

THE  
*Camellia*  
REVIEW

A Publication of the Southern California Camellia Society



*Japonica 'Dixie Knight Supreme'*

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physically, mentally and inspirationally.

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### **THE CAMELLIA REVIEW**

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## COVER PHOTO

Japonica 'Dixie Knight Supreme'—variegated form of 'Dixie Knight'  
Deep Red heavily moire White. (U.S. 1961—Wheeler)  
Photo by Mel Belcher

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## THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR



At our home in La Verne we have 37 semi-mature fruit and nut trees plus multiple vines of blackberries, kiwi and grapes. Except for the kiwi and grapes, the fruit set this year has been much heavier than normal. Even the macadamia nut tree is loaded. Why is the fruit set so much heavier than normal? The answer is simple—last winter the number of "chilling hours" (hours of temperature below 45°F) was adequate to stimulate the dormant tree to "rise and shine" and set plenty of fruit. Consequently, the apricots, peaches, nectarines, plums, apples and Asian pears had excessive fruit set. This condition is good and bad. Excessive fruit set results in many small fruits rather than fewer large spectacular fruits. So, I spent many

hours "thinning" the excess fruit in order to get impressive size.

What has this to do with camellias? I maintain that there is a correlation in the stimuli agent of fruit trees and camellia trees in the whole arena of culture. If this hypothesis is correct, why can't we extrapolate the for certain temperature stimulus in fruit tree response to camellia trees.

This should be a good year to at least observe the response, if any, to a verified cooler winter just past. Certainly, my camellias have a good bud set and I expect to spend much time "thinning" the buds.

I plan to re-read Step #8 of the "Twelve Steps to the Head Table" because Disbudding is just as important as thinning fruit if we hope to get impressive blooms. I am predicting that this will be an exceptional season for camellias—primarily because of weather conditions and, with all fingers crossed, that the coming winter will be compassionate.

Incidentally, I plan to have in the next issue of The Review an article on how temperature effects camellias but, for today, you will appreciate Dr. Roy Tomson's article on disbudding.

You read Shigeo Matsumoto's article on bonsai camellias in the last Review. In this issue you will enjoy learning about the history of the higo camellia which became so popular as a bonsai plant.

—Mel Belcher



## CAMELLIA STATIONERY

Our beautiful camellia notecards (back cover) are still available in sets of eight for \$6.00 including tax and shipping. Folks who use them and re-order tell us how truly lovely they are. They make wonderful gifts for your fellow camellia lovers or those you are trying to get interested in this great hobby! You can even order them for your own use. They also look beautiful in frames.

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## CALIFORNIA CAMELLIA-RAMA - NOVEMBER 2-3-4, 2001

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2**—This is the year that the ACS visits Camellia Rama. The ACS Board of Directors will meet during the day. Friday evening we will have our usual Camellia Hospitality Room. There will be all kinds of snacks and drinks for everyone's pleasure. This is the time that hobbyists from throughout the country can rub elbows with their camellia friends and exchange greetings and tips on camellia culture!!

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3** - This is Fun and Culture Day. Blooms may be entered in the Camellia Show room for an hour beginning at 8:00 a.m. This is an "Open" show and there is no limit to the number of blooms that an exhibitor may enter in Japonica, Reticulata, Non-Reticulata Hybrid and Species classes. Don't forget the little ones—they compete in a special small-miniature class. There are six best of class awards and an additional award for "Best of Show." Registration also begins at 8:00 a.m.

The morning session of the Camellia Symposium begins at 9:30 and once again we have an outstanding group of speakers. From California we have Gordon Goff, Jack Mandarich, Jim Randall and Richard Schulhof, Director of Descanso Gardens. The out-of-state speakers from the ACS are Ann Walton and Hulyn Smith, from George, and Bob Stroud from Louisiana. Hulyn will distribute numerous items from his work in research as he did four years ago. Ann and Bob will conduct a workshop offering suggestions to local societies on how to increase memberships. Ann will also display various items from the ACS Gift Shop including suggestions for show awards. At noon we will have a delightful buffet luncheon. After lunch we will all vote for "Best of Show" blooms.

Hospitality champagne begins at 6:30 p.m. with, of course, all the wonderful costumes that people bring. Don't fret if you are not in costume—costumes are optional and voluntary. This year's theme is **AROUND THE WORLD**. Use your imagination. We have numerous prizes for a number of costume categories such as "most authentic," "funniest," etc. The costume prizes will be awarded at the dinner that will include live music and dancing! The evening will end with our traditional "World's Greatest Raffle" and "Awesome Drawing."

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 4**—The Smugglers famous Farewell Champagne Brunch begins at 8:30 a.m. so that everyone can get an early start to a safe journey home.

**Start the 2001-2002 camellia season in Fresno  
and enjoy Camellia Fun and Culture**

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# CAMELLIA -RAMA REGISTRATION

## FORM 1

<b>ENTIRE PACKAGE</b>		_____ \$58.00 each	_____
	Registration	_____ 6.00 each	_____
<b>Saturday</b>	Luncheon	_____ 12.00 each	_____
	Dinner	_____ 30.00 each	_____
<b>Sunday</b>	Brunch	_____ 10.00 each	_____

**Please include checks with registration - payable to California Camellia-Rama**

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# THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HIGO CAMELLIA

An extract from an article by Taizo Hiratsuka, President of the Higo Camellia Society

Translator E. P. Young

## The Recovery of A Splendid Tradition

There are some Japanese who carried on the tradition of cherishing the camellia despite the turning away from old customs during Japan's modernizing period. By dint of their effort and enthusiasm, the appreciation of the camellia has been revived, and the beauty of the camellia flower is once more recognized by the Japanese. Especially in certain centers such as Tokyo, Kyoto and the City of Kumamoto on the island of Kyushu, the cultivation of the camellia is as popular as at any time in Japanese history. In Kumamoto, the particular form cultivated is the Higo camellia. Higo is the old name for the area which is now Kumamoto Prefecture.

During the period of the rule of the Shogun, the government of Higo was administered by Samurai. Although the Higo Samurai were professional military men, they greatly respected a life of culture and elegance. Through their efforts, the camellia achieved a unique development in Higo, and new forms appeared which are called Higo camellia.

## Ancestors of the Higo Camellia

In camellias of Japanese origin, there are two main historical family groups. One is called Yabu Tsubaki (mountain camellia), or *Camellia japonica* which grows everywhere in Japan except in Hokkaido. The other is called Yuki Tsubaki (snow camellia), or *Camellia rusticana* Honda, which is produced on the northern coast of Honshu where there is much snow.

