# THE CONNECTION REVIEW



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Inside Cover: 'Ferris Wheel' Photo by Bradford King
Front Cover: 'Happy Harlequin' Photo by Bradford King

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#### AN INVITATION TO JOIN

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#### THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR

### CAMELLIA GARDENS OF EXCELLENCE

By Bradford King

This winter we were blessed with much needed rain. It seemed the camellias responded well to having foliage cleaned, and flowers bloomed well. Therefore, we begin 2023 with the hope that these rain storms will end the five-year drought in California.

The cover photos in this issue highlight Nuccio's Nurseries' new introductions. The front cover is 'Happy Harlequin', registered in 2006; the inside front cover is 'Ferris Wheel', registered



in 2016, and the back cover is its sport 'Circus', introduced in 2022. The

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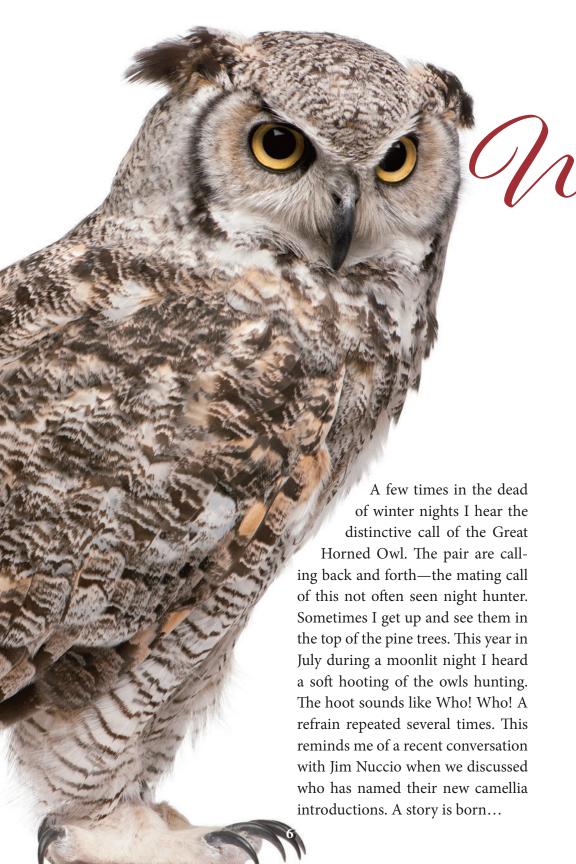
This issue contains articles that honor camellias named for Southern California cities and people named William. In addition, the wonderful Chinese Bonsai in The Huntington Chinese Garden are discussed. The photos were taken when the Southern California Camellia Society had an evening tour led by David MacLaren, curator of Asian Gardens, who retired in 2022. Tim Thibault, Curator of Woody Plants, will take over David's responsibilities as head of the camellia group for The Huntington. Tim has a strong camellia background and is a camellia friend.

The first of two other articles reports on some of the people who have named camellias, and the second highlights the most outstanding very large camellias offered through Nuccio's Nurseries.

It is a pleasure to announce that the International Camellia Society has reaccredited Descanso Gardens and The Huntington Botanical Gardens as Camellia Gardens of Excellence. Congratulations!



BONSAI GARDEN AT THE HUNTINGTON BOTANICAL GARDENS



## Mo Is THAT CALLING?

#### By Bradford King





'KATHERINE NUCCIO'

'Guilio Nuccio'

#### **CAMELLIA NAMES**

Family and friends are one of the most popular names used to honor loved ones. This is illustrated when Joe and Julius Nuccio named their first of over 200 Nuccio's Nurseries introductions for their mother. 'Katherine Nuccio' was registered in 1950.

The Nuccio brothers followed this up in 1956 by naming a large to very large coral red semidouble with irregular petals for their father. 'Giulio Nuccio' is at its best when petals stand up like "rabbit ears."

Many years later when Joe Nuccio's son Julius, called Jude to keep him from being confused for his Uncle Julius, joined the nursery full time, he looked for a camellia to honor his Dad. In 1991, they named a hybrid seedling from 'Garden Party' for him. 'Joe Nuccio' has a medium formal double orchid pink flower with distinctive incurved petals.





'IOE NUCCIO'

'Nuccio's Bella Rossa'

Julius Nuccio actively refused to allow his sons Tom and Jim and nephew Jude to name a beautiful large red formal double flower for him; consequently, they named it 'Nuccio's Bella Rossa'.

By 2014, Joe had passed away, and Julius was retired. Therefore, Jude, Tom, and Joe named a large to very large dark red semidouble with glossy petals for Julius. It became a popular show winning bloom almost immediately. Monrovia Nurseries was given the rights to propagate it.

