

THE
Camellia
REVIEW

A Publication of the Southern California Camellia Society



Camellias in Pauma Valley

Southern California Camellia Society, Inc.

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

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THE CAMELLIA REVIEW

Mel Belcher, Editor

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COVER PHOTO

“Camellias in Pauma Valley”

Photo by Mel Belcher

AN INVITATION TO JOIN THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CAMELLIA SOCIETY

The Southern California Camellia Society will welcome you as a member.

Annual membership — \$25.00 Includes subscription to *The Camellia Review* (three issues per year).

New Member	\$25.00	Sponsoring Member	\$50.00
Regular Member	\$25.00	Sustaining Member	\$100.00
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Send payment for dues to the Treasurer/Membership Chairman.

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2006 Camellia Nomenclature with over 150 pages describing more than 4,00 varieties will be available early 2006 at a cost of \$12 per copy. Copies can be ordered by sending a check payable to

Southern California Camellia Society
c/o Bobbie Belcher,
40641 Via Amapola, Murrieta, CA 92562.

THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR

An event happened a couple of months ago that got my attention and triggered an investigation that appears to bring the catacombs of the past into the present.

A young lady Kim Paytas out of the blue called, at the behest of Marilee Gray, to seek information about camellias. It seems that she and her husband had bought a place in Pauma Valley that had about 500 forty-year-old camellias. She, being from Chicago, had no experience with this specie. I was intrigued with the vision of 500 mature camellia plants in, of all places, Pauma Valley.

I arranged a meeting with Kim at their place and was surprised that the three-acre lot was beautifully landscaped with giant oak trees providing a canopy for, among other plants, well-maintained camellias.

Since my experience as an avid hobbyist extended back only twenty-five years, I set out to get historical information about camellias in Pauma Valley. I talked with Tom Gilfoy who suggested Tom Nuccio who recommended his dad, Julius Nuccio. That got me in contact with the real guru of camellia history in California. Those of you, including myself, who have limited knowledge of the history of Descanso Gardens, will find it interesting that Manchester Boddy established Descanso Gardens as a nursery to provide boutonniere flowers for the Eastern flower market. This market was short-lived because cut blooms don't last long and flower blight hastened its demise. However, florists did like the vegetative limbs and foliage for floral arrangements. This secondary market thrived and prompted Manchester Boddy to establish a multi-thousand planting of foliage camellias for that market in Pauma Valley, North San Diego County. The venture was successful but age and health limitations prompted Mr. Boddy to sell this venture to the County of San Diego. It is now known and maintained as Wilderness Gardens. (Phone 760-742-1631)

We're not through yet. Howard Asper was associated with Manchester Boddy at Descanso and followed Mr. Boddy to Pauma Valley where he also planted thousands of plants for the flower foliage market. Mr. Asper's venture was also successful but, after time, his age and health prompted him to dispose of his plants. It is my understanding that his camellia plants were distributed to the local area residents, which brings us back to "triggered investigation." Until we get more definitive information, I'm assuming that Kim's 500 plants came from Howard Asper's dispersed foliage garden. Manchester Boddy's son Bob has a nursery at Ft. Bragg, California I called him as Julius recommended and confirmed basically what I've related This saga has many twists and turns that had to be glossed over but, to me, it is an interesting tale. We hope to hear more from Kim Paytas as she responds to either the "gold mine of camellias" or managing the "monkey on her back."

Question—what would you do with 500-800 mature camellia plants?

—Mel Belcher, Editor

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CAMELLIA STATIONERY

Our beautiful camellia notecards 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. Cards can be ordered through Dorothy Grier, 13229 Pipeline Avenue, Chino, CA 91710 (909) 628-1380. Make your check payable to SCCS.

If any camellia society would like to use these cards as fund raisers, orders for 25 or more sets are priced at \$5.00 each, including tax and shipping.

SOUTHERN CAMELLIA SHOW SCHEDULE FOR 2006

- January 7 Exhibitors and Judges Symposium Workshop
 Hosted by Southern California Camellia Council
 Descanso Gardens, La Canada
- January 14 and 15 Pacific Camellia Society
 Descanso Gardens, La Canada
- January 21 and 22 Orange County Camellia Society
 Roger's Gardens, Corona del Mar
- January 28 and 29 Southern California Camellia Society
 Descanso Gardens, La Canada
- February 4 and 5 San Diego Camellia Society
 Balboa Park, San Diego
- February 11 and 12 Southern California Camellia Society
 Huntington Gardens, San Marino
- February 18 and 19 Pomona Valley Camellia Society
 Community Center, La Verne
- February 25 and 26 Southern California Camellia Council
 Descanso Gardens, La Canada
- March 4 and 5 Kern County Camellia Society
 First Christian Church, Bakersfield
- March 11 and 12 "Late Bloomers" Show
 Descanso Gardens
 Hosted by Pacific Camellia Society

Join Australia and New Zealand Camellia Societies

Australia Society
\$22.00 Single
\$24.00 Family

New Zealand Society
\$22.00 Single
\$26.00 Family

These are U.S. dollars.

Send your check payable to Southern California Camellia Society
c/o Beth Stone
1997 Queensberry Road
Pasadena, California 91104-3351.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CAMELLIA SOCIETY

PROGRAMS FOR 2006

The Southern California Camellia Society meets each month at
The Los Angeles County Arboretum ~ Botanical Gardens
Located on North Baldwin Avenue in Arcadia just south of the I-210

The public is welcome to attend all meetings

Meetings begin at 7:15 PM with refreshments followed by bloom identification and a culture session at 7:30. The featured program begins at 8:00 PM and a camellia plant raffle concludes each meeting.

JANUARY 26 – WHAT'S NEW IN THE CAMELLIA WORLD? **Tom Nuccio** from the world famous NUCCIO'S NURSERIES will discuss and illustrate with camellia plants and blooms. Tom is always a lively speaker and very informative as he entertains and enlightens us with his knowledge of camellias.

FEBRUARY 23 –MY FAVORITE CAMELLIAS **Robert Ehrhart** a past president of the American Camellia Society grows and shows hundreds of outstanding blooms. He is a humorous storyteller who will show us some of his best flowers. This meeting held at Descanso Gardens at 1481 Descanso Drive, La Canada/Flintridge is jointly sponsored by the Southern California Camellia Society, Pacific Camellia Society and the Descanso Gardens to kick off the DESCANSO CAMELLIA FESTIVAL.

MARCH 23-WORKSHOP ON PRUNING CAMELLIAS BY THE SOCIETY'S BEST GROWERS Demonstrations for spring landscape pruning, pruning camellias for "show" blooms and hands-on pruning experience will be highlighted. **PLEASE BRING A CAMELLIA TO THE MEETING TO PRUNE AND TO RECEIVE SUPERVISION IN SHAPING YOUR PLANTS.** This workshop is recommended for all camellia lovers.

APRIL 27—ICE CREAM SOCIAL The year-end meeting will include awards, gift certificates to Nuccio's and a presentation by **Mel Belcher** showing slides of the year's winning blooms and candid shots of show attendees.

Something to ponder—

How is it that one careless match can start a forest fire, but it takes a whole box to start a campfire?

If corn oil is made from corn and vegetable oil is made from vegetables, then what is baby oil made from?

If electricity comes from electrons, does morality come from morons?

Do illiterate people get the full effect of Alphabet Soup?
Why doesn't glue stick to the inside of the bottle?

There are two kinds of pedestrians—the quick and the dead

MEMORIES OF TOICHI DOMOTO

Julius Nuccio, Altadena California

January 9, 1993

I've known Toichi Domoto most of my life, as a fellow nurseryman, as a plantsman, as a great friend, and as a competitor. Although competitor is not the proper word for Toichi because he was always a contributor, never a competitor. He was always a steady, quiet, humble person and never controversial and brought to the nursery industry integrity and a continued search for new and better varieties with honest evaluations.

I first met Toichi in the late 1930's. I had experienced several years of working in a full-line nursery and soon found myself hooked on the two greatest flowering shrubs on the earth, the camellia and the azaleas.

