

**THE**

# *Camellia Review*

**July**

**1957**

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**SCCS**

**Vol. 18**

**No. 8**

*Fifty Cents*



# *Southern California Camellia Society Inc.*

An organization devoted to the advancement of the Camellia for the benefit of mankind—physically, mentally, and inspirationally.

The Society holds open meetings on the Second Tuesday of every month, November to April, inclusive at the San Marino Women's Club House, 1800 Huntington Drive, San Marino. A cut-camellia blossom exhibit at 7:30 o'clock regularly precedes the program which starts at 8:00.

Application for membership may be made by letter. Annual dues: \$5.00.

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 Meetings held 1st Monday of month, October through April, alternating between  
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# Camellia Reviewer

ELIZABETH BEEBE

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## No Chitchat

This is not the time nor is there room in this issue for a long Reviewer of pleasant camellia chit chat. This month we have endeavored to cram a wealth of camellia material into these pages, information that although timely, will live beyond chit chat. And working over the membership list we felt again (as we did when we published it for the first time two and a half years ago) that it will be a revelation to our readers, to say nothing of serving them well. We hope there will be bits of real information in these pages and suggestions that will spur you, our readers, on to experimentation and the realization of camellias that will meet your most rigorous standards and satisfy your highest desires. We shall be proud if the Review will be a part of the forward trend.

We are not worried about the Camellias, for we have a suspicion that they will go along with everything — Malathion; Gibberellic Acid; compost of pine needles or peanut hulls; soils technically treated or as Nature provides; and perhaps twirl a petal at all the fuss. And as a reward some of them will be so beautiful as to make you catch your breath, and others so sweetly commonplace that they remind you that though there are heights to be scaled, one must live for the most part on ordinary routine.

We are not worried either that Camelliaphiles are tired of working with their darlings for enthusiasm seems to bubble up from more places than we can count. From New Zealand to Virginia for instance, as Milton Brown, Ex-President of the Potomac Society writes that their 1957 Show showed a tremendous stride

forward in that of the 152 varieties exhibited, *all* were grown in the immediate area. There were many formal doubles too, he says, disproving the old wives' tale that singles and semi-singles are best for colder climates. We are interested in noting that the Potomac president's gavel is fabricated from the wood of a 'Hibiscus Blush' (from Dave Strother's garden) and made by Dr. John Nunamaker of Arlington.

Take it all around, this may be the lazy season for camellias but bless their hearts, they are responsible for a heap o' bustling on the part of those interested in them.

## California Echo

We simple cannot resist taking a bit more space to report what certainly will stand out as the prize camellia boo-boo of the year. Some unknown caption writer who works for the Sea Coast Echo, a newspaper of Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, noted beneath a picture of participants in the Gulfport Camellia Show, quote: "the American Camellia Society's 'All American' Camellia, the beautiful bright yellow 'Cinderella'." This stunning double error brought a long and wrathful letter from Arthur Brown, Editor of the American Camellia Society's Yearbook, explaining that the American Camellia Society had no connection with the All America Camellia Selections and also that the reporter must have been color blind. On the same page with Mr. Brown's letter, the Echo's editor who obviously knows nothing whatever about camellias, and is unaware of the thousands of intelligent camelliaphiles, wrote a breezy and ironic editorial entitled "Tempest in a Teapot." In this he accused Mr. Brown of being "ungenerous, petty and sharply discourteous," and was surprised at Mr. Brown's ignorance of the fact that captions are often written long after the photograph was

*(Continued on Page 36)*

## CARYLL PITKIN IS NEW S C C S PRESIDENT



The newly elected President of the Southern California Camellia Society is shown here with Mrs. Pitkin in their own extensive camellia garden.

A camelliophile of many years' standing, Mr. Pitkin is a long time member of the society, serving it in various capacities, including those of Program Chairman and Society Director. His present position as President he declares to be the highlight of his camellia-life, eclipsing even his chairmanship of last year's joint Camellia Show which was an undisputed success.

Asking Mrs. Pitkin how much time her husband spends with his camellias, she responded quickly, "all his waking hours at home." Her part in the camellia culture is watering, disbudding and pruning — the latter done when her husband is not looking for she says he "just can't bear to cut his plants."

This combination of duties has paid off handsomely in the satisfaction of receiving many "firsts" for Mr. Pitkin. However, he says carelessly that he just throws his ribbons in a drawer in the dresser.

The Review suspects that that particular drawer nevertheless may well hold a vital part of the background for a successful reign of Caryl Pitkin as President of the Southern California Camellia Society.