Recently many varieties of camellias have been developed by the cross-fertilization of these two main groups with other similar forms, and the Higo camellia is one such product. Accordingly the forms which are

known as the Higo camellia are not a monotype but can be considered as embracing one grouping of forms.

## Higo camellia and other Higo flowers.

The Higo camellia was produced as new forms by Higo Samurai and nurseries have continuously cultivated them for about 200 years. Today, in the outskirts of Kumamoto City, there is an old camellia tree which is thought to be over 150 years old.

The Higo Samurai valued, in addition to the camellia, the iris, the Sasanka (*Camellia sasanqua* Thumb.) chrysanthemums, herbaceous peonies and morning glories. Devotees established an association for the improvement of varieties which was called the Hana-ten or the Flower Lovers' Association. And it was in fact the Samurai who played the leading role in this association.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Higo-ren disintegrated, as did such organization in other parts of the country, taking with them the practice of the cultivation and appreciation of the camellia and other flowers. In Higo, however, the descendants of Samurai and certain nurseries at the very end of the nineteenth century revived their ancestors' attitude toward floral appreciation and carried even further the improvement of the forms.

In the Second World War, Kumamoto City, the center of old Higo, was bombed and many old camellia trees were reduced to ashes. However, the Higo camellia has been resuscitated and in 1958 camellia lovers established a new society, the Higo Camellia Society (Higo Tsubaki Kyokai).

### Special Features of the Higo Camellia

The most noticeable feature of the Higo camellia is the shape of its flower. It is a single-petalled flower. Its petals number five to nine and properly opens out in four directions. These petals are large, thick, strong and have a strong luster. Once the flower has been seen, it can easily be distinguished from other camellias.

The center of the blossom is filled with stamens much like the apricot blossom (Japanese Ume), it is called "Apricot-stamen Form" or, in Japanese "Ume-Jin." This aspect reinforces the powerful beauty of the petals. The number of stamens varies according to the form from 100 to 250. The pistil stands straight up in the center of the corolla.

The beauty of a Higo camellia is determined in the first instance by the corolla and the formation of the petals, stamens and pistil. There are various colors white, pink, crimson, scarlet and gold-patterned (Nishiki or brocade). But whatever the color, there

is a demand that the flower be a solid color.

The special features of the Higo camellia are found not only in the shape of the flower but also in the color of the leaves, the shape of the trunk and branches. These are included in the appreciation. This is especially true since the major proportion of Higo camellias are cultivated as Bonsai, or potted plants and therefore the total effect of the flowers, leaves and trunk has become an object of aesthetic attention.

The camellia is an evergreen tree, and it is important that its leaves maintain a brilliant green throughout the four seasons. The trunk, as the scaffold for powerful flowers, must be that much more powerful than usual. Moreover, among Japanese, a powerful tree trunk is thought to be a sign of longevity and is therefore particularly welcomed. In the case of Bonsai, of course, value is in the age and wildness of the tree, as suggested by its appearance.

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Kern County Camellia Society

**In memory of Lavenia Treischel**  
Chuck and Rosamond Gerlach



## LIFE BEFORE AND AFTER CAMELLIAS

Chuck Gerlach, Seal Beach, California

One of the most difficult decisions I ever had to make was the selling of our home and its 160 potential winners, but it had to be done sooner or later because of physical problems my wife Rosamond and I were having. It was getting to be just too much for me to take care of. Trying to prune 160 plants with my bad back was harder to do each year, especially since they are all in the ground on split levels.

We have moved to a retirement community called "Leisure World" in Seal Beach, California. They have all the facilities in case of any emergency—doctors, nurses, etc., but there is little room to plant camellias.

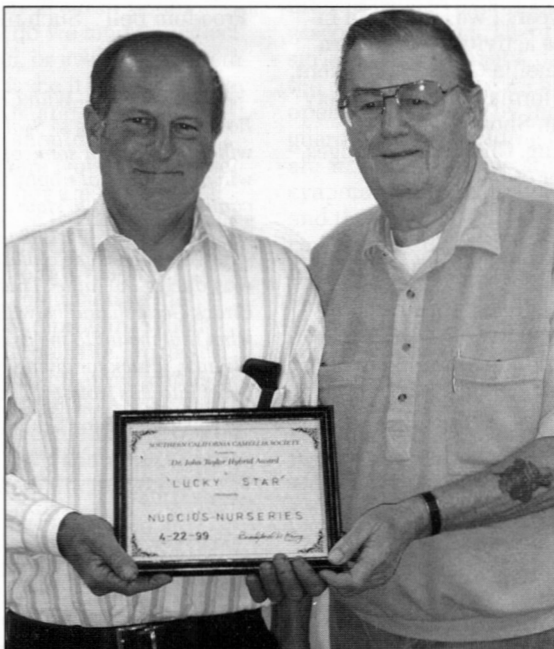
Our home was located in La Crescenta, California, just a few miles from Descanso Gardens at the base of the Verdugo Mountains. We attended a few shows at Descanso over the years and I thought to myself "Why don't you try growing some camellias.

Our back yard would be an ideal place." There were 14 oak trees which gave filtered sunlight, the soil was rich from over 100 years of decayed oak leaves and being so close to the mountains with its rocky soil made for excellent drainage.

I went to a local nursery to see about procuring some camellias. They only had one—a one gall plant of 'Carolyn Tuttle'. It never won anything, but I kept it all these years for sentimental reasons, I guess. I was told about a nursery in Altadena, California, called Nuccio's. I proceeded there and purchased a few plants. It was just the beginning. Over the years I made many a trip there.

I entered my first show at Descanso in 1974. To my pleasant surprise, I won four ribbons. Boy!

Was I hooked. Being very green at all of this, I thought they would send you larger ribbons than the small ones on the entry cards. So I wrote to the Southern California Camellia Society and asked when I was to receive the ribbons. To my surprise I got them in the mail. I found out later that it was Bernice



Chuck presented Tom Nuccio with the "John Taylor Award" for 'Lucky Star' in 1999.

Gunn and Sergio Bracci's idea to get a new member—and it sure did work!

There is something extra special about winning your first trophy. It happened in 1976 at the Southern California Camellia Council show at the Los Angeles County Arboretum. I

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won a Court of Honor with 'Tammia'.

Over the years I guess I have won my share. I always did quite well with smalls like 'Maroon and Gold' and 'Ave Maria' but I am most proud of my baby known as 'Freedom Bell'.