Many camellia hybridizers have named seedlings for their wives. One of the best known of the camellias bearing the Mrs. title is 'Mrs. D. W. Davis'. Mr. Davis named this very large blush pink semidouble flower for his wife. 'Mrs. D. W. Davis' is a popular ornamental camellia that has also been used in breeding new cultivars due to its lovely color and very large size. In 1954, it was awarded the Illges Japonica Seedling Award. This bloom is still capa-



'Julius Nuccio'



'Mrs. D. W. Davis'





'BEV PIET'

'BEV PIET'S SMILE'

ble of winning points at camellia shows.

Meyer Piet, a hybridizer from Arcadia, California, named a very dark red medium *C. reticulata* hybrid for his wife Bev. It blooms late in the season and is less popular than the *C. japonica* he named 'Bev Piet's Smile'. This medium peony bloom is variegated and lights up the garden just as Bev's smile lights up her face and her husband's heart. Interestingly, this flower was registered by Konrad Hooper, a friend of Meyer's from the south, who visited him in Arcadia and obtained the seedling from him.

Rudy Moore was a camellia curator at The Huntington Botanical Gardens who also bred camellias. He named one for his son. 'Little Michael' has a miniature to small anemone blush pink flower with a lovely central mass of light blush to creamy petaloids.

Hulyn Smith was a prolific breeder from Valdosta, Georgia, who named



'LITTLE MICHAEL'



'Tudor Baby'



RENE, MANDY, AND LAUREN

camellias for many of his friends and his daughters—Rene, Mandy, and Lauren. 'Lauren Tudor' has a very large peony flower with a mass of pink and red flecks which is selected to represent his daughter. This bloom was awarded the Illges Seedling Japonica Award. Hulyn was also noted for his sense of humor, consequently, he named the small dark red formal double 'Tudor Baby'. He sometimes claimed he could never remember the child's name, but more likely the small flower was cute like the baby.

Grandchildren are cherished by their grandparents, therefore, it is no surprise that some grandparents have named new seedlings for them. Mrs. A.B. Durant of New Zealand named a medium light lavender pink semi-double hybrid for her grandson, Nicky Crisp. Durant's daughter is a physician and a camellia breeder like her mother.

Don and Mary Bergamini named a miniature to small white anemone flower with wonderful stripes of shades of pink and red for their grandson, Chris Bergamini.

#### WHO DOES THE NAMING?

When I asked Jim Nuccio, he reported that 'Moonlight Bay' and 'Prima Ballerina' were named by Bill Woodruff. Bill was the founder of the *Camellia Nomenclature* which he edited for 20 years from 1947 until 1990. In the "Old Days" at Nuccio's Nurseries, there was a Monday morning boys meeting in-





'NICKY CRISP'

'CHRIS BERGAMINI'

cluding the Nuccio men, Sergio Bracci, and Bill Woodruff. They discussed, among other things, names for camellias.

Jim stated that his father, Julius Nuccio, was the one who named 'Buttons 'N Bows', a beautiful pink small formal double *C. saluenensis* hybrid. Julius jokingly acknowledged naming it stating, "I hope this won't ruin my manly reputation."

Jim recalled that Jackie Randall from Northern California and her husband, who was an ACS Board member, were shown a miniature to small pink profusely blooming *C. rosaeflora* hybrid with rabbit ears. Jackie suggested it be named 'Bunny Ears'. Jackie has continued to support ACS and traveled to ACS and ICS congresses over the years.



'MOONLIGHT BAY'



'PRIMA BALLERINA'





'Buttons 'N Bows'

'BUNNY EARS'

Mike Hines, a long time Nuccio friend who went to high school with Tom and in later years worked at the Nursery, passed away in June 2019. He took one look at the single white flower with multiple stripes and dashes of red hues in various amounts and named it 'Kaleidoscope'. Its flowers are all different just like when looking into the changing patterns in a kaleidoscope.

In conclusion, Jim Nuccio named 'Royal Velvet'. He was taking a shower and noticed the dark red bathmat was the color of the seedling we now know as 'Royal Velvet'. Years ago, Elsie Bracci enlivened this story by humorously telling those present at the Southern California Camellia Society, "Jim was taking care of business on the throne." This is the version I am guilty of repeating as it makes a great story, but let's end with the truth. Jim was in the shower.