# CAMELLIAS AND SUMMER SUN

By HELEN DOBSON BROWN

It is quite generally recognized that camellias need heat and light, not only for proper growth and bud set, but for flowers worth the trouble of growing. In addition, other factors, such as drainage, soil, wind exposure, and moisture must be favorable for desirable and satisfying results. All of these are so interrelated that it is difficult if not impossible to talk of one without at least being cognizant of the others; and all must be considered, it seems to me, primarily from the standpoint of the location of the plant in relation to the sun. I am speaking of those camellias grown out of doors, of course.

Having stated the premise of this article, let me also establish my viewpoint. I am strictly an amateur camellia fancier, who shares with my husband, a home, a small greenhouse, and several hundred camellias on an average city lot in Sacramento, California. In other words, this is not a scientific treatise; but merely some personal opinions based on personal experience on the subject of the sun as a challenging summer problem—and location as the primary factor of control.

I have no quarrel whatever with those growers who contend that camellias will grow in full sun. But from our experience, trying to grow camellias in full sun here in the Sacramento valley, without even partial protection in summer, is like forcing your children to do everything the hard way. Some camellias will survive full sun treatment, but we have seen only a few in full sun which would be considered good specimens. And seldom do plants in full sun produce outstanding or even consistently good flowers.

Whenever someone asks me about growing camellias in full sun, I cannot help but ask some of the following questions:

Just why do you wish to grow your camellias in full sun?

Is the sunny location you have in mind the only space available; and if it is, do you object to an attractive partial shelter such as lath?

Do you wish to prove camellias will grow in full sun; or do you want outstanding camellia blooms?

For eight or nine years, for the sake of experiment, we have been trying to grow camellias in the front of our house which faces west. I say trying, advisedly, because during that time a number of the plants just simply did not survive, even with partial shade supplied by large trees from midafternoon to sundown. Of course, as always, drainage, soil, and insufficient moisture may have at least partially influenced the results, in spite of special precautions taken to avoid this possibility.

But even the plants which have survived are not, so far, good specimens of their variety. In every case, the same variety in another part of the garden with better exposure, is superior in form, foliage, and flower.

Here in the Sacramento valley we have the variation of climate which seems particularly conducive to fine foliage and beautiful blossoms. Our warm summer days appear to be the key to satisfactory growth and bud set. This heat, however, also provides the camellia gardener with a challenging problem as far as location and adequate watering is concerned.

If you live in a similar climate, and if your objective is a good plant and worth while flowers, it is safest to select a location in your garden which affords partial shade for your camellia after two o'clock in the afternoon. One of the following exposures is excellent: An east side with full morning sun and afternoon shade;

## AWARD ANNOUNCED

William E. Wylam, Chairman of the Hertrich Awards Committee, makes the following announcement, quote:

"The Hertrich Awards Committee met May 14, 1957 to determine the winners for the current season.

"The seedling *C. japonica* 'Billie McCaskill', developed by McCaskill Gardens, received the highest point scores in the judging and, therefore, is announced the winner of the Margarete Hertrich Award for the 1956-57 blooming season.

"No mutations were entered or judged for the William Hertrich Award."

Mr. Wylam adds a personal comment, quote:

"While not to be classed as a large Camellia, 'Billie McCaskill' attracts instant attention by reason of the beautifully shaded soft pink colors and the superlative touch of distinction added by the delicately fimbriated petals. The whole bloom possesses that certain indefinable something which, for lack of a better term, we sometimes call 'class.'

"In my opinion, it is the most outstandingly distinctive Camellia introduction of the last ten years. Our sincere compliments to both the Camellia and the Lady for winning the Margarete Hertrich Award for 1957."

### SUMMER SUN *Continued*

continuous half sun and shade the whole day under lath or high branching trees; or northern exposure which is shady in the afternoon.

Many growers rely on mulches to offset burning and drying of surface roots. But a mulch will not compensate for a poor location in the first place; neither will a mulch prevent burning of the leaves due to over-exposure to hot summer afternoon sun.

A few hours of summer sun during midday seems unlikely to damage a judiciously chosen variety of camellia if other factors such as drainage and soil are favorable, and if the plant is given sufficient water. Avoid, however, planting any camellia in front of a wall which gets full sun in the afternoon for even a few hours. The reflected rays of the sun will actually give your plant double exposure.