Believe it or not, with singles, trays of three and five, Firsts Seconds and Courts of Honor 'Freedom Bell' won a total of 32 trophies.

I will always remember going to the Fresno show in 1989. I had the best tray of five medium japonica 'Nuccio's Gem'. They were non-treated and won over a tray of 'Firedance Variegated' that had been treated. Because Fresno is an "open" show, when treated and non-treated compete, this was a special win for me.

Over the years I was involved in many camellia activities—Southern California Camellia Council President, Southern California Camellia Society Vice President, Show Chairman, Staging, Judging, Chairman of Judges, Board Member of Pacific and Southern California Camellia Societies. In the later years, I especially enjoyed helping Bob Jaacks at the Head Table.

There are so many nice camellia people that I met over the years that it would be hard to mention them all with missing someone., Who could

ever forget the twenty some years at Camellia Rama in Fresno. We especially enjoyed the raffles and the costumes. I really shook them up one year when I came as Adolphe Hitler (all in fun).

Every camellia hobbyist has a list of favorites. I am sure mine is a little different —

'Freedom Bell;  
'Maroon and Gold'  
'Ave Maria'  
'Valley Knudsen'  
'Shishi-Gashira'.

I received a phone call from Tom Nuccio. He had heard about our moving to Seal Beach and wanted to bring us a camellia for our new home. He asked Sergio Bracci for a suggestion and Sergio said, what else, 'Freedom Bell'. Such nice people!

*Editor's note—With Chuck and Rosamond moving to Seal Beach, the door will be opened for some of us dreamers to win an occasional trophy for small camellias. I want to state that, at the first camellia society meeting I attended, a stranger brought me a plant he had just won during the raffle. That stranger was Chuck Gerlach and he will never know what that meant to me as a new member. Thanks, Chuck for giving me a blue ribbon boost into this wonderful world of camellias!*

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# LEAVES, JUST LEAVES

Jennifer Trehane  
Dorset, England

## Leaves, just leaves

Camellias are, as I'm sure we are all aware, evergreen shrubs; and we grow them because they provide us with a wonderful display of flowers, which, by careful choice of varieties we can enjoy almost all year round. We exhibit blooms at Shows, enjoy their brightness in gardens and feel cheered when they flower through the dull days of winter and early Spring.

But what about their leaves?

Those "evergreen" features of our camellias. Why do we tend to neglect to mention them, or even notice them particularly? Maybe it is because they are always "there" and we take them for granted. We shouldn't, because without them there would, of course, be no flowers. They are, after all, of crucial importance to our plants; being the primary food factories responsible for combining the raw materials around them to manufacture the carbohydrates, and proteins which they need for all their life processes.

Leaves are also great indicators of the health of our plants. A look at a cross section of a camellia leaf can be quite informative. It shows just how well designed and efficient these manufacturing units are.

The process, photosynthesis—meaning the combining of materials using light as a source of energy—indicates how essential light is, while the need for the green chloroplasts bearing chlorophyll is less obvious. These are present in the epidermal cells close to the leaf surface and in the mesophyll layers further in. It is the chloroplasts which harness and put the light energy to good use. In most leaves they are most abundant in the rectangular palisade cells, near the upper surface of the leaf, just below the protective cuticle and it is here

that photosynthesis is rapid. The basic raw materials required are water, taken in by the roots and conducted up to the leaves, and carbon dioxide produced during respiration but also available in the air taken in by the leaf. Oxygen is a waste product of this process, used in respiration. A natural exchange between two vital processes.

There are gaps between cells in the mesophyll layer, (sometimes called the spongy mesophyll), in the centre of the leaf; air spaces which allow interior cells to experience efficient gaseous exchange. There are also surface holes, stomata, particularly on the under surface, which can be opened and closed by the action of guard cells surrounding them. These are activated to allow and regulate evaporation (transpiration) of water and the exchange of gases (oxygen and carbon dioxide), between the interior cells of the leaf and the atmosphere surrounding it. Maximum transpiration occurs when the plant needs cooling and also when photosynthesis is at its most active, in summer and it is important that plenty of water is available through the roots to replace that lost from the leaves otherwise wilting takes place.

One thing which is apparent from looking at cross sections of leaves is that variegated leaves; those which have white or yellow colouring instead of being uniformly green, have areas which are lacking in chlorophyll. This, for me, explains why many such plants, whether variegated by virus infection or produced as a result of "sporting" (chimera), tend to lack vigour. They are unable to harness the sun's energy as efficiently as fully green leaved plants. I have also found that many variegated leaves, especially those which have thin cuticles, become brown very

readily with dead cells in the colourless areas, especially in cold weather. Is there a connection here, too ?

### Adaptations

Some species have thicker layers of wax on their cuticles than others. The shiny leaves of most *C. japonica* indicate an effective coating of wax. The gloss reflects light and reduces heat absorption in summer and heat loss in winter. Ideal for a species such as *C. japonica* which comes from an area where summers may be bright and hot and winters can be very cold and wet. At the other extreme, the delicate, matt surfaced leaves of *C. lutchuensis* appear to have very little cuticle, because they do not need much protection in a sub tropical climate. Somewhere in between are species such as *C. reticulata* and *C. saluenensis* which have quite leathery leaves, (thick cell walls) with a matte surface, (little cuticular wax). These species tend to grow amongst the pine trees, in semi-shade and experience moderately cold, dry winters. One species, photographed in February 1994, in Sichuan, growing on an exposed hillside at 3,200 metres, and subsequently verified as *C. tenuivalvis*, has very pointed leaves which are markedly keeled like a boat and excellent for conducting rainwater and snow down to the soil below.

The yellow camellias such as *C. nitidissima*, which we saw in very deep shade in sub-tropical bamboo forest in Guangxi Province, China, have extra large leaves whose surface area is further increased by being "bumpy". These plants are able to catch sufficient light for their metabolism even in what appear to be incredibly dark conditions. Their leaves are thin and light in texture, ideally suited to their habitat.

To further increase available surface area for light absorption and gaseous exchange where cooling by evaporation, (transpiration) in hot dry conditions, is also necessary, a huge

number of very small leaves is seen. *C. lutchuensis*, *C. transnokoensis* and *C. sasanqua* are good examples.

### Leaves as indicators

In cultivation, we may note other adaptations. When we experience hard frosts and strong winds our camellias tend to look poor, with their leaves hanging listlessly down instead of being held up boldly. They are merely adapting to harsh conditions by keeping their vulnerable lower surfaces with their stomatal pores, out of the wind as far as possible. A sensible precaution and the equivalent of our wrapping our coats around us to keep warm. But there may be more to it than that, if the soil is frozen.