'Kaleidoscope'



'ROYAL VELVET'



#### 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 Los Angeles Arboretum. In 1875, Lucky Baldwin purchased 8,000 acres of Rancho Santa Anita where he cultivated the land for farming, orchards, and a ranch. He built the Queen Anne 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 1930s 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 1970s and 80s from Meyer's home. They registered 16 new reticulata hybrids, most of which were named for family members. In 1979, he named a salmon pink very large semidouble *C. reticulata* flower for his hometown.

#### **COVINA**

This small city with beautiful mountain views of the San Gabriel Mountains began as a coffee plantation. Coffee proved to be an 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, and 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 *C. 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.



'COVINA'



#### SAN DIMAS

The name comes from San Dimas 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 Jesus' crucifixion asking to be remembered when Jesus come into his kingdom.

Like the other cities and towns in the San Gabriel Valley, wheat and other Midwestern 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.

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 watermarks 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, loved the location, and purchased it 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 *C. 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.





## hinese Sonsai

HE HUNTINGTON BOTANICAL GARDENS

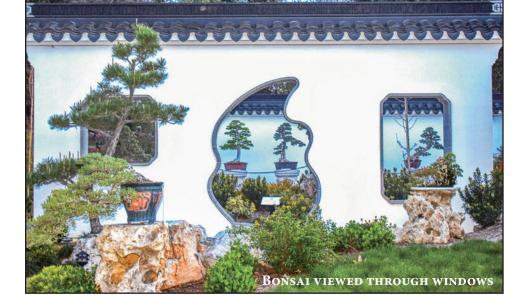
By Bradford King

Penjing (Chinese Bonsai) originated in China 1300 years ago. Penjing means a scene in a container. Originally, only the elite in China developed bonsais and gave them as gifts. Buddhist monks brought bonsai to Japan 500 years ago where it became a popular art form. A hundred years ago, bonsai came to America where typically the Japanese form of bonsai are grown. Therefore, it is a delight to see a collection of penjing bonsai in "The Garden of Flowering Fragrance" (Liu Fang Yuan) in the area called Verdant Microcosm in The Huntington Botanical Camellia Gardens.

One of the crucial features of a Chinese garden is placement and viewing of plants. This is illustrated by the impressive bonsai strategically placed where they are first viewed through windows and the creatively formed entrance of the Verdant pavilion.

These bonsai are living sculptures of trees strategically placed against a white wall where they can be intimately observed.

There are several dozen more ev-



ergreen bonsai placed around this garden. They are all beautifully formed. Many are in the formal and informal upright bonsai style with a few slanting specimens. They are all much larger than the classic Japanese style bonsai. They are trained for years through pruning and careful cutting of limbs; wiring is not used in shaping *penjing* bonsai.

Five bonsai and several pines are displayed around a lighted oval entrance where a limestone rock from China is seen. This picture captures the beautiful placement of bonsai, rocks, and plants around structures which makes us appreciate the Huntington's vision of a classic Chinese garden.



THE BONSAI AGAINST A WHITE WALL

#### MY NAME IS WILLIAM; CALL ME BILL

#### By Bradford King

William is an English name with a history dating back a thousand years to Germany where it meant a "strong willed warrior." It became popular in England due to William the Conqueror. William has continued to be a popular name ranked number five in America in 2020. While many men named Wil-

lian are known as Will or Willy, most go by Bill. The name Willamina is a parallel female name with many women preferring to be called Billie.

An important camellia person name William was Dr. William Ackerman. Bill studied plant genetics at the University of Maryland, receiving his PhD authoring a camellia thesis. He was one of the early breeders of fragrant camellias and a pioneer hybridizer of cold hardy camellias. He wrote *Growing Camellias in Cold* 



'WILLIAM HERTRICH'

Climates in 2002 and Beyond the Camellia Belt in 2007 which articulates the breeding, propagating, and growing of cold hardy camellias. However, no camellia has been named for him.

There are three men and a woman who loved camellias, lived in Southern California, and have camellias named for them. They are William Hertrich, Bill Goertz, Bill Woodruff, and Billie McCaskill. The camellias named for them are illustrated here because they are seldom seen and are worthy blooms.

William Hertrich was superintendent of The Huntington Botanical Gardens from 1903 to 1948 and was instrumental in building the camellia collection. In 1954, he published a hardcover well illustrated book with full page black and white photos of 249 cultivars growing in the Huntington. In 1963,



'BILL GOERTZ VARIEGATED'



'BILL WOODRUFF'



'BILLIE McCaskill'

Howard Asper, a noted hybridizer, named a very large deep cherry red *C. reticulata* hybrid to honor him.