Camellia popularity was just coming in to a new, lively market with many interested gardeners and camellia hobbyists all searching for new and better varieties. The availability of varieties was quite limited; hence, my first trip to Hayward California and business with Toichi Domoto. At that time he was the leader in available stock as well as varieties and, of course, knowledge of both the camellia and azaleas. This man was open, with no secrets, and shared his knowledge and made many varieties available. I couldn't believe his sincerity and the humility that has been his trait all the many years of our friendship.

The demand for camellias of new and better varieties grew so rapidly that it created thirty or more camellia specialty nurseries in the southern California area alone, and many throughout the entire state. The race was truly on, and Toichi was ready with stock and an established nursery. However, along came Pearl Harbor—that's right, he was interned. I couldn't believe it!

These were very difficult years for Americans of Japanese descent, especially those with established

businesses such as Toichi. His lost business opportunities because of the war were truly tragic. Toichi never wavered even though being interned only proved to be half the battle. Upon his return at war's end he found that many in the industry continued to discriminate against the Japanese Americans hoping to keep them out of competition. This, too, was very hard to believe.

It was in these early years after the war that I realized what a great and sincere friend this man was. We at Nuccio's were able to get back into the camellia world, but not so for Toichi. Toichi called me one day in 1948. In order to get back in the race he wanted to know if we would supply him with some of the newer varieties. Of course, our answer was that we would be more than happy to. Upon completion of the order he said that his truck would pick up the plants at 6 a.m. This was fine, but then I wondered why such an early hour. Toichi gave us several such orders and each time the truck arrived at 6 a.m. for pick up. Finally I asked him why the early pick up. His reply was that he didn't want anyone to see a Japanese in our nursery for fear of hurting our business. This respect and consideration for others was always a trait of Toichi.

Needless to say, this man was soon back in the competition and contributing to the camellia world new varieties such as 'Ecclefield', 'Destiny', 'Scented Gem' and 'Shiro Chan', to name a few. 'Shiro Chan' was and is, without a doubt, one of the finest mutations ever developed. His testing of this camellia and preparation for distribution was truly outstanding.

Along with his own introductions, Toichi's distribution and confidence in the sasanqua camellia must be told. He was one of the first to predict that

some day the gardeners of America would benefit from the great fall color and versatility of this camellia species. It has taken years, but today the sasanqua is accepted as one of our finest flowering evergreen shrubs. The varieties that Toichi valued highly many years ago are still the most popular today. To name a few—'Hana Jiman', 'Hiryu', 'Momozono Nishiki', 'Naruigami', 'Nodama Ushiro', 'Setsugekka', 'Shinonome', 'Shishi Gashira', 'Showa no Sakea', 'White Doves' and 'Yae Arare'.

It should be obvious that our relationship grew well beyond fellow nurserymen and good friends. We became interested in each other's families and their futures. At each one of our meetings over the years, regardless of business, the conversation always was, "How are the kids?" This is where Toichi's life took another turn—his children chose different roads and are doing very well. Mine stayed to carry on the nursery business.

A nursery that produces and introduces new varieties should be family-oriented to be successful, and Toichi, with all his wisdom and knowledge, knew this. He realized that if he sold the nursery the Domoto tradition would no longer be and he would certainly not be happy away from what he has loved all his life. Hence, his decision to phase out his stock to a comfortable size that he could be relaxed in. In doing so he has given the young people at Nuccio's all of his selected seedlings for them to evaluate and market.

In the early years of his phasing-out program, the 1970's, he sent us two fine selected seedlings. One was a hybrid cuspidata and the other a sasanqua 'Shishi Gashira' seedling. In our testing it was quite obvious that both would be great new varieties and should be named and marketed. I called Toichi and told him that he had two fine camellias and that he should name them. I suggested to him that the boys at the nursery felt that his name

would be perfect for either one, as they both represented excellent qualities that he always strived for. His answer was firm; he did not want his name used and told me to tell the boys that whatever name they decided on, other than his, would be fine. The cuspidata hybrid was named 'Spring Festival' and the sasanqua 'Dwarf Shishi'. Both have been marketed and have won acclaim all over the camellia world. They represent what Toichi worked for—excellent landscape plants for the gardens.

At this time many of Toichi's seedlings are being propagated for future introductions. His nursery has phased down considerably, but not the man. His interests are still high for the new varieties. Recently we received another group of his seedlings for testing and know from his track record that they will all have merit.

Hopefully I have conveyed to the reader my feelings of respect and admiration for Toichi Domoto and his contribution to the horticultural and nursery industries.

Editor's note: Toichi Domoto died several years ago, but he left a wonderful legacy to all camellia lovers. This year, with the approval of Toichi's family, Nuccio's Nurseries is introducing a new japonica 'Toichi Domoto'. Described as slow growing and bushy with 4-inch strawberry pink blooms with darker stripes of red. Julius Nuccio wrote this tribute to his friend in 1993 to be deposited in the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley. The character, respect and admiration these two camellia giants had for one another is clearly reflected in this tribute. Should not this quality of honor for one another transcend time and reside in the hearts of not only camellia lovers but all men today? Thanks to Julius for making this living memory available to today's Camellia Review.

FOR SWEETNESS AND CHARM PLANT SASANQUAS

Roma Coolidge Mulvihill

Southern California Camellia Society Bulletin, December 1948

To the devotee of the simple form, *C. sasanqua* adds yet another worthy subject to the most familiar group of single and semidouble flowers. While their popularity may never equal that of the double and more formal types of the japonicas, we note that within the last five years the sasanquas are growing in favor not only with the artistically inclined but with those who enjoy an unpretentious naturalness above all else.

It has been said that in China and Japan, the japonicas with their heavy flowers and stiff uprightness are more often than not relegated to some obscure spot in the garden while the delicate sasanquas with their open airy habit of growth are accorded the places of honor.

Observation over a period of twenty years has proven to the writer that sasanquas have a far more various adaptability than japonicas despite the fact that small foliated plants are often difficult to use in a given planting or landscape scheme. First and foremost they can be successfully grown in full sun, even if their foliage is slightly lighter green in color than when planted in partial shade. Also, when given deep shade, they bloom much more freely than do the japonicas under similar condition.

About twenty-seven years ago D. W. Coolidge imported a quantity of seed from Japan and from this start the kinds known as 'Briar Rose', 'Blanchette', 'Tanya', 'White Doves' and 'Mininia' were the first sasanquas to be introduced to the trade in California (about eighteen years ago). All of the group were named by the writer.

With the exception of 'White Doves', the above are single, each with some distinguishing difference in color and form. Two features in common are their lovely golden stamens and a faint, woody fragrance.

'Briar Rose', a soft silvery pink, with slightly twisted petals, is somewhat slower in growth and more dwarf than the remainder of the group.

'Appleblossom', although a larger flower, closely resembles its prototype and, like 'Blanchette' (a pure white) is erect and tall in growth habit. The watermelon pink 'Tanya' is a pendulous type and, as exemplified in the McCaskill garden here in Pasadena, makes a most charming hedge which can be successfully cropped and kept within the required bounds. 'White Doves' has a feathery fragility, a delight to behold. It, like 'Tanya', is classed as pendulous or trailing and can be kept low as a ground cover or, when given support, may be coaxed up into the oaks or other spreading trees where its blossoms make a shower of white. The foliage of 'Mininia' differs somewhat in color, being slightly grayer and with a noticeably serrate edge. These dainty lilac-pink flowers are larger than the other single forms and do not fall as readily. This upright type also makes an attractive hedge. All of the foregoing espalier beautifully against a wall or trellis, or they may be trained on wire to edge a path exactly as the deciduous fruit trees are so abundantly used in the European countries. For pot or tub specimens they are most pleasant and, used in harmony with other small leaved evergreens or where desirable for contrast to other bolder foliated plants, they fill a much-felt want.

Today there are a few other singles and semidoubles in the trade, and at an early date some rarely beautiful kinds will be available. Culture identical with that of the japonicas is recommended and with imagination and an investigating green thumb, beautiful effects may be obtained with the charmingly simple sasanquas.