A camellia suffering lack of water in the soil in summer has a similar appearance. Both are suffering from dehydration. It is easy to rehydrate in summer, but in winter we just have to wait until the water in the soil thaws and reduce the loss of water by transpiration, and therefore stress on the plant, by keeping the leaves protected from the wind.

Leaves tell us so much about the condition of our camellias. If they are bright and green, we know that all is well. As soon as they look pale or dull, or discoloured somehow, we know that something is wrong. The problem may be a shortage or excess of vital minerals and we can even identify which ones by the colour and sometimes the pattern of colouring, general starvation, lack of iron, excess of phosphorus. There may be chewed edges, (adult vine weevils are at large), or holes, (there has been an invasion of sap sucking insects such as scale insects). Sooty mould fungus on the upper surface is also a sure sign, and frequently the first we notice, that insects or mites have been feeding and excreting "honeydew" which in turn acts as a marvellous medium for the fungus. Scorched leaves, which usually drop later, due to too much exposure to sun and wind, especially

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when combined with low temperatures, tell us that our camellia is in need of more shelter. Varieties vary greatly in their susceptibility so maybe another cultivar can be planted in its place.

It is not always appreciated however that the appearance of a few yellow/brown leaves, especially near the centre of a plant, are to be expected. It is normal for a camellia to shed some of its older leaves, especially before cellular activity and new growth starts in Spring, when the plant has used up all its stored food reserves during the flowering period. In fact this is when my plants look decidedly tired and poor before picking up as the new season gets under way.

#### **Leaves to enjoy.**

Camellia foliage is, to my mind, greatly under-appreciated. In California, where the production of blooms for exhibition purposes is the main objective, this is understandable. Big blooms also tend to be borne on bushes of varieties which have naturally sparse foliage, and keen exhibitors tend to prune their bushes heavily too. These "hat racks" are not meant to look attractive! However, where camellias are grown for their value as garden plants, the shape of a bush and the qualities of its foliage are much more important and should certainly be included as a consideration when purchasing plants. A mass of flowers in winter or Spring, on a bush with attractive foliage is truly an attraction in any garden. Then there is nothing better than a background of deep green camellia foliage on a tidy, bushy plant to show off colourful summer flowers or to lend depth to a summer shrub border.

Varieties with variegated foliage may be appreciated, but bearing in mind their possible lack of vigour due to low chlorophyll levels. Variegation may be due to sporting (chimera) such as *C. japonica* variegata, *C. japonica* Ryjoku, or *C. sasanqua* variegated. It

may also be due to virus infection

Leaf shape, size and colour can add interest, especially in a mixed border in a garden where camellias become important as evergreen features during their non-flowering season. There are so many variations

Young growth can also be a very attractive feature. Many species, such as *C. lutchuensis*, and *C. transnokoensis* have striking red tones in their young leaves. *C. cuspidata* and some of its hybrids such as 'Spring Festival' and 'Cornish Snow' have wonderful red/bronze young growth. *C. japonica* 'Ruddigore', and 'Bob Hope' are other examples.

The best of the lot, in my collection at least, is the New Zealand bred (Oz Blumhardt) hybrid 'Night Rider' which has wonderful deep red young leaves which mature to deep green with a red cast. I can accept its tendency to produce flowers irregularly in our climate. It even has red roots, but that is another story.

Leaves are also, as I am finding out especially when asked to try to identify historic collections, of great significance as features to consider when looking at camellias with similar or even identical flowers. So often, where they have fortunately been recorded, a description of leaves and the habit of a bush, helps to identify them.

We must not forget, however, that a single bush may carry leaves of different sizes and shapes and an assessment based on an agreed standard needs to be made—maybe "the third leaf behind a flower" as used by Dr Clifford Parks during studies "in the field" in China in 2000 ?

Let us all appreciate our camellia leaves a little more. Let us also, when registering new cultivars, include a description of leaves to help future identification, especially now that, with over 35,000 cultivars included in the International Register, there are bound to be many which have very similar blooms.

# ROOTED CUTTINGS

E. C. Snooks, La Jolla, California

Of all the means of propagation, rooting cuttings is, by far, the most widely used. This method is popular because it is easy, reliable, quick and cheap. All of us have excess growth which we want to remove from our plants and, if properly chosen, these trimmings make excellent cuttings. Plants propagated by this means will provide a continuous supply of understock as well as plants to be given as gifts.

With a plant as variable as the camellia it might be no surprise to learn that all varieties do not root with equal ease. Most *C. japonica* cultivars root quite easily, but there are exceptions. On the other hand, *C. reticulata* and some other species do not root easily under normal condition. With this in mind, stick to *C. japonica* and *C. sasanqua* cuttings to start with and try several varieties of each.

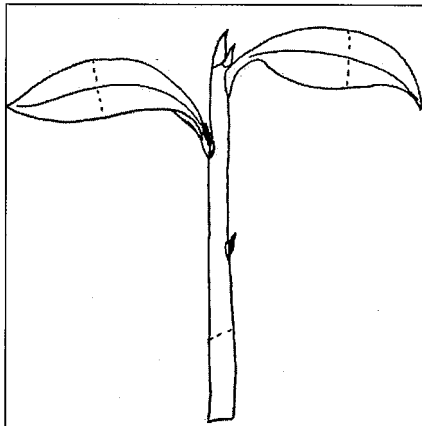
The variety of rooting mediums used and suggested in the literature are more numerous than the variations on a theme in a Bach fugue but the most widely used is made up of equal parts coarse sand and peat moss. Blend these together; pack firmly in the chosen rooting container and water well. For small numbers plastic pots may be used. Flats and old peach crates with a couple extra slats do fine.

High humidity must be provided to prevent dehydration of the cuttings until roots form. In pots the same form of wire loops and plastic bags as used

for grafts may be employed. For flats, secure a stake of about 10" high in each corner of the flat. This will support the plastic sheeting which will be used to cover and seal the flat.

Current-year growth should be selected when the stems have hardened sufficiently to snap when bent and show a tan color. Do not let these cuttings dry out during collection but do not place in a bucket of water for water logging will delay rooting. Rather, collect in a wetted plastic bag. Cuttings of about 3" should be selected.

All but one of two leaves are removed and those remaining may be cut in half to reduce space requirements and moisture loss. Re-cut the stem on a slant at or below a node (area where a leaf meets the stem).