'Bill Goertz' is a very large semidouble red camellia with wavy notched petals introduced by Bill Goertz, Duarte, California, in 1986. It is a cross between *C.reticulata* 'William Hertrich' and *C. japonica* 'Clark Hubbs'. It is one of many red camellias that, when variegated, become even more attractive.

Bill Woodruff was the founder of the "Camellia Nomenclature" published by the Southern California Camellia Society. This book serves as the official nomenclature for the American Camellia Society which brought order and stability to camellia shows. He served as its editor for the first 20 editions from 1947 to 1990. Nuccio's Nurseries honored him in 1989 by naming a very large scarlet *C. reticulata* seedling 'Bill Woodruff'. This was a perfect choice, as he was noted for proclaiming a winning show camellia needs to be big and red.

Vern McCaskill, through his nursery McCaskill Gardens, introduced 70 new camellias. Many, like 'Star Above Star', 'Demi-tasse', 'Kewpie Doll', and 'Waltz Time Variegated', are great camellias that are seen in local gardens and at camellia shows. Less well known is the medium semidouble pink flower 'Billie McCaskill'. Vern introduced 'Billie McCaskill' to honor his wife.



#### OUTSTANDING Very Large C. Japonica Blooms

By Bradford King

When camellia flowers are more than five inches across, they are a remarkable sight surrounded by their dark green leaves. There is a dozen of these very large flowers listed in the Nuccio's Nurseries catalog (2022-2023). Four of them have been awarded the prestigious Illges Seedling Japonica Award by the American Camellia Society. They are 'R.L. Wheeler' in 1954; 'Mrs. D. W. Davis' in 1959; 'Show Time' in 1987, and 'Moonlight Bay' in 1997.

'R. L. Wheeler' was introduced by Central Georgia Nurseries, Macon, Georgia, from seed of unknown parents gathered in the garden of Dr. W. G. Lee, a well-known camellia lover from Macon. I had the opportunity to visit

this home garden when it was purchased by an American Camellia Society consultant who held a reception for ACS. Interestingly, it is across the street from Dr. Walter Homeyer's home where he bred camellias like 'Frank Houser'. Walter's nextdoor neighbor was Dr. Frank Houser. Three great camellia icons in one Mobile neighborhood. Wow!

'R. L. Wheeler' has a rose pink semidouble to anemone formed flower with thick petals. It has continued to be a popular camellia here in California as well as in the southeast where it was registered. Today we can see an excellent specimen in the North Vista at The Huntington Botanical Gardens.

In 1954, Mr. Davis named a very large blush pink semidouble flower for his wife. 'Mrs. D. W. Davis' is a popular ornamental camellia that has also been used in breeding new cultivars due to its lovely color and very large size. It was known as the million-dollar baby in the 1950s when it brought high prices. It is seen at local camellia shows when entered by Libbie and Susan Stull whose father planted it years ago in their garden in Bakersfield.

I find it interesting and frustrating that only the initials are used in the names of 'R. L. Wheeler', 'Mrs. D. W. Davis', and 'Dr. W. G. Lee'. While this was a usual practice in the 1950s, it leaves us wondering does "R" stand for Robert and "D" for Dorothy and "W' for Walter, common names in the 1950s or?

In 1978, Nuccio's registered 'Show Time' which is widely grown here in its home state but also in the southeast where it wins points at camellia shows. The clear light pink semidouble flower has lovely fluted petals. Its photo was taken in Descanso Gardens where it was grafted onto large rootstock by Tom Gilfoy who went to camellia heaven in January 2023.



'Mrs. D. W. Davis'



'SHOW TIME'





'MOONLIGHT BAY'

'KATIE'

'Moonlight Bay' is a 1982 Nuccio's introduction. The flower resembles a full moon with its very large pale pink semidouble flower. Bill Woodruff, the editor of the *Camellia Nomenclature* from1947 to 1990, named this bloom at one of the weekly Monday morning "men's meetings" at Nuccio's. These gatherings included Sergio Bracci who commented at a Society meeting that he cut his plant down as it didn't grow well. Sergio was a mentor, so I took his advice and removed mine. This was a big mistake, and one of the few times Sergio was wrong! In the right place it grows vigorously upright with a long blooming season.