ESPALIER TRAINING OF CAMELLIAS

David Cook

Southern California Camellia Society Bulletin, March 1949

In this year's miserable winter, the worst in sunny California's recorded history, most if not all the plantings of tender subtropicals were burned and blasted beyond all hope of revival. Our showy and beautiful vines seemed to be among those hardest hit and Jack Frost dealt us all a painful and foul blow there. Our bouganvilleas, thunbergia, passion vine, copa de oro, hibbertia, bignonias, even sweet peas were done in most thoroughly. We left ourselves wide open for it. We planted knowing the material was borderline tender. We let our gardens grow up against and around a background of flowering vines and what have we? Those vines we so carefully trained and nursed for several years are reposing on the trash pile, not even good composting material. The gaps left in our gardens are as painfully obvious as a lost front tooth.

We are now faced with a choice of course to follow in repairing our damaged gardens. We may try those borderline subtropicals again hoping to take better precautions in the event of another such winter (provided, of course, that we are able to find such plant material this season), or we may decide on what seems to me the obvious course to follow. If you weren't camellia minded in the first place you wouldn't be reading this bulletin, so why not go whole hog and use camellias in place of vines. Sure, you can grow them as vines! Nuf said?

Espalier training of camellias may be more readily accomplished with some varieties than with others, so let us first consider those camellias which we have hitherto overlooked because of the objectionable ranginess of growth. The variety 'Marchioness of Exeter' for example is a beautiful flower but as a shrub it has a rotten habit of growth. 'T Deum', or 'Dr.

Shepherd' as the nomenclature birds have it, is another. Almost all the sasanquas fit in here, too. 'Purity', 'General George Patton', 'Francine', 'Chandleri Elegans', 'Gigantea' and many others are more rangy in habit than compact. These are good strong growers, but it takes a stouter brand of hero than most to keep after them with the pruners to make them bushy. We have plenty of compact growers as it is; let's consider some of these rangy types for a moment—they may get us out of an unhappy situation.

Many gardens have a stout and serviceable fence family known as "chain link" which, while good and strong, is not particularly attractive, all things considered. But it is a cinch for covering with camellias. Lots of circulation of air, little stored or reflected heat during summer and millions of places to tie to. Would such a fence look better with camellias growing on it? Need that question be answered? Or how about the front of the lath house, or across that lattice work at the east side of the patio, or that full length window with the blank wall space on either side. Would it or would it not look better with some espaliered camellias? And, come to think of it, could you or could you not find some use for a few portable espaliers to set around as a color screen when you're resting from your labors in the spring garden? Ever think of growing espaliers in tubs, h'umm?

I'll admit espalier work looks like a job for an expert, but after all, you aren't shy about your prowess with rooting cuttings or tying on grafts or inarching, or propagating from seed, so why fear defeat in this fascinating aspect of camellia culture.

The first and most important thing to consider is the exposure to be covered. If we have a warm east wall, we might best stick to the brighter

camellia colors as they are in many ways more tolerant of heat than the delicate pinks and white. Almost without exception we're perfectly safe in choosing any of the sasanquas for this exposure. Depending upon the size of the plant you start with, construct a light but strong trellis or lattice work that may be securely attached to the house or wall. One-by-one redwood strips are ideal. These should be nailed to blocks that are attached to the framework or to the house allowing room between the house and the strips for good circulation of air. A three or four inch space should be sufficient. As the plant grows and requires further support, add to the lattice work to accommodate the new growth. You will find in a few years time, as the branch structure of the camellias becomes hardened, that the plant may become independent of the starting support and guidance will be needed only for the new growth.

A geometric pattern need not be followed; quite often the camellia is more attractive if growth is maintained in just the same flat manner as a clinging vine. The lateral branch growth is valuable here insofar as it may be bent or tied to fill in any gaps in the espalier; beyond that need, however it should be pruned out so that greater development may occur in the "leader" branches. All ties should be made securely on the trellis but loosely on the plant so that circulation in the branches is not restricted. Any radical bends should be induced gradually; care must be taken not to place to great a strain upon any branch. As the branch becomes adjusted a further strain may be placed upon it, but always be gentle degrees until it is as you want it.

Once a lateral branch has sprouted "spur" branches you may expect to reap a fuller measure of blooms. These spur branches will, if headed back a

bit after blooming, produce still more spurs and in turn still more flowers for the following season. It's more interesting to note that nearly all of the blooms will be turned right side out so that the espalier crop may be enjoyed much more fully than camellias grown on the conventional shrub.

Incidentally, pest control is greatly simplified by this manner of culture.

A heavily shaded area will be greatly beautified by an espalier of, for example 'Alba Plena', 'Fimbriata', 'Debutante' or some of the other delicately colored varieties. Camellias such as 'Mary Charlotte' or 'Berenice Boddy' should be especially suitable for this location, too. The variety 'Kingyo-Tsubaki' with its unusual and lovely foliage should be given special consideration because it is interesting even without blooms, but so indeed are almost all the camellias.

I can think of no finer background for a bed of camellias than a living wall of espaliered 'Chandleri' or 'Francine'. And for a bed of late-flowering azaleas you might try an espaliered 'Purity' or for the early ones the sasanqua 'Pink Briar'. If you could go for that idea of tub grown espaliers for a portable screen effect, how about using 'C. M. Hovey' which is usually in bloom about the same time of year the sun is beginning to cast a little warmth? Would you enjoy just sitting in the garden looking at that? No matter what idea appeals to your fancy, you are sure to derive a great deal of pleasure from this interesting and creative mode of camellia culture. It is really simple and best of all you can safely replace most of your vines with camellias, one of the very few ornamental plants that "came through" the long-to-be remembered winter of '49 and presented a wonderful display of blooms within two or three days after the ice retreated.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CAMELLIA COUNCIL

2006 Camellia Show Schedule

- February 4 Napa Senior Center, 1500 Jefferson Street, Napa
Hosted by Napa Valley Camellia Society
- February 11-12 Community Activities Building, 1400 Roosevelt Ave,
Redwood City
Hosted by San Francisco Peninsula Camellia Society
- February 18 Atwater Community Center, 760 El. Bellevue Road, Atwater
Hosted by Atwater Garden Club and Camellia Society
- February 25-26 Community Recreation Center, 969 Kiely Blvd., Santa Clara
Hosted by The Camellia Society of Santa Clara County
- March 4-5 Pleasant Hill Community Center, 320 Civic Drive,
Pleasant Hill
Hosted by The Northern California Camellia Society
- March 11-12 Memorial Auditorium, 1515 "J" Street, Sacramento
Hosted by The Camellia Society of Sacramento
- March 18-19 E. & J. Gallo Administrative Building, Modesto
Hosted by The Camellia Society of Modesto
- March 25-26 Pilgrim Congregational Church Social Hall,
3673 North First Street, Fresno
Hosted by Central California Camellia Society
- April 1 ACS Convention in progress, Portland, Oregon
- April 8 Broadway Plaza, Walnut Creek
Broadway, Ehrhart Mini Show
Hosted by The Northern California Camellia Council



Continued from page 28

To help camellias to withstand extra cold, they should be protected from north and west winds in the winter. A fence or hedge will suffice most of the time. If severe cold weather is expected for an extended period, the plants can be covered with cloth or burlap.

Do not use plastic unless you can control it. Then, use clear or white and not black plastic. If plastic touches the plant, it could freeze-burn it. Plastic can be used over cloth, if it is removed before any sunlight hits it.

Heat will accumulate under the plastic, particularly black plastic, and fry the plant. Many people make wire cages and cover the cage with cloth and plastic. This creates a (portable and snug) cold frame for the plants inside.

Editor's note: An excellent reference book is *Growing Camellias in Cold Climates* by Dr. William L. Ackerman. Published by Nobel House, it is available through Amazon.com

SICK BAY

Bradford King
Arcadia, California

In June a friend of mine sold his home in Arcadia to move out of state. He gave me his six potted camellias. They all had some dead branches and light green, unhealthy foliage. They had been purchased in 2000 and 2001 as healthy plants from Nuccio's Nursery. None of the plants had ever been repotted, but had received cottonseed meal fertilizer each April.

One plant was so far gone it ended up in the green trash can! It was in a soggy potting mixture with only a few short roots. This illustrates the most common failure in keeping potted camellias—overwatering resulting in extensive root rot.

The 'Frank Houser' had light green brown spotted foliage. It was in a three-gallon pot in very soggy soil. I hope to be able to save this reticulata suffering from root rot. It is a favorite variety with its very large rabbit-eared rose red blooms. When well grown it is a vigorous and attractive plant. The first step was to remove all the dead branches. The second step was to remove it from the pot to examine the root structure. It retained only a few long roots.