Dotted lines on leaves show where to cut them to reduce transpiration; dotted lines on stems show where to make a slanting cut in relation to the node above.

After packing the rooting medium and watering prepare for a row of cuttings by cutting with a heavy knife. Dip the cutting end in a rooting hormone powder (Rootone, Hormodin #2, etc.), tap off the excess and insert securely in the medium. About 1 1/2" of a 3" cutting should be inserted into the medium. Firm the soil around the cuttings after the whole row is set and

water well. Cuttings may be placed as close as 1" in a row but 2" will be more convenient to work with. Rows should be 3" apart. Cover the pot or flat with the plastic to seal in the moisture and place in a light but shaded area. Water when required. With good drainage over-watering is nearly impossible.

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The cuttings must never dry out. Check a couple of cuttings after 4-6 weeks. If rooting has started, gradually aerate the cuttings to accustom them

to dryer air. When roots 1- 1/2" long have developed, remove the cuttings and pot.

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## CARE OF CUTTINGS

*The following is a portion of an article entitled "Cuttings" by Henry P. Orr and Harvey F. Short from Camellia Culture edited by E. C. Tourje in 1958 and published by the Southern California Camellia Society.*

After watering in the cutting initially, additional thorough waterings will be needed periodically as the medium dries. The peat-sand mixture will turn light brown as it dries. If the flats or frames are kept tightly covered, seldom will watering be necessary—even in sunny weather—more than once or twice a week. Water the cutting medium thoroughly prior to syringing, but do not keep it in a waterlogged condition. Syringe the cuttings lightly as the leaves dry during sunny days. Syringing will probably be needed around 10 a.m., noon ad 3 p.m. of sunny days.

As soon as roots begin forming, the cutting should be aerated in increasing amounts each day. With increased aeration increased syringing may be needed. When the cuttings have roots 1 to 1/2 inches in length, they can be removed from the propagation medium and either potted or planted in beds. The potting or planting soil should be an organic, well-drained-but-retentive-of-moisture soil containing a medium amount of phosphorus and potash but practically no nitrogen compounds. Usually a 5-inch potful of superphosphate (or two 5-inch potfuls of bonemeal) and a 3-inch potful of muriate of potash are sufficient if incorporated thoroughly with 2 bushels of composted or organic soil. The pH or soil acidity should be around pH 6.0-6.5

The rooted cutting can be

effectively handled by potting into 3- or 4-inch clay pots, watering them in thoroughly and placing them under lath or similar shading. Watering should be watched carefully to prevent an overly dry or waterlogged soil. On sunny days syringing may be necessary until new roots are apparent in the soil near the edge of the pot, and the plants are established. Before it can become potbound the developing camellia plant should be shifted to a larger pot or other container.

In beds, cutting are usually lined out in rows 8 inches apart, the cuttings spaced 4 inches apart in the row. Pine straw or similar mulching can be used effectively between the cutting to prevent excessive drying and to aid in weed control. All potting or planting soil should be steam or chemically sterilized to reduce disease and weed incidence.

Should leaf spots or stem rots become apparent at any time either in the propagation medium or in the planted areas, a fungicide such as Captain or Ferbam should be used according to directions. Cleanliness and prevention of disease should be practiced at all times by sterilization of structures and mediums and by the use of clean stock.

Propagation of camellias by softwood cuttings is an interesting, challenging experience. Anyone who desires to increase his camellia "population" should be able to be successful if the methods and practices discussed above are followed, with minor adaptation applied with common sense to fit each gardener's situation.



# FROM THE ARCHIVES—DISBUDDING

Roy T. Thomson

The practice of removing surplus flowers buds from plants is as old as the practice of horticulture and it is based on the simply mathematical truth that the more divisions made in any substance, the smaller each will be. Applied to flowers, it presupposes that each plant can produce a certain quantity of blooms and that if larger blooms are desired, their number should be reduced. Among camellia growers, the practice has long since been proved effective and is almost universally employed. Some of the reason for Disbudding and the methods generally followed by camellia growers are summarized in the following paragraphs.

**1. Objectives of Disbudding.** Disbudding is usually engaged in solely to increase the size of the flower, and this can be truthfully described as its prime objective. But disbudding also improves the quality of the flowers for it insures that each flower will have sufficient moisture and nutriment to expand to its full, true pattern. Certain other related objectives will also influence the camellia grower's disbudding practices: if blue ribbons and prizes are his objective, he will disbud heavily, leaving only a few terminal buds. if he desires to have an ample supply of good camellia flowers either for cutting or garden display but not necessarily for competition, he will disbud more moderately; if mass effects of flowering shrubs in the

landscape are his objective he will do very little, if any, disbudding.

**2. Type of flowers which should be considered.** It can readily be seen that a large peony-type of flower will require four or five times as much water and nutriment as a single and that therefore fewer buds should be left on varieties that bear the heavier flowers. With a good many of the singles, disbudding can be wholly dispensed with.

### 3. Varieties sometimes differ. The



Only buds 2 and 5 (one large and one small) should be left. They will open at different times with ample space in which to develop. If emphasis is to be on large flowers, 5 may also be removed

flower type, however, doesn't always give a true indication of the plant's disbudding needs. There are certain varieties which seem to regulate their own succession of blooms in such a manner as to make disbudding unnecessary. They do not produce excess buds to begin with, but maintain a long blooming period by producing a few flowers at a time and gradually using up all their buds.

### 4. Time of bud formation.

Flower buds form on camellias some five to seven months in advance of blooming and the time when these buds first appear varies considerably from season to season. Some varieties show flower buds much earlier than others. In one very oddly patterned camellia year, a few varieties put out their first flower buds in November. But the usual

(continued on page 18)

# THE JUDGE'S FIRST DECISIONS OF THE MILLENNIUM

Don Bergamini, Martínez, California

The year 2001 saw the first year decisions of the new millennium. Were the old favorites still there? Of course they were. 'Miss Charleston Variegated' led the large/very large japonica category with six wins. The medium japonica category saw 'Margaret Davis' get the nod with six wins as well, followed closely by a fairly newcomer 'Elaine's Betty' with five wins. The small class of any species saw a commanding lead with 'Spring Daze' and 'Red Hots' with eight and seven wins respectively. The minis had a tie with six wins each between 'Lemon Drop' and 'Little Michael'. The reticulata and its hybrids was led by 'Frank Houser' with eight wins followed by 'Dr. Clifford Parks' with seven wins. The non-reticulata class was tied with 'Julie Variegated' and 'Pink Dahlia' each with four wins. The decisions were not as clear cut in some of the other categories.

