Japanese Tea House is creatively landscaped with the beautiful shell pink flowers of *C. sasanqua* 'Jean May'.

Near the tea house are several specimens of the *C. sasanqua* 'Hugh Evans' growing among Japanese lanterns. 'Hugh Evans' is noted for its abundant single pink flowers with twisted petals.

The small pond has koi fish that have been bred in Japan to be viewed from above rather than a side view like when looking at fish in an aquarium. One of the few anemone form *C. sasanqua*, 'Choji Guruma', grows on the front edge of the koi pond. The name means "wheel of anemone." The light pink flower has darker pink on the petal and petaloid edges.

Francis Uyematsu (1881-1978) came from his native Japan as a 23-year-old in 1904. He and a friend began importing



THE JAPANESE
GARDEN PATH
WITH 'JEAN MAY'
IN BLOOM





'HUGH EVANS'



'CHOJI GURUMA'



'BERENICE BODDY'

plants in 1908 from Japan to Figueroa Nursery in Los Angeles. In 1912, Francis Uyematsu moved to a five-acre lot in Montebello, California, and established a wholesale business named "Star Nursery." He was very enterprising to the point of operating four nurseries, a wholesale flower market, and experimenting with hybridizing willows, wisterias, peaches, and breeding tropical fish. Over the years, Star Nursery imported hundreds of thousands of camellias.

After Pearl Harbor and the United States entering World War II, Mr. Uyematsu was faced with internment along with other Japanese Americans, which meant the loss of his property and business. On February 22, 1942, he was visited by Manchester Boddy, newspaper publisher of Los Angeles Daily News, and Charles S. Jones, President of the Richfield Oil Company, both avid camellia collectors who wished to buy camellias for their estates in the Los Angeles area of California. Mr. Boddy got most of the named camellias. Mr. Jones got several of the unnamed seedlings, some of them in bloom. Some were named and distributed by Descanso with Jones's numbers. For example, number S101 (Star Nursery #101 seedling) became 'Berenice Boddy'. This well-known *C. japonica* was introduced

by Descanso and Jones in 1946 and was named for Manchester Boddy's wife. The beautiful semidouble flower is pale pink with deeper pink on the under petals and edges.

Mr. Uyematsu, through Star Nursery, was a major importer, propagator, and distributor of camellias in America. In American camellia history, we have individuals, commercial nurseries, and public gardens that have made significant contributions to the camellia world. One of the least known and yet most important was Mr. Uyematsu. Descanso Gardens seeks to honor his legacy.

Many of the camellias he imported are in the Descanso Gardens collection. This is illustrated here by 'Hana-Fuki' ("Wealthy and Noble Flower") which dates to 1882 in Japan. He imported this beautiful pink semidouble flower in 1930.

While most of his imports are rarely seen at camellia shows, one exception is the 'Fukurin-ikkyu' which dates to 1859 in Japan. The lovely small pink flower with darker pink stripes is appreciated by many camellia lovers. Recently a tray of three beautiful evenly matched flowers won in its class by George and Karen Harrison.

Diana Nightingale, Curator of Camellias, arranged a display table of the Star Nursery camellias in



'HANA-FUKI'



'FUKURIN-IKKYU'



CAMELLIA SPECIES DISPLAY

bloom in mid-February for the 2022 Pacific Camellia show at Descanso Gardens.

The last two years Descanso has been seeking to add to their camellia collection by adding camellia species. For example, in 2021 two dozen species were displayed as a means of educating the public to the diversity of camellias.

In 2022, 18 camellia species were donated to Descanso by Nuccio's Nurseries. One group was displayed in colorful pots under the mature tea plant *C. sinensis* in the Japanese Garden. The globe in the photo foreground shows the route of *C. reticulata* from Yunnan China to Descanso in 1948.

In this display, the ornamental species are highlighted: Higo, *C. japonica*, *C. reticulata*, and nonreticulata camellias.

The remaining two dozen were arranged in front of the Minka House, also in the Japanese Garden. The species are clearly labeled to educate and assist visitors to learn about the diversity of camellias.

The February Southern California Society speakers were Autumn Ayres, Plant Records Coordinator, and Diana Nightingale, Curator of the Camellia Collection. They reported that Descanso plans to restore the Uyematsu and Yoshimura



CAMELLIA SPECIES DISPLAY



**GLOBE SHOWING THE YUNNAN
C. RETICULATA TO DESCANSO**



CAMELLIA SPECIES DISPLAY



AUTUMN AYRES



DIANA NIGHTINGALE

camellias; restore the Yunnan *C. reticulata* which have been in serious decline; continue to add camellia species to highlight the diversity of camellias species, and to grow more of the tea and oil-bearing camellias.

Before we conclude, it should be noted that one of the highlights of Descano Gardens is seeing multiple mature camellias in full bloom. There is no better sight in the middle of winter than to see a 20-foot camellia tree covered in masses of flowers.



HIGO TREASURES FROM JAPAN:
'KYO-NISHIKI'

STORY AND PHOTO BY BRADFORD KING

The flower of 'Kyo-Nishiki' (Brocade of Japan) is white with red or pink spots and stripes. It may have purple markings at times. The medium flat flower has a mass of central stamens. It appears in *Higo Camellias* by Ghirardi on page 84, but there is typographic error in that it is labeled as 'Kyo Hishiki' yet correctly labeled in the bibliography as 'Kyo-Nishiki'. It is an ancient cultivar that mutated 'Asahi-no-minato', 'Mikuni-no-homare', and 'Jitsu-getsu-sei'.





PARTING SHOT:
LOOK-ALIKE YELLOW CAMELLIAS

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 significantly 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 Keith Brushfield, Australia.

Les Jury used 'Gwenneth Morey' as the pollen parent to get 'Jury's Yellow'. It has a lovely white anemone flower with creamy yellow petaloids that is widely grown. It blooms early to late on a compact upright plant.



'JURY'S YELLOW'

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!



'BRUSHFIELD'S YELLOW'



'GWENNETH MOREY'



'PINK-A-BOO'



'KANJIRO'