The third was to remove as much of the old soil mix as possible without damaging the roots. The fourth step was to repot it in a loose rich potting mix of two parts of a commercial camellia mix, one part pine bark and one part oak leaf mold. I filled the bottom of the pot with medium fir bark to the top of the drainage holes before adding the potting mix. The 'Frank Houser' was put in "Sick Bay" under a tree and receives partial morning sun and adequate water. The final step was to drench it with Monterey Aliette one tablespoon for two gallons of water to treat *Phytophthora Cinnamomi* (root rot).

The 'Nuccio's Bella Rossa' had dry roots and a sparse leafy top. It had three dead branches but a number of

healthy branches too. The root ball had numerous healthy white roots. It was diagnosed as suffering from lack of moisture. Therefore, it was potted up to a five gallon pot in the potting mixture described earlier in this article.

The 'Betty Sheffield Blush' we had given to our friend as a house gift over five years ago. Since his mother's first name was Betty, and he was her only child, we had planned to buy 'Betty's Beauty'. However, when we were unable to purchase it in a three or five gallon size we opted to buy 'Betty Sheffield Blush'. Its nickname in the camellia nomenclature is "Wonder Child." This plant was in moderately good shape. It had good foliage, four seed pods and a good root ball. It had never been pruned and it looked like it! After pruning out all the dead, crossed branches and opening up the center it was potted up from a five to a seven gallon container. Nylon bags (half of a nylon stocking) were placed over each seed pod. It too was placed in 'sick bay'.

The 'Harold L. Paige' was also in decent shape in a three gallon pot of wet mix. It was pruned and repotted in its three gallon container following the same steps as outlined for 'Frank Houser'. Because it leaned to one side it was staked to help it grow upright.

The sixth plant was in soggy wet soil and had sparse light green foliage. When removed from the pot, root rot was easily observed. It was potted down, staked and treated in the manner discussed under 'Frank Houser'.

This plant had the original Nuccio tag but the name had worn off. My friend thought it was called 'Snow Flake'. When I checked the Nuccio catalogue and *Camellia Nomenclature* there was no listing for a *C. japonica* with this name. I asked my friend to describe the bloom. He said, "It's

white with the size and shape of 'Grand Marshal', but less compact." I reviewed the Nuccio catalogue and found a listing for a "large white, highly built loose peony form" flower called 'Snowman'. This name rang a bell with him! It seems most likely, if it survives, that 'Snowman' is a new addition to my collection. This story shows how wise it is to have nametags for all potted plants. It might also be handy to keep a notebook or listing of all camellias when you purchase plants to add to your collection. This can be compared to having 'back-up' for your computer for all you computer literate people!

This summer, during the time I was composing this article, I came across a quote by Benjamin Franklin that I like. While I have no illusion about being a genius, I hope it appeals to you too:

"Genius without education is like silver in the mind."

With that thought in mind, what have we learned reading this article?

1. Potted camellias need to be repotted or potted up every two to three years.

2. Camellias require a loose potting mixture high in humus that is slightly acid. Camellia roots need air. Fir bark, perlite or sand provide the necessary air space and assist in keeping the "soil" well drained. Humus and acidity are provided with oak leaf mold or peat moss. If you use peat moss, use a coarse peat mixture. Peat moss when wet gets soggy and, when it dries out, it is difficult to get it correctly moistened to the right level.

3. Water regularly as conditions require keeping a moist but not wet or soggy mixture.

4. Prune out dead, crossing and low branches as they add nothing to the stature of the plant. The finished plant is open and pleasing to look at.

5. Label your pots and plants and keep a back-up list.

One more thing I might add is to mention that my friend was highly successful in growing camellias as lush and beautiful landscaping plants.

In 2000 he extensively remodeled his 1950's California ranch house in Arcadia. This included removing all the shrubs and trees in the front yard.

We discussed using camellias and azaleas as landscaping for this northern exposure. We went together to Nuccio's Nursery. His aesthetic vision was to use only red and white flowers against dark green foliage and only in limited varieties in an informal three-tiered effect. He purchased a dozen 'Red Bird' azaleas for the lowest tier. 'Red Bird' has a large ruffled hose-in-hose flower. He chose five 'Nuccio's Gem' with its large formal double white bloom for the middle tier. Five 'Grand Marshal' plants were selected for the back row. The medium to large peony form dark red flowers are particularly striking. 'Grand Marschal' was a particularly easy choice for him as he was a big fan of the Rose Parade held in Pasadena each January! These camellias were all planted in the ground with liberal amounts of coarse peat mixed in to the soil. They were topped with a thick mulch of fir bark and were fed cottonseed meal. This landscaping is strikingly beautiful with its bright red and white blossoms. And later when the plants are no longer in bloom the lighter green azalea and dark lush green camellia leaves continue to provide an attractive landscape to the home.



I never did anything worth doing by accident,
nor did any of my inventions come by accident;
they came by work.

—Thomas Edison

The Camellia Bug . . . he'll getcha, if you don't watch out!

John H. Clairmont

Southern California Camellia Society Bulletin July 1950

Starting out some four months ago with one, or possibly two camellias, I now find myself with some three hundred plants and around two hundred seventy-five varieties. With meager beginning as a novice you suddenly realize you have a full time chore for week ends with watering, feeding and spraying, keeping your containers clean, you more than earn the flowers when they start blooming, or you can be like a friend of mine who stated that when the plants start blooming they are his and the rest of the time they are his wife's—get the point?

But seriously, let us discuss why we get so many and why we want them. Everyone has his pet variety whether it be single, semi double, formal or what have you, and they all can be had in different colors and variegations. Now why do we want them all? In the first place, the "camellia bug" is a persistent little cuss; he gnaws and gets in deeper all the time, and we simply must have everything our friends have, good, bad and indifferent.

I sometimes wonder if we just don't acquire a new name sight unseen. 'Jim Doakes' gets on the market or we hear about it even sooner than that, and we simply must have it—we get it on hear-say testimony. I recall one that I have, 'Breen's White'—not too well known. I waited three years for its first blossoms and

they were worthwhile, but nary a good flower since.

Some of the older varieties are still fine camellias and hard to beat, but that does not satisfy us. We must get into the revolving cage with the rest of the squirrels and around and around we go until we get every name we hear about. Please note that I say name because I believe that is what it amounts to. We leave no stone unturned until we get a plant or scion of that new red hot number.

We can't have them all, that is certain, so to properly build up a choice collection of camellias—quality and not quantity—let us approach our hobby sanely and acquire only a few new varieties each season, and then only after we have seen a representative flower. In that way have more time for their care and enjoying.

Just because I like 'Susie Q' is no reason why you should. Tastes and likes vary. If that were not so, we would not have horse races.

Now of one thing I'm sure. Regardless of the food for thought this article may provoke, you and I will still build up our collection the same old way; want everything within sight or hearing, become very secretive, and still go on thinking we're having lots of fun. If you are like me, you should realize the "Camellia Bug" has really got you.

•••••

Junk is soething you've kept for years and throw away
three weeks before you need it.

Learn from the mistakes of others You can't live long enough
to make them all yourself.

Whatever hits the fan will not be evenly
distributed.

LAZY MAN'S PERFECT HOBBY—THE CAMELLIA

Author Unknown but John Clairmont suspected

Southern California Camellia Society Bulletin July 1950

Life is a lot more interesting when we can be frank and honest with ourselves even though we don't like to always express that same frankness to our friends. Which all leads to one thing. We are all somewhat lazy.

The degree varies with different people. Some are just naturally lazier than others but I am just plain lazy in many things. That is why camellias are my hobby. This may or may not be the reason so many other people have adopted the camellia for theirs.

You can enjoy and have the most beautiful camellia plants and flowers with so little effort. Of course you must plant them first of all but no plants or shrubs are any easier to get into the ground. It is good to put a little leaf mold and peat moss into the ground when planting but that is only a temporary help. It decays and the roots eventually reach way out beyond the benefit of the materials put into the soil originally. Many good plants are planted without the benefit of anything but the native soil. Many of mine are planted with nothing more than virgin sandy soil. They are doing well probably because they do get some fertilizer once in a while.