The multiple entries were still dominated by some really excellent varieties for trays such as 'Nuccio's Carousel' - nine wins; 'Pink Perfection' - eight wins; 'Red Hots' - seven wins; 'Emma Gaeta Variegated' - six wins; and 'Nicky Crisp' - seven wins. If you want to win in the multiple categories then these are the varieties that are a must to obtain.

Some newer varieties to look for in the future might be 'Melissa Anne', 'Jackie D.', 'Paper Dolls', 'Hotshot', 'Sue Kendall', 'Linda Carol', 'Sir Robert Muldoon' and 'Les Jury'. I wish everyone a great camellia season in 2002 and may all your blooms be winners, as you know we all know that our own blooms are always winners and that the judges just over looked them. I

know that and I hope you do, too. Remember—camellias are for fun and good friends.

## SINGLE ENTRIES

### Japonicas Large/ Very Large

'Miss Charleston Variegated'	6
'Junior Prom'	4
'Lady Laura'	4
'Royal Velvet'	4
'Swan Lake'	4
'Tomorrow Park Hill'	4
'Carter's Sunburst'	3
'Katie'	3
'Elegans Splendor'	2
'Elizabeth Weaver'	2
'Han Ling Snow'	2
'Helen Bower'	2
'Julia France'	2
'Veiled Beauty'	2
19 others with 1 each	

### Japonica Mediums

'Margaret Davis'	6
'Elaine's Betty'	5
'Black Magic'	4
'Nuccio's Jewel'	4
'Cherries Jubilee'	2
'Dawn's Early Light'	2
'Fire Dance Variegated'	2
'Grand Marshal'	2
'In The Red'	2
'Prima Ballerina'	2
24 others with 1 each	

### Smalls Any Species

'Spring Daze'	8
'Red Hots'	7
'Paper Dolls'	4
'Demi-Tasse'	3
'Black Tie'	2
'Dahlohnega'	2
'Jackie D.'	2
'Little Babe Variegated'	2

'Pink Perfection'	2	<b>Species</b>	
8 others with 1 each		'Egao'	7
<b>Miniatures Any Species</b>		'Shibori Ega'	4
'Lemon Drop'	6	4 others with 1 each	
'Little Michael'	6	<b>MULTIPLE ENTRIES</b>	
'Chrysantha'	4	<b>Japonicas</b>	
'Little Slam Variegated'	3	'Nuccio's Carousel'	9
'Man Size'	3	'Kramer's Supreme'	5
'Ellen Daniel'	2	'Royal Velvet'	5
'Fircone Variegated'	2	'Junior Prom'	4
'Grace Albritton'	2	'Royal Velvet Variegated'	4
'Mikey B.'	2	'Tomorrow Park Hill'	4
'Tammia'	2	'Wildfire'	4
14 others with 1 each		'Fire Dance Variegated'	3
<b>Reticulata/Reticulata Hybrids</b>		'Snowman'	3
'Frank Houser'	8	'Chie Taramoto'	2
'Dr. Clifford Parks'	7	'Eleanor Martin Supreme'	2
'Emma Gaeta Variegated'	5	'Elegans Champagne'	2
'Harold L. Paige'	4	'Haru-No-Utena'	2
'Linda Carol'	4	'Katie Variegated'	2
'Miss Tulare'	4	'Lady Laura'	2
'Ruta Hagmann'	4	'Margaret Davis'	2
'Black Lace'	2	'Miss Charleston Variegated'	2
'Crinoline'	2	'Rudy's Magnoliaeflora'	2
'Emma Gaeta'	2	28 others with 1 each	
'Frank Houser Variegated'	2	<b>Smalls and Miniatures Any Species</b>	
'Larry Piet'	2	'Pink Perfection'	8
'LASCA Beauty'	2	'Red Hots'	7
'Mary O'Donnell'	2	'Man Size'	5
'Sir Robert Muldoon'	2	'Paper Dolls'	4
'Valentine Day Variegated'	2	'Chrysantha'	3
23 others with 1 each		'Freedom Bell'	3
<b>Non-Reticulata Hybrids</b>		'Lemon Drop'	3
'Julie Variegated'	4	'Little Babe Variegated'	3
'Pink Dahlia'	4	'Little Michael'	3
'First Blush'	3	'Little Slam'	3
'Lucky Star'	3	'Night Rider'	3
'Angel Wings'	2	'Fircone Variegated'	2
'Buttons 'N Bows'	2	'Ellen Daniel'	2
'Coral Delight Variegated'	2	'Something Beautiful'	2
'Debbie'	2	'Spring Daze'	2
'Elsie Jury'	2	'Spring Festival'	2
'Honeymoon'	2	10 others with 1 each	
'Jubilation Variegated'	2	<b>Reticulata and Reticulata Hybrids</b>	
'Julia'	2	'Emma Gaeta Variegated'	6
'Mona Jury Variegated'	2	'LASCA Beauty'	4
14 others with 1 each		'Dr. Clifford Parks'	3

'Larry Piet'	3	<b>Non- Reticulata Hybrids</b>	
'Valley Knudsen'	3	'Nicky Crisp'	7
'Cornelian'	2	'Waltz Time Variegated'	5
'Fiesta Grande'	2	'Buttons 'N Bows'	3
'Harold L. Paige'	2	'Julie Variegated'	3
'Miss Tulare'	2	'Coral Delight'	2
'Terrell Weave'	2	'Waltz Time'	2
'W. P. Gilley'	2	11 others with 1 each	
12 others with 1 each			



## HUNTINGTON CAMELLIA EXPERT SHARES KNOWLEDGE IN NEW BOOK

Huntington camellia specialist, Ann Richardson, shares her expertise in a new 80 page, all color pictorial guide, *A Curator's Introduction to the Camellia Collection in the Huntington Botanical Gardens*. (Huntington Library Press, San Marino, \$14.95 paper, \$27.95 cloth) Eighty-eight color photographs feature both popular and rare camellias from the Huntington camellia garden which is one of the most diverse public collections anywhere in the world. Reproductions of nineteenth-century botanical illustrations from the Huntington Library's rare book collections are also included.

Richardson draws on decades of experience in horticulture to present an array of facts on the history and cultivation of the camellia, including how they get their names, the differences between a cultivar and a species and why some camellia flowers have stripes or splotches. She counsels that camellias are easy to grow and tells readers how, with just a small amount of care, they can produce a maximum of attractive plants and flowers.