Some of Nuccio's Nurseries other very large camellia introductions are widely grown and seen at camellia shows. Joe and Julius, co-founders of Nuccio's Nurseries, named their first camellia 'Katherine Nuccio' for their mother. However, she was called Katie and loved large flowers. Therefore, in 1978 they named a large seedling from 'Drama Girl' for her. 'Katie' has a semidouble coral rose pink flower which looks stylish on a bushy upright plant. 'Katie Variegated' is its showy variegated form. I have grown both for years enjoying their flowers and taking their pictures every year for over 25 years. When I registered my first camellia introduction, I called it 'Little Katie' named for our Shih tzu. The flower is a red small to medium semidouble to loose peony with yellow stamens. It blooms profusely early to midseason on a spreading bushy landscape plant. Katie enjoys eating camellia flowers, even her namesake, which annoys "Her Mother."

'Grand Prix' has a very large brilliant red irregular semidouble flower which grows on a vigorous upright plant that blooms midseason. Petals have





'KATIE VARIEGATED

KATIE EATING 'LITTLE KATIE'

excellent texture which means the petal surface is rippled with thin raised lines due to the ruffled petals with slightly raised veins. It was my first choice 30 years ago when I landscaped our home with camellias. It has reliably bloomed every year. It becomes huge when gibbed.

Nuccio's has introduced three very large white camellias. 'Silver Triumph' has a semidouble flower with golden stamens and 'Silver Cloud' has an irregular peony flower whose stamens are intermingled with its twisted petals. Tom Nuccio's favorite is 'Silver Waves' because of its large pure white semidouble flower with wavy petals and a mass of golden stamens. It blooms early to midseason on a vigorous bushy upright plant with dark shiny foliage. It has a cozy place in my garden where I can see it very day.



'GRAND PRIX'



'SILVER WAVES'



#### **SPECIES:**

#### C. TACHANGENSIS

By Bradford King

The small pretty blush to white single flower has 5 or 6 petals with yellow stamens. It can grow to 20 feet in height. It is found in evergreen, broad-leafed, and coniferous forests at elevations from 2000 to 7500 feet in eastern Yunnan province and northwestern Guangxi. It is used to make tea in China.

While not frequently grown in America, a nice specimen can be found in The Huntington Botanical Gardens where this photo was taken. It was in full bloom in December.

#### HIGO TREASURES FROM JAPAN:

#### 'KAKEHASHI'

#### STORY AND PHOTO BY BRADFORD KING

The classy white flower of 'Kakehashi', with slender red stripes, has five slightly wavy petals and a mass of 100 to 140 stamens. It is an old camellia that blooms midseason. The name means "suspension bridge." While I am a fan of the picturesque names given to many Japanese camellias, this one is a puzzle to me... do the stripes represent posts and the pedestals on the bridge? What do you imagine?





#### **PARTING SHOT:**

### LOVELY CLUSTER BLOOMING CAMELLIAS

By Bradford King

Modern hybridizers have sought to develop cluster blooming hybrids. All of them have a profusion of miniature or small flowers and look wonderful as cut flowers arranged artfully in a vase. They are not usually seen in camellia shows but are cherished in the garden for their masses of pretty buds and flowers. This "Parting Shot" article highlights four examples of cluster blooming camellias available in camellia nurseries.

'Bunny Ears' has a miniature to small semidouble pink flower with rabbit ears. This *C. rosaeflora* hybrid blooms in a vigorous bushy upright manner in mid to late season and is bred by Nuccio's Nurseries. Multiple flowers bloom up and down the stems which look lovely in a vase. 'Elina Cascade' has a profusion of tiny pink buds and very small white flowers that bloom in



'ELINA CASCADE' PLANT IN BLOOM

clusters up and down its slender pendulous branches in late winter and early spring. It is a *C. tsaii* cultivar registered in 1996. The very small, shiny green leaves are pretty all year long on the slender branches that sweep down to form a neat, pretty foliage camellia shrub. New foliage has a lovely bronze hue in the spring.

'Fairy Blush' has a fragrant single miniature flower the color of apple blossoms. The attractive bud is bright pink. The plant grows vigorously in an upright manner and blooms early to late season. This profuse bloomer is a *C. lutchuensis* seedling bred by Mark Jury of New Zealand and is propagated by Monrovia Nurseries.

'Snow Drop Cascade' has a miniature white flower that shades to pink on the petal edges. The single to semidouble flowers bloom profusely on a spreading plant early to midseason. It was registered in Australia in 2005 by Steve Campbell. The mass of flowers makes a beautiful display. It is a seedling of 'Snow Drop', a cross of *C. pitardii variety pitardii* and *C. fraterna*. 'Snow Drop Cascade' inherited the cluster blooming trait from *C. fraterna* and the white flowers toned pink from *C. pitardii variety pitardii*.



'SNOW DROP CASCADE'

#### Nuccio's Nurseries 2022-23 introductions



'BIG WHEEL'

'Plugged in Purple'



'CIRCUS'