When one gets over being too lazy, you can feed them a little good food. Latest research seems to clearly indicate that it makes very little difference whether the soil is slightly acid or slightly alkaline. Some people feed their camellias a couple of times a year. Others seldom ever and other quite often. I know of one plant about 10 feet high that grew wonderfully well without benefit of fertilizer for several years. It grew well but this is not to be construed that you should not feed your plants because they should definitely be fed.

Another thing in my lazy makeup that makes the camellia appeal to me is that the roots grow near the surface of the ground. Therefore do not

cultivate around them. That's what I like. Don't dig around them. Just plany, feed, water and let grow. Of course you can pick lots of blossoms.

You can plant camellias in almost any part of your yard. I have them on the north, south, and east and west side of our house. In deep shade and in full sun. They seem to grow equally well. Don't be so lazy that you fail to consult your favorite nurseryman to get his advice on which to plant where or consult the Nomenclature book. In general, just plant the lighter shades in the shade and the darker in the sunnier locations. Another thing is to also consult your nurseryman to be certain you do not get a plant that drops its buds most of the time.

In order to save additional work, you can plant a ground covering to keep the weeds out. Thus you see the camellia is really the Lazy Man's plant. You can grow them in very heavy soil or exceedingly sandy. In very hot climates such as the San Joaquin Valley, Imperial Valley, Sacramento Valley or in the colder climates of Washington and Oregon as well as the Southern States. At this time the main growing of the camellia seems to be restricted to certain areas but it is believed they can be grown in most other sections of the United States. One thing is to get other Lazy Men who are willing to try them.

One thing about the hot desert areas is that in many cases the blossoms are even prettier than in the Los Angeles area. The hot climate does something for some plants and their flowers. Remember you can grow beautiful flowers in almost any part of California. You never have to get up in the night to smudge or cover your camellias. They have survived the coldest freezes we have had in California. One thing of which you can be certain—you will have your

camellia plants irrespective of the weather or temperature.

Don't worry about the bugs and aphids. Once in a while you might get a few aphids on some of your young leaves. Just wash them off with the hose or squash them with your fingers. That is a very effective way of getting rid of them. You don't have to spray them. Once in a while you might get a bug on them but don't let it disturb you. Pick them off or just let them alone. Camellias so seldom ever get buggy that you can almost forget about them. Just sit in your lazy chair and watch them grow.

Maybe you can be like Huckleberry Finn and get some one to trim or espalier some of your plants into interesting patterns and designs.

You can grow a wall of camellias against your house or fence. Prune them if you like to give a flat effect if you haven't much space. You can have a beautiful tree or a hedge which can be pruned to shape. Better get Huck to ask your nursery man which plants to use if you want to produce certain desired effect.

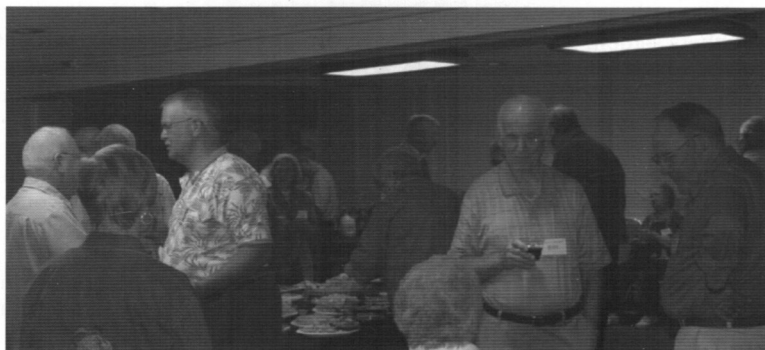
The principal thing is to be sure and let the "Camellia Bug" get a good bite on you, then you can plant as many plants as your pocket book will permit. Water and fertilize them, then watch them grow and flower. They are really a "Lazy Man's Plant"—that's for me.

Editor's note—This article is published with "a grain of salt."

MORMORIES OF CAMELLIA-RAMA 2005 HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



Friday night—good eats and good fellowship



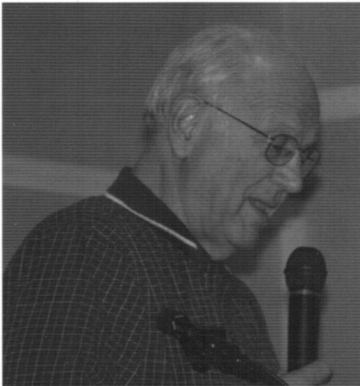


Barbara Tuffli shared the visions that ACS has for the 21st Century.



Chris Gonos, master organizer of events and details.

Art Gonos, always the amiable MC, talked about petal blight.



Above— Jim Toland told the group about sudden oak death syndrome.



The audience enjoyed Tom's enthusiasm about new things happening at Nuccio's Nurseries.



The Burches are in the "party" spirit. Deane had a tail to pin on the donkey.



Ann Walton was all smiles.

The Judge and his lady join the birthday celebration.



Mad Hatter Bergamini and cohorts!





Virginia Rankin was the
Birthday Cake!



Bob and Linda Ehrhart, aka Sherlock
Holmes and Violet, celebrated their first
anniversary at the birthday party.

QUESTIONS AND "HOWEVERS" ABOUT CAMELLIAS

Ray Bond
Dallas, Texas

Many camellia growers have problems with their camellias fading after they have bumped them up into larger containers. On occasion, some or too many of them begin to go downhill.

Why is this happening? Ray Bond tells everybody that camellias are easy to grow, but others have said that growing them is tough. Who is right? Are they big sweat or no sweat? I continue to say that the answer is "no sweat." There are many "however's" to camellia growing and all of them are simple matters of doing it right the first time.

With anything you plant, that "no sweat" means that you may have to abandon some old habits that may have worked for other crops. Let's look at some of these problems and what we can do about them. Many of these camellia problems may be obvious and are no problem to you, but read my mail or answer my telephone for a month and you will know they have been purple problems for many growers.

1. Sun. The sun is bright and hot. Camellias with two exceptions that I am familiar with cannot stand full sun. I suggest at least 63% shade in the summer and at least 40% in the winter. This may be increased in warmer climates and areas of more direct sun. If shade cloth is not available, a grove of trees (pine are best) will suffice and many nurseries use pine trees for shade. The primary "however" here is that some camellias can be grown in full in some coastal areas where the humidity is high and remains that way. But even then, it will be prudent to grow *C. japonicas* under shade cover. Other species, such as *C. sasanqua* and winter-hardy *C.* hybrids PROBABLY won't need shade in high humidity areas.

2. Planting too deeply. This one cannot be stressed enough. Camellias will drown. Camellia roots need air. Camellias should be "planted high" because they need a roots on the surface of the soil to help them get air. The crown of the plant should be an inch or more above the surrounding soil surface. Many nurserymen and landscapers take pains to cover these surface roots. Then they wonder why they lose the plants. Drowning camellias appear to have sudden affliction of root rot. *C. sasanqua*, *C. oleifera* and many of their hybrids do not get *Phytophthora cinnamomi* (common root rot.) More camellias are lost due to planting too deeply than from any other cause.

3. Soil mix. Camellias need air down in the root area. A tight soil mix with no air spaces can cause drowning or root rot. My recommended soil mix of 20% sharp sand and 80% 2 or 3 year aged pine bark mulch. Some nurserymen throw in about 10% pine bark "nuggets" and that is great. Pine bark nuggets contain trapped air. Look into a root ball that contains them and you will see roots hanging on to these nuggets very tightly. Add enough dolomitic limestone to this mixture to raise the pH to 6.0. PEAT MOSS SHOULD NEVER BE USED; it fills the pores and air spaces in the soil mix, depriving the roots of needed air. Pine bark contains an agent that retards fungal (phytophthora) root rot.

4. Root rot. We have covered the reasons for root rot, now for the remedies. There are two kinds of root rot that affect camellias. The first, *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, affects *C. japonica* and *C. reticulata*. It doesn't affect *C. sasanqua* and *C. oleifera*. Prevent it with a treatment of Subdue® once every four to six months. For mushroom root rot, be

sure your soil is clean. Mushroom root rot (*Cylindrocladium crotalariae*) is caused by using creek sand or silt which is contaminated with the fungus. A clean soil mix will fix this problem. This fungus rarely attacks mature and established plants. If your *C. sasanqua* and/or *C. oleifera* appear to have root rot, they are too wet and drowning. See paragraph 3, above and paragraph 7, below.