This is the first in a series of pictorial guides on individual Huntington gardens designed to share the expertise of its staff horticulturists

with other gardeners and at the same time serve as mementoes for visitors.

The Huntington's camellia garden is one of only five gardens worldwide to earn the International Camellia Garden of Excellence award from the International Camellia Society. The collection includes some of the world's oldest camellia cultivars as well as new 21st century introductions, both well documented in this lavishly illustrated, compact book. The collection originated with the work of William Hertrich, a much revered horticulturist who collaborated with railroad and real estate developer Henry E. Huntington establish the Huntington Botanical Gardens on the grounds of his estate in the early 1900's. Today the gardens together with Huntington's world-renowned library and impressive art collection comprise one of the nation's great cultural and educational centers.

*A Curator's Introduction to the Camellia Collection* is available from retail bookstores and on-line booksellers. Information on other garden books is available at the Huntington website [www.huntington.org](http://www.huntington.org). Book sales support the Huntington's education and research programs.

(continued from page 14)  
time for the appearance of flower buds on most varieties is the first half of July, and by the first of September most varieties will show them.

#### **5. Identification of flower buds.**

The presence of flower buds can be guessed at very early in the season when new leaf and flower buds appear simultaneously in the leaf axis of the new growth in groups or two or three. Leaf buds usually appear singly, hence if there are two or three buds in an axil, it is a good guess that a flower bud is present. This temporary identification is of academic interest only, for it is too early for positive identification. Conclusive identification can be made only when the flower buds have swelled into larger, thicker units than the leaf buds. The shape of flower buds varies with the type of flower and the variety; a peony-flowered plant will produce round, sometimes perfectly spherical, buds because of the large number of undeveloped petals, petaloids and stamens forming inside; a single-flowered plant will produce more long, slender buds because it contains only a few petals and stamens without the large amount of "stuffing" found in a peony bud. The flower buds of other types fall in between these two extremes. In the earlier stages of their development flower and leaf buds can easily be confused, but if given time, the flower buds will eventually become larger and of a different shape, and only then positive identification can easily be made.

**6. Time for disbudding.** Since flower buds remain on the camellia plant for many months, there will be considerable leeway for the disbudding process. If the disbudding process is to cover a large number of plants of good size and thus consume much time, it should be planned in such a way and at such a time that it will not be necessary to go over any given plant a second time. This makes

proper timing important. If disbudded too early, say in August or early September, a camellia plant may replace many of the buds removed, thus making it necessary to go over the plant a second time. 'Herme', for example, will keep on replacing removed buds until November or December. Most varieties, however, will have developed all the buds that they are likely to develop by the middle of October, and this time, as a general rule, is a good time to carry out the disbudding process, that is, the last half of October. It is a good time, but not mandatory, for the disbudding process can be delayed until the blooming period has actually started. Such a delay, though, is very inadvisable, for by this time a great deal of the plant's substance has gone into the flower buds and will thus be wasted. Also, the larger the bud when removed, the greater the possibility of injury to the stem and nearby buds.

**7. Which buds to remove.** The actual disbudding of a camellia will be governed by several considerations:

**a. Size.** Other things being equal it is best to leave the largest bud because it is farthest advanced toward flowering and contains more substance than the others.

**b. Vigor.** The most vigorous growth on a plant will be found at the ends of the branches and twigs, particularly the branches at the top of the plant. The best scions and the best blooms are likely to be found here, hence it is good practice to give this top area preference and leave more buds here. The general practice is to leave the largest bud at the end of a twig.

**c. Number of buds to leave.** The disbudder should decide in advance the approximate number of buds he wishes to leave on each plant, depending on the size of the plant and on certain other considerations discussed in another section of this article. After he has decided on the approximate number of buds to leave

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he should actually remove about 25 percent more than this number, for when the plant blooms he will usually discover that he has left too many buds.

**d. Position.** The position of a bud in relation to surrounding leaves and stem should always be considered. If, in visualizing the opened flower, it is seen that it will come in contact with other leaves or stem, this handicap should be avoided in advance by removing the bud. All buds left should be in a position where they can open freely. Another consideration is which way the opened flower will face. Sometimes a flower will face a wall, or face down, or face the interior of the plant. These poor positions can be easily avoided by leaving buds which face in the right directions for best appearance on the plant and best viewing by observers. Growers who are grooming flowers for competitive awards sometimes deliberately leave buds which will produce flowers facing the ground so that they will be less likely to accumulate dust, debris, insects and rain.

**e. Blooming time.** If the plant is expected to bloom over a long period, consideration should be given to the relative size of the buds left. If the largest bud is left on the end of a twig, a second but smaller bud should be left on the second or third axil down the top to produce a later flower and thus extend the blooming period.

**8. How best to remove buds.** The quickest and easiest way to remove a flower bud is to twist it off. In doing this one should hold the twig or stem firmly in one hand while twisting off the bud with the other. Sometimes a group of buds will be so tightly clustered together that in removing them there will be danger of injuring the stem of the bud selected to remain. Such injury can best be avoided by using greater care in the removal of each bud in the cluster. Some growers prefer to cut off the buds with a razor blade, others

puncture the excess buds with pins or other sharp instruments so that they will eventually dry up and fall off. Such practices take more time but may be worth the effort in especially important situation.

**9. When not to disbud.** Where the chief effect desired from a camellia or group of camellias is a show of mass color in the landscape, it is, of course, inadvisable to disbud. In such cases, the size of the individual flowers is not important.

**10. Disbudding and fertilizing coordinated.** Disbudding should be intelligently coordinated with fertilizing of camellias for both procedures have the same object. If prize-winning blooms are the grower's purpose it would be unrealistic to fertilize without disbudding or to disbud without fertilizing. A good plan is to fertilize quite heavily in midsummer, disbud in October or early November, then fertilize very lightly a month before blooms are expected.

**11. Disbudding and balling.** Balling (failure of a flower to open fully and properly) is frequently caused by a drop in humidity at the time when the opening of flowers makes a heavy demand upon the plant's water supply, and many buds will remain half open for a few days, then fall off. However, if a good job of disbudding has been done on the plant, there is a much change of its having enough water to open the remaining buds properly. It is good plan, generally, to heavily disbud varieties which, year after year, show a tendency to ball. (*Editor's note—*we sometimes call this condition "bull nosing.")

**12. Snipping new foliage.** As a supplement to disbudding, some growers snip off any new foliage that may have appeared next to important flower buds that are about to open.