Sometimes an exposure can be arranged. For instance, we arranged a northern exposure facing our garden

by placing a grapestake fence along the property line at the south. Often a less than ideal site can stimulate ingenuity and result in an unusually attractive effect. Even a lathhouse or a lath structure, when planned with imagination, can be charming addition to your garden—at the same time being practical and functional.

No doubt it is obvious by now that we do not recommend full sun exposure for any camellia in climate such as ours. However, in our experience, we have found the following varieties to withstand more sun than others without leaf burn: 'Ville De Nantes,' 'Fred Sander,' 'Gigantea,' 'Pink Perfection,' 'Colletti,' 'Lindsay Neill,' 'Paeoniaeflora,' 'Mrs. Charles Cobb,' 'Elegans,' 'Lady Clare,' and 'Kumasaka.' The newly introduced 'Cinderella' may be expected to join the list, since it is a sport of 'Fred Sander.' And of course there are many new varieties on the market which are as yet untested and unproved in the respect.

# CHLOROSIS IN CAMELLIAS AND A POSSIBLE METHOD OF CONTROL

By JOHN ROBINSON

The need of supplying the minor elements in the nutrition of Camellias has been a controversial subject for a great number of years. There have been those that have held that a sufficiency of the minor or trace elements is available in the soil at all times. Others have felt that there were not sufficient quantities of these minor elements in the soil or if they were present they were unavailable.

Hume in his book "Camellias—Kinds and Culture" states, in discussing the minor elements: "Their absence from the soil is usually indicated by the lack of proper development of green coloring matter (chlorophyll) in the foliage. This condition is referred to as chlorosis, and a definite pattern often follows for each substance that is absent entirely or present in short supply. Intake and use of iron appears to be affected seriously and this is reflected in lack of green coloring in the foliage." Recently a great deal of study has been given to the need for the minor elements by plants. It has been fairly well established now that plants do need minor elements to thrive and do their best, however, unlike nitrogen or phosphorus, they need them only in very small quantities. According to recent reports these elements are available in sufficient amount in the Western soils with the possible exception of iron. That is, a sufficient quantity of these lesser nutrients is there, providing the conditions are such that they are available to the plant.

In the 1953 American Camellia Yearbook, Johnstone says, "Camellias apparently need more iron, and possibly manganese, than most other plants, therefore they do best in a pH of 5.0 to 5.5. If somehow Camellias could get sufficient iron and manganese in a pH of 6.0 to 7.0, they should thrive best at this range." Since Camellias are known to be acid-loving plants it has been standard procedure for years to give a sick or yellow foliage Camellia an application of soil sulfur or some other acidifying

medium. What we were actually trying to do was to get the pH down below 5.0 where iron and manganese are at their maximum availability. In giving this remedy, an overdose was not uncommon and the pH was lowered to such an extent that the plant either died or struggled along until the pH rose more toward neutral either by leaching of the soil or by the action of alkaline water. A disadvantage, of course, of lowering the pH of the soil to 5.0 or below is that at this level the availability of the major nutrients—nitrogen, phosphorus, and potash—drop off sharply.

Several years ago articles started appearing in the technical scientific journals on the use of iron chelates for the prevention of chlorosis in citrus and orchard trees. "Chelate," the chemist says, means "claw." In other words, an iron chelate molecule is one where the iron is surrounded as by a claw, and thereby protected from destruction or oxidation. These articles were of a great deal of interest to me for in my collection there were a number of plants that were in a sickly condition and appeared to have chlorosis. These plants had been given the usual treatment as recommended in the books on Camellia culture such as repotting, conditioning with an acidifying agent, and the application of iron sulfate. After each of these remedies was applied the plants showed improvement for a period of time but sooner or later would lapse back into their chlorotic



or semichlorotic condition. On the premise that what was good for the citrus trees *might* be equally good for Camellias I went in search of an iron chelate compound. It soon developed that this was not an easy material to find. Nursery supply dealers as a rule had not even heard of the material. While discussing this problem with Julius Nuccio of Nuccio's Nursery, it developed that they had a product for experimental use on Camellias and Azaleas. Their material contained 3.25% nitrogen from ammonium sulfate, 14.2% iron from iron sulfate, and a chelating agent. A small amount of this material was obtained and given to the ailing plants according to directions—one tablespoon per gallon of water every two weeks.

This treatment was started in the Summer between the two cycles of growth. The first growth cycle on the sick plants had been very short, amounting to two or three very yellowed, poorly developed leaves. The second cycle of growth came out quite normally and was approximately twice that of the first cycle.