5. Mixing fertilizer with the soil mix or too much fertilizer. This applies to polyon coated fertilizers, such as Osmacote, which are released by warm temperatures. When temperatures get hot, these fertilizers can "dump" on the roots and burn them. Camellias should be fertilized from the top, allowing the roots to "eat" as the nutrients are flushed by them from above. Overfed camellias may exhibit severe leaf burn, leaf browning on the older leaves and the younger ones wilt and turn black. If your camellias appear to wilt, looking like they need water and the plant seems to be plenty moist, they could be overfed. If possible, repot in soil with no fertilizer in it and flush the plant with fresh water. In any event, try to flush out the fertilizer salts.

6. Tight roots. When plants are bumped from one size container to another, growth problems can appear. Many people, when bumping from one-gallon containers to three-gallon or larger containers wait until the plant in the one-gallon container is 50% root bound before they bump it up. This will retard camellia plant growth. A plant can sit for a year or longer in its original root ball with very few roots reaching out into the soil in the new and larger container.

Those outside roots on the plant can be pulled out or cut (about 1/4" deep) into the root ball, vertically down the root ball in three or four places around the diameter of the ball, in order to release these roots. Personally, I discourage slicing the roots. It is sort of like using one damaging practice in an effort to cover

another. The plant is shocked and growth delayed.

Trapped roots have an awful effect on the ultimate customer. He starts to put the three-gallon plant into the ground and the soil falls away from the smaller root ball. The customer feels cheated. He paid for a three-gallon plant but received a scraggly one-gallon plant, disguised as a larger one.

7. So - I recommend that "trade" gallon containers never be used for small camellia liners. Instead, use the "full" gallon containers. They encourage better rooting due to the fact that the roots have space to grow.

8. Camellia dieback. Dieback is a disease caused by the fungus, *Glomerella cingulata*. Sometimes it is confused with root rot. A twig of new growth suddenly wilts. Or, a canker appears on the trunk or on a limb. Cut off infected areas down to clean wood. Many sterilize their pruning shears with Isopropyl Alcohol (IPA) from the local drug store between cuts. (However, we have discovered that this "sterilization" may not be necessary unless the wood is oozing. We have ceased to use it at our nursery with no ill effects.) Infected wood is brown with an orange cast. Dieback is spread when contaminated water splashes on new growth or a plant wound, such as a leaf drop wound or a cut in the bark. *C. sasanqua* is generically more susceptible to dieback than *C. japonica*, but some cultivars of *C. japonica* seem to go out of their way to look for it. Some cultivars are easily infected; some are not. It is more prevalent in areas of high humidity and in foggy areas, the costs of controlling it may not be worth the trouble.

A prophylactic spray of captan mixed with Cleary 3336 (both WP) at a rate of two pounds per 100 gallons is recommended in the spring. Add a little dishwasher detergent as spreader-sticker. Spray every two or three weeks, beginning in early April,

continuing through May or early June. Recently, Heritage® has been found to have a very beneficial effect against camellia dieback, but there are some “howevers” that will be discussed in a later article on this subject.

9. Cold. Plants in containers will give up one hardiness zone as compared to plants established in the landscape. That is, if the camellia you have in the container is rated to zone 7, store it under zone 8 conditions in zone 7 or colder weather.

10. Rodents. In the winter when food is scarce, rats, voles, rabbits, and squirrels love to eat camellias, one way or another. Use the usual rodent poisons and get a cat or two. If you get a cat, give it a warm and friendly place to live feed it enough to keep it around. A cat will gather varmints for you and will shut them down. There are also a few interesting traps that will help, but cats, whether you like them or not, are consistently the most effective.

11. Scale. Camellias are susceptible to scale insect attacks. Tea

scale on leaves under the lower limbs is the first place scale attacks. Use the usual scale eradication remedies and keep preferred hosts for scale away. Camellias, while not being preferred hosts for scale, are solidly in the number two group of hosts. This subject will be discussed further in another article.

I know a lot of this is redundant to what you already know and what has already been written here. But, others are having these same problems and questions. Sometimes we better understand what we observe when it is put into context. I hope this gives you some sort of context.

Brand and trade names and treatment portions are given for reference only. Consult your State Agricultural and Pesticide agencies for recommended chemicals registered by the State. Always follow instructions on the label.

CAMELLIA CARE—JANUARY TO APRIL

Ray Bond
Dallas, Texas

January

Camellias Grown Inside: Many growers move their containerized camellias into greenhouses or cold frames for the winter. This will protect them and enable them to bloom without danger of freezing or losing the blooms. Keep the inside of the cold frame at about 33°F to 37°F. If the outside temperature drops to 28°F or below, heat the house. Residual heat in the ground will be worth 4°F to 5°F and probably keep the temperature above freezing.

Camellias go dormant when temperatures fall below 40°F for three nights in a row. You don't want to wake them up. They will bloom

anyway when the temperature is low. Cold weather “triggers” blooming.

Blooms are composed of up to 90% water. Some plants may need extra water to support their blooms, particularly if allowed to bloom profusely or produces large blooms. Extra water is good protection from cold weather, if applied a day or two prior to the onset of the cold. Be sure not to over water and drown your camellias. Camellias must have serious drainage and watering for winter should not be so much that this drainage is interrupted.

Camellias Grown Outside: Mulch and water are the keys to successful outside winter care of camellias. Camellias grown outside should be

well mulched with pine bark nuggets or pine straw. An average or four inches with five or six inches up the trunk will not hurt in the winter. Keep the mulch loose so that it will trap air that camellias need. Mulching will keep the roots warm and prevent loss of moisture as well as giving the roots access to oxygen. Don't use hardwood bark or leaves for mulch. These materials tend to mat, get soggy, and deny oxygen to the surface roots.

Take care of your plants to allow them to bloom and, in very cold weather, expand your care program so that your blooms have a chance to survive. Very cold December or January weather can damage buds and plants.

Protect camellias from wind chill. The wind chill factor that you hear about on radio and TV also applies to plants. Give your camellias a break: a wind break against the prevailing cold winds. A fence or natural wind break will go a long way in saving plants in the landscape.

If your plants are in containers, remember that a zone 7 plant must be stored under zone 8 conditions, unless stored under controlled conditions. In other words, plants lose one hardiness zone from their normal hardiness zone tolerance level if they are in containers.

If you believe the cold weather has killed a (planted in the ground) camellia, cut it off at ground level. Seal the stump with a good (water based) plant wound sealer. Place a pine (straw or bark "nugget") mulch around and over the stump. Odds are very great that the plant will sprout from the roots if the root system is strong and the ground around the roots stayed above 25°F.

Grafting: If you graft camellias, we believe that January is the best time to do it. The root stock and scion are still dormant, but will soon be ready to emerge and grow. There is a short period in mid-summer during which grafting can be done, but summer grafts can be very "iffy."

February

Middle to late February is the beginning of the late blooming season and is nearing the end of the cold season, except for an occasional "Nor'-Easter" or cold front coming in from the northwest. There really is not too much to do for camellia plants except protect them from the cold.

If plants are dry and watered just before freezing weather, the sudden onset of cold can split the plant wide open or otherwise freeze kill it. The water will be taken up by the cambium layer, but the pulp will not have sufficient time to absorb it and transfer it upward, thereby evening the water distribution within the plant. Uneven water distribution will enhance splitting and hasten freeze kill.

Pests: In late February, pests can damage good blooms and healthy plants. If there is unusually warm weather, ants, via their herding of aphids, and slugs will damage blooms. Ants will herd aphids to the buds and the sucking and honeydew of the aphids will ruin them. Ants will also go into the bloom for nectar and, if nothing else, you may find blooms filled with ants.

Nocturnal mollusks, slugs and snails, will go into a bloom for a nice bite of the tender new growth, bloom petals or a drink of nectar. Their slimy trails will leave brown streaks on petals, thereby ruining blooms. I have seen prize blooms mauled by slugs and snails.