This is effective only if done immediately before the flower opens; if done a considerable time before the bud opens it may have the opposite effect of that intended, for the plant's energies may then be directed into the formation of new leaf buds at the point where the new growth was cut off.

#### **14. Results not always uniform.**

Although the results of disbudding are generally quite apparent and satisfactory, they are not always so,

and sometimes the grower will wonder if disbudding is really effective. Many factors contribute to the successful production of fine blooms, and the blame for ordinary or mediocre blooms should not be placed on the failure of disbudding, but on the lack of sufficient water, need for transplanting, the unusual pattern of the current camellia season, and many other causes. To be fully effective, disbudding must be coordinated fully with all other factors bearing on the production of camellia flowers.

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## **BUILDING CAMELLIA SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP**

**Barbara Tuffli, Atherton, California**

*The following has been excerpted from information sent by Barbara Tuffli, President of the Peninsula Camellia Society. Excited because this has been a year of record growth for their Society, she shared some ideas that had been successful for their group. Thanks, Barbara, for these helpful hints!*

Sponsor great programs—

While including camellia topics (growing, grafting, judging and research), we designed programs to appeal to audiences with a variety of interests which might overlap with camellias: travel, photography, and plants to use with camellias in your garden. Next year we plan to add flower arranging with camellias to the list.

Our two outside speakers were heavily advertised and their talks were free to the public. This attracted garden club members, nurserymen, and some new members.

Encourage camaraderie – make it fun! Have events and members-only parties that people want to attend.

Contribute to the community. Donate plants to public parks or senior centers teach pruning, planting and fertilizing techniques to park maintenance people. Encourage senior centers or churches to bring people to your show by bus. Take flowers to nursing homes or hospitals after the

show. Be available to speak to garden clubs and arboretums. Encouraging more people to grow camellias will attract new members.

Be connected. Use web sites and email to connect to other hobbyists and the camellia world locally, nationally and internationally.

Be relevant and mentor.

Help members with their camellia gardens and growing problems.

Help members find new varieties.

Help educate members on current topics— pest and disease control).

Help members succeed in entering their flowers in local shows.

Welcome new members and make them feel included. Introduce them to other Society members. Offer them rides to meetings or other nearby shows. Give new members jobs so they feel they are part of the group. Help them enter flowers in shows and succeed: one trophy won makes a convert! Show interest in their camellias and offer to help them with their plants. Be sure to notice what they do and thank them. Listen to why they joined and what they hope to gain from membership. Then be sure it happens.

How does one measure success? By seeing increasing numbers of enthusiastic new members become, over time, enthusiastic contributing members of our societies.



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## DIRECTORY OF CALIFORNIA CAMELLIA SOCIETIES

CENTRAL CALIFORNIA CAMELLIA SOCIETY: President—Jeane Shoemaker; Secretary—Joan Hill, 37341 Ave 17 1/2, Madera, 93638. Meetings: 3rd Wednesday, November-February, 7:30 p.m. Sheraton Smuggler's Inn, 3737 N. Blackstone, Fresno.

KERN COUNTY, CAMELLIA SOCIETY OF: President—Helen Maas; Secretary—Jane Brady, 7401-21 Hilton Head Way, Bakersfield 93309. For meeting dates and times, call Helen Maas (805)872-2188.

MODESTO, CAMELLIA SOCIETY OF: President—Don Kendall; Secretary—Sue Kendall, 1505 Gary Lane. Modesto, 95355. Meetings: 1st Sunday, October-April, 1:00 p.m., 220-A Standiford Avenue, Modesto.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CAMELLIA SOCIETY: President—Don Bergamini; Secretary—Eric Hansen. Meetings: 1st Monday, November-April, 7:30 p.m., Oak Grove School, 2050 Minert Road, Concord. Final meeting in May is a dinner meeting.

ORANGE COUNTY CAMELLIA SOCIETY: President—Linda Rodriguez; Secretary—Peggy Sheldon, 20151 Crown Reef Lane, Huntington Beach 92646. Meetings: 1st Monday, October-April, 7:00 p.m. Dept. of Education Building, 200 Kalmus, Costa Mesa

PACIFIC CAMELLIA SOCIETY: President—Elsie Bracci. Meetings: 1st Thursday, November-April, 7:30 p.m., Descanso Gardens, 1418 Descanso Drive, La Canada.

PENINSULA CAMELLIA SOCIETY: President—Barbara Coates Tuffli; Secretary—Nicky Farmer, 360 Santa Margarita Avenue, Menlo Park 94025. Meetings: 4th Monday, October-March, Veterans' Building Annex, 711 Nevada St., Rm. 20 (elevator available), Redwood City

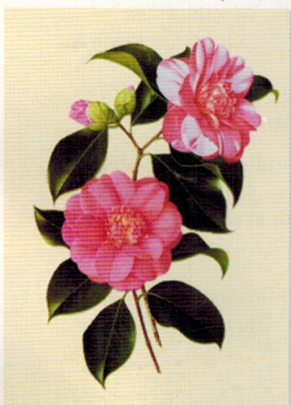
POMONA VALLEY CAMELLIA SOCIETY: President—David Trujillo; Secretary—Dorothy Christinson, 3751 Hoover St., Riverside 95204. Meetings: 2nd Tuesday, November-April, 7:30 p.m., Lutheran Church, Corner Baseline and Wheeler, La Verne.

SACRAMENTO, CAMELLIA SOCIETY OF: President—Jackie Randall; Secretary—Gary Schanz, 1177 Cavanaugh Way, Sacramento 95822. Meetings: 4th Tuesday, October-April, 7:30 p.m., Studio Theater, 1028 "R" Street, Sacramento

SAN DIEGO CAMELLIA SOCIETY: President—Dean Turney; Secretary—Lew Gary, 11419 Cabela Place, San Diego 92127. Meetings: 3rd Wednesday, November-April, 7:30 p.m., Room 101 Casa del Prado, Balboa Park, San Diego.

SANTA CLARA COUNTY, INC., CAMELLIA SOCIETY OF: President—Walt Dabel. Meetings: 3rd Wednesday, October-April, 7:30 p.m., Lick Mill Park, 4750 Lick Mill Boulevard, Santa Clara.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CAMELLIA SOCIETY: President—Brad King; Secretary—Sandra Ragusa, 10720 E. Freer St., Temple City, CA 91780. Meetings: 7:30 p.m., Ayres Hall, Los Angeles County Arboretum, 301 Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia. Call Marilee Gray for meeting dates (909) 624-4107.



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