The results of this first and uncontrolled experiment with the material was so encouraging that a larger quantity of the material was then obtained and monthly feedings were given to all of the plants in the collection. The blooms the following winter were of better quality and size than previously, but this could have been due to a number of other factors such as general weather conditions or the fact that the plants were one year older. The feeding schedule using Nuccio's stabilized iron was carried on at regular monthly intervals throughout the next twelve months and the plants seemed to be in such good condition that it was decided as an experiment to eliminate the usual Spring and Summer feeding of a regular balanced fertilizer. The blooms the following year were larger

and had better substance than the previous year, and the condition of the plants was so good that a number of Camellia hobbyists commented on them and inquired what treating program was being used.

Shortly after this, in the Spring, our family moved; and it became necessary to discontinue the regular feeding program. During the following Summer and Fall the plants received two applications of a balanced fertilizer and sporadic applications of stabilized iron whenever time permitted. The blooms last winter, I feel, were greatly inferior to those of the two previous years, which could have been partially due to the moving of the plants to a new and more shaded environment.

In summarizing this material, for a Camellia to get sufficient iron and manganese, the pH of the soil should be approximately 5.0, however, at this point the availability of the major nutrients is greatly reduced. If iron can be supplied in a form that is available to the plant at a pH of 6.0 to 7.0 then the plant will be growing under the best conditions possible. Until recently it has been difficult to supply sufficient iron to a Camellia at this pH level, however, now with the chelating compounds available, it appears that this difficulty has been overcome.

All of the foregoing are the conclusions I have drawn from the studies made of this subject and observations of very uncontrolled experimentation. Controlled tests using the chelates should give more information as to their effectiveness in Camellia culture as well as the amounts required. It is hoped that in about two years the results of a controlled test I am running for Crown Zellerbach Corporation with their chelate, Greens 26, will give us this helpful data.

# CAMELLIA TROUBLES IN GREAT BRITAIN

By CHARLES PUDDLE

There are very few pests and diseases which attack camellias when they are grown in the open in Britain, and most of our serious troubles are confined to plants grown under glass. In the warmer regions of the south-western seaboard, Scale is sometimes found on plants in the open garden, but never reaches serious proportions. Flower Blight is unknown and Die Back only occurs on rare occasions.

Most outdoor camellias are planted in woodlands and especially where beech and birch predominate, foliage is often damaged by Vine Weevils. The removal of regular notches from the leaf margin weakens the plant and causes serious disfigurement to the lovely foliage. Leaves are also holed by the Clay Coloured Weevil and under oaks the characteristic leaf-roll damage of Tortrix Moths occurs. All these pests are repelled by spraying the foliage with a stomach poison such as Lead Arsenate. This must not be applied in strong sunlight; the wash must be constantly agitated, and the spray kept clear of any edible crops. If the Weevil attacks are serious, proprietary poison baits are available.

The most prevalent disorder of camellias in the open is "Bud Drooping." There are many factors which contribute to the seriousness of this trouble, but in Britain the condition is aggravated by the very rapid changes which are typical of our climate. Although Bud Drop largely occurs in the Spring, I feel we must look to the climatic conditions prevailing during the previous summer and autumn for the main cause of the trouble. A prolonged drought or excessive wet period in late summer or autumn when bud development is reaching its final stages appears to prevent the normal setting of the flower buds and when they begin to grow after a period of dormancy during the winter, they fall off. Providing the summer and autumn weather conditions are normal, severe spring frosts have little effect on bud shedding. There are of course some var-

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ieties which we prone to this disorder and others which produce so many flower buds that some natural thinning is necessary and in this case the fall can be compared with the June drop of apples. Bull Heading on the other hand is not troublesome and this disorder appears to be more serious in warmer climates.

Under glass the chief pests are Scale, Mealy Bugs, Thrips, Aphids and Red Spider. The first line of defense against all these pests is good cultivation, the thorough syringing or hosing of the foliage with soft water whenever conditions permit and a regular spraying programme. Another precaution is to isolate plants and scions obtained from outside sources until they have been subjected to an intensive inspection and treatment where necessary.

Camellia Scale is perhaps the most widespread and if allowed to get established, the countless insects covering both leaves and branches seriously weaken the plant. Volck or any good white oil emulsion spray applied with force on a dull day when the temperature is not too low will usually give good results and should be repeated at fortnightly intervals as necessary. Although closely related to Scale, Mealy Bugs are a little more difficult to eradicate due to their waxy excretion. Similar methods of control are used but the application of the spray must be most thorough and forceful so as to penetrate the protective covering of the bugs.

Aphids are usually troublesome on

































































































