In late winter, voles and squirrels like to chew the soft bark around the base of camellia plants. Voles (sometimes called "shrews") will completely sever a camellia trunk in a few minutes. The camellia will look like a miniature beaver sawed it down. They love the soft cambium, particularly when they cannot get to anything else, such as acorns. Be wary of voles; they can be a real problem. Cats are a great solution for rodent problems.

March-April

Late March is a transition time for camellias. Late blooming cultivars are about to end their season, while those that have completed their blooming cycle are getting ready to put on new growth, if they have not already started it.

Inspection: Many growers of containerized camellias choose March, after the plants have bloomed, to inspect the plants thoroughly and make changes as necessary. It pays to check conditions of the roots. If the plant is root bound, bump it to a larger container. If the roots look unhealthy, prune the bad roots away and repot it, changing the soil. Good, healthy roots are white; sick or dead ones are dark brown.

Pruning: The best time to prune is late March or early April, immediately after all blooms have passed and just before the plant begins to put on new growth. The next best time to prune is September, to shape the plant before sending it to market.

When "pinching" cut the plant or branches back to a new growth bud. This must be done prior to the plant adding any spring growth. These buds and nodes will form the new growth for the following season. Bloom buds form on the new growth of the previous spring.

When giving a camellia a thorough LANDSCAPE pruning, thin out the plant from the inside by removing the small, inside and crossover branches. Prune each branch back to a new growth bud or node, leaving the bud or node on the plant. If an entire branch must be removed, be sure not to cut it flush to its main branch or trunk. Cut it back to the collar just outside the main. This will hasten healing. Research has shown that removal of terminal buds inhibits root growth. The worst thing that can be done is to "crew cut" camellias or use hedge clippers on them.

Spring Fertilizing: As soon as your plants have finished blooming in late March or early April and before

new growth is well under way, fertilize them. Use a good fertilizer with trace elements. For this first yearly feeding, I like a 3-1-2, 2-1-1 or similar ratio fertilizer that includes trace elements. Apply according to directions on the bag. There is a tendency to over fertilize and this can be damaging to camellias. You might want to cut the recommended dose by about 20% and add that much, by volume, of composted cow manure or cottonseed meal. Some nitrogen should be ammonia based in the spring. This gives fast growth. We apply Jack's Secret™ each spring, to promote plant health, faster growth, greater bud set, and larger blooms.

Trace elements can be overdone, particularly zinc, copper and boron. Recent studies have indicated that excessive quantities, which may not be much, of these elements in the soil can be damaging, if not fatal, to your plants. If in doubt, eliminate trace elements and add them separately. Cutting back fertilizer containing these materials will serve to reduce the potential for damage from overdose. However, good commercial fertilizers containing trace elements, such as Scott's Pro' Kote™, Nutricote™ and Wood Ace™ and other reputable, slow release, trace element containing fertilizers should not evoke concern about this problem.

Should directions on the fertilizer container be vague or uncertain, you may want to use the following rules of thumb for fertilizer application. If the plant is in the ground, a two cup helping of fertilizer around the drip line of the plant for about every five feet of height, should be sufficient. If the plant is in a container, one tablespoon placed per three-gallon container is sufficient. Cut the quantity accordingly for smaller containers and add accordingly for larger.

Disease Prevention: Pick up and destroy any brown or brown spotted blooms that have fallen from your camellias. They may have petal

blight, an invasive, bloom decimating fungus for which there is no known cure. Petal blight is mostly found in warmer and more humid camellia growing areas and usually appears in late and warm blooming season. It can be transported from place to place in infected containers.

A pine needle mulch around the plant will greatly retard petal blight as well as keep the roots protected, cool and happy. Black ground cloth covering the area around the plant or container will greatly retard this disease.

Petal blight manifests itself as a small brown spot on the bloom that rapidly expands to consume the bloom. After the bloom has been attacked and fallen to the ground, a short, dime sized gray-brown toadstool grows, releases spore and the cycle is repeated. There is no known treatment, other than prevention, for this fungus. Good hygiene will help eliminate and/or prevent petal blight. Treat the ground around the plant with Terrachlor™ if you think you have discovered petal blight. This treatment will break spore release part of the three-part life cycle, but not all three.

Continually inspect for camellia dieback. Dieback is very active in the spring. Cut off any branches or twigs that look dried up and dead. Cut them back to clean wood. Immediately destroy these infected branches. Spray the plant with a captan or Manzate™ or Dithane™, Cleary 3336™ mixture, two tablespoons each per gallon of water. Add a few drops of Ivory™ or Joy™, as a surfactant, to this brew. If the wound is large, smear the wound with this mixture. Let it dry and cover it with a water based wound paint.

Soil Mix: March-April is a good time to plant cuttings that you have received from a cutting vendor or rooted over the winter. As a soil mix, I recommend about 80% pine bark mulch (aged two or three years) and 20% sharp sand. NO PEAT MOSS OR "LANDSCAPE MIX!" Peat moss fills

the voids in the mixture, denying the roots of needed air space.

"Landscape mix" is a generally a mixture of softwood barks. It prevents air from getting to the root and drowns camellias. "Landscape mix" even needs a heavy dose of nitrogen to help it decay. In order to get this nitrogen it takes it from the surrounding soil. It is also very acid (low pH). If extra nitrogen is applied to compensate for this loss in the soil, the level of nitrogen required in a short period may be sufficient to burn plants trying to live in the stuff.

Add 8 to 10 pounds of dolomitic limestone for every cubic yard of soil medium to raise the pH to 5.5 to 6.5. This is a good, light, easy to handle mix. If you use this well draining soil mix, you can move rooted camellia cuttings directly into full gallon and larger containers, avoiding time consuming and labor intensive continual bumping from smaller to larger containers.

If you wish to "charge" this mixture, mix in 20 pounds of cottonseed meal (CSM) or 20 pounds of composted cow manure per cubic yard of soil mix. Horticultural cotton seed meal, as a fertilizer, hasn't burned anything yet, so it is tough to use too much, but there is a point of diminishing return wherein residues can clog air spaces in the soil mix. The price has gone up with the advent of its use as a cattle feed. (Don't use cattle feed CSM; it contains salt.) Quantities suggested herein will suffice. COMPOSTED cow manure won't burn, either. These organic fertilizers can be a "secret weapon" to give your plants a good "kick start."

Relocating Camellias: Prior to moving camellia containers to summer locations, place a layer of gravel to the depth of about two inches under them. This will assure good drainage and lessen the chance of root rot by helping eliminate water puddles. A sheet of polyethylene under the gravel will discourage voles and mice from invading and help stop

invasive roots of other plants from growing into containers. This is another good application for used poly. Punch small holes in the polyethylene to let water drain through. Black ground cloth over the gravel will give you a firm base for your containers.

The better the care during this March and April growing season, the stronger the plants and the better the blooms will be during the following winter. Camellias add new growth in March and April; they set buds in May and early June. In July they may put on more new growth. (Bloom buds don't form on this late growth. It is very good for taking cuttings for propagation.) After that, the camellias are gathering strength for the blooming season.

Spraying: When the temperature is between 40°F and 80°F, spray horticultural oil or dormant oil for scale insects. Be sure to follow directions. Scale larvae are moving at this time of year and are very vulnerable. Kill them now for better and healthier plants! Scale is the largest, ongoing insect problem of camellias.

The captan or Manzate™ or Dithane™/Cleary 3336™ spray mixture (above) is an excellent prophylactic spray for dieback and other possible fungi. Some growers also add dormant oil or Sunspray™ Horticultural oil to this mix for the first spraying, thereby solving two problems with one spray. The combination works well.

Sunspray™ mixed with Orthene™ (50) will also protect the new growth on the camellias from insect damage such as aphids and mealy bugs. I am not a fan of spraying for the sake of spraying. Prophylactic spraying is OK and should be done as required. Strong, healthy plants are much more resistant to insect and disease damage than weaker ones. The horticulture growth supplement, Jack's Secret™, as well as being a growth enhancing agent, strengthens plants against

disease and insect damage.

Varmints: Pests begin to show themselves in the spring. Mice that lived in and among the plant containers in the winter, eating tender roots, will become more apparent. Poisons and cats should be used for control. Voles love camellias and will chew them off at the base or remove the bark to eat the cambium around the base. Evidence of vole damage is plants being cut down at the base, as if done by tiny beavers.

Voles like the dark. Rat poisons are very effective for voles, when placed where voles run. The best deterrent for voles is a mousetrap baited with apple slices and peanut butter. Place the trap by any small animal hole you can find or next to a damaged plant and cover it with an empty plant container. The mousetrap will do the rest.

The mouse trap technique for voles is much safer for cats and dogs. Squirrels can be as big a nuisance as voles, if given the opportunity. Squirrels and rabbits love the cambium and will girdle a plant in late winter and early spring when other forage is scarce. They will eat new growth. Rabbits are best controlled by dogs, cats and traps. Cats and rat poisons are good vole (and squirrel) control agents. Squirrels can be worse than rats. A North Carolina State University zoologist stated that squirrels should be regarded as rats with bushy tails.

March and April, as stated at the beginning, are very important months for camellias. The better the care during this growing season, the stronger the plants and the better the blooms will be during the following winter. The rest of the year, they are gathering strength for the blooming season.

Brand and trade names and treatment portions are given for information and reference only. Consult your State Agricultural and Pesticide agencies for recommended chemicals registered by the State. Always follow label instructions

WINTER-TOLERANT CAMELLIAS

Ray Bond
Dallas, Texas

Perhaps the most frequently asked question about camellias is about one of the most perplexing problems camellias present: cold weather limitations. How much cold can they take? Temperature limits have been a restriction as well as a paradox; most camellias, other than some *C. sasanqua*s, need a "shot" of cold in the range of 35°F to 40°F to "trigger" buds opening into blooms. They also need time below 40°F to go dormant.

First, let's put to rest an old idea about camellias and the cold. Most nurserymen have been told that *C. sasanqua* with withstand more cold than *C. japonica*. This is not true. Generically, *C. japonica* is tougher. There are exceptions to both sides of this contention and we have seen them. This idea probably came about because most *C. sasanqua*s bloom in the fall and the blooms are largely missed by the cold of winter. *C. sasanqua*s then go dormant and remain so during the balance of the winter.

Case in point: *C. sasanqua* cultivar Yuletide. It is a fairly tough, nice looking plant *sasanqua* that had a pretty little single bloom. However, rarely is it seen to bloom because it blooms at Christmas time and its blooms are killed by the cold. The plant generally withstands the cold if planted properly.

The temperature question must be taken apart and further defined. There are some camellias that cannot tolerate cold weather and will be killed by a surge of winter. There are others that have genetic makeups that lets them outperform their cousins. Further, if they are properly planted, located and protected, they may withstand temperatures approaching 0°F to perhaps a few degrees below that.

These camellias known as "winter-tolerant" and the ones we will discuss, here. For many years, very little was known about cold tolerance of

camellias other than what camellias growers noticed in their private collections. Not much could be attached to this information other than it was a good place to start. So, not much was accomplished until the severe winters of 1983/1984 and 1984/1985 when temperatures went below zero in camellia growing areas. Then the results of cold damage were kept and camellias that survived were noted.

Locations and surroundings of these plants were noted. This data helped determine not only which cultivars were tougher than others, but verified what most camellia growers and landscapers know: Protection from strong north and west winter winds have very positive effect on camellia survival. The late J. Stewart Howard used to say that one of the best places to grow camellias is in a pine grove surrounded by a windbreak. As usual, he was right.

In the winter, if your plants are in containers or balled and burlapped, place the containers in sawdust. Heat produced as the sawdust decays will help to keep them warm. If you can, place them in cold frames or otherwise keep them above freezing during very cold weather.

In the landscape, extremes of sun, wind, low humidity and sudden cold snaps are enemies. Keep soil moisture as even as possible and don't water immediately before a cold snap. Watering immediately before a sudden cold spell will encourage uneven absorption of water and can cause the plant to split. Do water several days before the advent of very cold weather.

Now, which camellias, other than the new varieties just appearing on the market, do best in cold temperatures? Of course, the healthier the camellia, the better its chances for winter survival.

There are several *C. japonica* cultivars (that are classified as winter-tolerant) that, when cared for properly, will survive in the temperature range from 25°F to 0°F with minimal, if any damage to the plant other than blooms. Bud damage may occur. These *C. japonicas* are excellent landscape plants and some are show quality. Most discovered to date are old *C. japonica* cultivars, which for the most part, are readily available.

Winter-tolerant camellias are not to be confused with winter-hardy camellias, some of which will withstand temperatures to -15°F under the proper circumstances. These camellias are, with a few significant exceptions, are camellia hybrids of selected *C. oleifera* and other camellia species.

A list of "old favorite" winter-tolerant *C. japonicas* follows. It is difficult to classify in exact order which cultivar is stronger than which. The following are in approximate order, Paulette Goddard probably being the most winter-tolerant. All are old *C. japonica* cultivars and have been around for many years. This list is for reference, only and is not set in stone. These are typical; there are more. Formal and informal research is bound to continue. All camellia growers have experience with other *C. japonicas* that have withstood very low temperatures and could be added to this list.

* Non virus (variegated) infected

plants are stronger than those with virus variegation.

** 'Gov. Mouton' has been renamed 'Aunt Jetty var.' This old *C. japonica* cultivar will continue to be sold as 'Gov. Mouton' for many years.

You will note that there are no white blooms on this list. Camellias with white blooms are usually not as strong as those with colored blooms. 'Frost Queen' is about as winter-tolerant white as there is, but it is not as strong as the colored *C. japonica* cultivars. One of the best white *C. japonicas* for cold weather is probably 'White-by-the-Gate,' a medium sized, formal double flower that is sometimes streaked with red. 'White-by-the-Gate' is not quite as strong as the usual winter-tolerant *C. japonicas*.

There are more, beautiful *C. japonicas* that handle cold weather very well, down to -5°F and maybe below. These comprise the 'April Series' of *C. japonicas* introduced by Dr. Clifford R. Parks of Chapel Hill, NC.

More are waiting for positive identification. The above list was compiled by many camellia people who have researched and studied the subject in depth and who have witnessed the ability of *C. japonica* cultivars to withstand cold temperatures in the range from freezing to zero and a degree or two below zero with protection.

Continued on page 11

Name	Color	Size	Form
'Paulette Goddard'	Rose Pink	Medium	Rose Form
'Paulette Goddard Var.*	Rose Pink/var.	Medium	Rose Form
'Aunt Jetty'	Red	Medium	Peony
'Gov. Mouton'**	Red/var. white	Medium	Peony
'Debutante'	Pink	Medium	Peony
'Berenice Boddy'	Light Pink	Medium	Semidouble
'April (series)'	Red to Lt. Pink	Various	Various
'Prof. Sargent'	Red	Medium	Peony
'Kumasaka'	Red	Med/large	Semidouble
'Kumasaka Var.'	Red/var. white	Med/large	Semidouble
'Lady Clare'	Deep Pink	Large	Semidouble

DIRECTORY OF CALIFORNIA CAMELLIA SOCIETIES

ATWATER GARDEN CLUB & CAMELLIA SOCIETY; President—Sherry Miller; Secretary—Pam Jambor, PO Box 918, Atwater, CA 95301, Meetings 3rd Tuesday, September-June, 6:30 p.m. St. Nicholas Episcopal Church, 1635 Shaffer Road, Atwater.

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NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CAMELLIA SOCIETY: President—Mary Bergamini; Secretary—Don Bergamini, 2023 Huntridge Court, Martinez 94553 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—Steve Mefford; Secretary—Bob Sheriff, 27333 Paseo Laguna, San Juan Capistrano 92675. Meetings: 1st Monday, October-April, 7:00 p.m. Dept. of Education Building, 200 Kalmus, Costa Mesa

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SAN DIEGO CAMELLIA SOCIETY: President—Gene Snooks; 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.

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SANTA CLARA COUNTY, INC., CAMELLIA SOCIETY OF: President—Kathleen Hall, 1085 Tasman Drive #13, Sunnyvale 94089. Meetings: 3rd Wednesday, October-April, 7:30 p.m., Lick Mill Park, 4750 Lick Mill Boulevard, Santa Clara.

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