

THE  
*Camellia*  
REVIEW

A Publication of the Southern California Camellia Society



Reticulata Hybrid 'Mouchang'



Wild *C. japonica* John Wang  
saw in his visit to China.  
See John's article on page5.



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## THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR

As we start our sixteenth year as Editors of the Southern California Camellia Review, Bobbie and I want to stress the fact that we did not accept the "honor" as a lifetime appointment. We accepted the job as a temporary bridge, which means we've been recruiting a permanent Editor for fifteen years. Even temporary editors are encouraged to apply

It is interesting to note the change in technology used in publishing the Review since 1992. Bill Donnan, Glen Smith and Pat Greutert used the "cut and paste" method and generated paper ribbons of print to be carefully arranged for the final printing. Starting in 1993, Carol Stickley, a computer whiz with a degree in graphic design instantaneously helped us change production from "cut and paste" to a complete computer job. After a few years with Carol's tutoring, Bobbie was able to do the computer layout in addition to the typing. Today we take one single disc to the printer and, after a couple of weeks, we pick up the "ready to mail" Camellia Review. Even the use of photographs has changed. No more "color separation" requirements. We even receive photos by e-mail that can be included on the disc! Because Bobbie is the major laborer in the production of the Review, our Board decided at our last meeting to make her a Co-Editor.

In this issue, as in past issues, you will find an interesting report from the "archives" as well as new up-to-date articles. Having lived in Las Vegas, I was impressed with the creative measures taken by Howard Wald and his wife to grow impressive looking camellias. We will look forward to continuing reports from Howard. We appreciate Brad King's work and research with hybridizing. Now that he has "retired," we will undoubtedly someday marvel at his success. You will enjoy John Wang's extremely interesting article about visiting camellias in their native habitat in China.

Happy reading and gardening. Keep those camellias well cared for — the show season will be upon us sooner than you know. We know that our friends "Down Under" are just beginning their show season. We have great memories of seeing some of those beautiful camellia shows two years ago.

—Mel and Bobbie Belcher



Of all the wonderful things in the wonderful universe of God, nothing seems to me more surprising than the planting of a seed in the blank earth and the result thereof.

—Julie Moir Messervy

Let no one think that real gardening is a bucolic and meditative occupation. It is an insatiable passion, like everything else to which a man gives his heart.

—Karel Capek

In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.

—Margaret Atwood

On every stem, on every leaf ... and at the root of everything that grew, was a professional specialist in the shape of grub, caterpillar, aphid, or other expert, whose business it was to devour that particular part.

—Oliver Wendell Holmes

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*A note from the other side of our continent —*

“Yes, spring's here. Actually, we've had full leaves on trees just for the past couple days. There are so many maples, they all come out at the same time and suddenly the world is green again.

I inherited 13 camellias this year from the other fan in our little town of 3000. Gene Garber, my octogenarian friend of many years, asked that I take his plants before he died in June. The greenhouse was glorious this winter. The plants bloom on a schedule similar to southern California, if chats with my mother are a good indicator. Come April, they begin feathering. By May, they're ready to go outside. I have found through unfortunate experience that deer will come right up to the front door to get the new leaves, so I really have to leave them inside longer than they'd like. Once they're hardened off, though, no deer. Perhaps that's because by then there are green things to eat in the woods, not in the entry way of humans' houses.

—Marshall Brewer  
Putney, Vermont

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## CAMELLIA SHOWS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA 2009

<b>January 10</b>	Camellia Judges Symposium 9:30 to 2:30 p.m. Descanso Gardens Southern California Camellia Council	La Canada
<b>January 17 and 18</b>	Pacific Camellia Society Bloom placement 7:00 – 10:30 a.m. Show Chairman: Tom Gilfoy	Descanso Gardens
<b>January 24 and 25</b>	Orange County Camellia Society Bloom placement 7:00 – 10:30 a.m. Show Chairman: Steve Mefford	Rogers Gardens Corona del Mar
<b>January 31/February 1</b>	So. California Camellia Society Bloom placement 7:00 – 10:30 Show Chairman: Brad King	Descanso Gardens
<b>February 7 and 8</b>	San Diego Camellia Society Bloom placement 8:00 – 10:30 a.m. Show Chairman: Dean Turney	Casa Del Prado Balboa Park San Diego
<b>February 14 and 15</b>	So. California Camellia Society Bloom placement 7:00 – 10:30 Show Chairman: Brad King	Huntington Gardens San Marino
<b>February 21 and 22</b>	Pomona Valley Camellia Society Bloom placement 6:00 – 10:30 a.m. Show Chairpersons: Les and JoAnn Brewer	Community Center D Street, La Verne
<b>February 22</b>	Pomona Valley Camellia Society Mini Show Bloom placement Noon – 2:00 p.m.	Community Center
<b>February 28/March 1</b>	So. California Camellia Council Bloom placement 7:00 – 10:30 Show Chairman: Wayne Walker	Descanso Gardens
<b>March 7 and 8</b>	Camellia Society of Kern County Bloom placement 6:00 - 10:00 a.m. Show Chairman: Mel Canfield	East Hills Mall 300 Mall View Road Bakersfield
<b>March 14 and 15</b>	Pacific Camellia Society “Late Bloomers Show” Bloom placement 8:00 – 10:00 Show Chairman: Wayne Walker	Descanso Gardens

# VISITING THE HABITAT OF WILD *C. JAPONICA* IN CHINA

John Wang

During the Sixth Chinese National Camellia Show and the Chinese Camellia Hybridization Group meeting held at Dali City, Yunnan Province, China in February 2008, I had opportunities to make many new camellia friends from different regions in China. Professor Nih Hui of Ningbo University, Zhejiang Province, kindly asked me, "Are you interested in visiting the Zhoushan islands to see the habitat of wild *C. japonica*?" "Of course, I would really love to go," I replied.

*C. japonica* is generally regarded as native to China, Japan and Korea. Mr. Harold A. Fraser wrote an article in the 1983 ACS Year Book about his search for *C.*

*japonica* in China. He made three trips to China, particularly to Sichuan Province. However, he concluded that "his findings remained obscure" about the origin of *C. japonica* in China and suggested that the habitat was possibly destroyed due to the long history of human settlement in the area.

I also had a chance to meet a Japanese camellia scholar, Mr. Sugiwaru Sinosi, when I was in China in 2003 and 2005. He is a very devoted camellia expert and thought that *C. japonica* had possibly evolved from *C. pitardii*. Yet he was frustrated to not find any forests of wild *C. japonica* in China. He made at least ten trips to China and climbed many

mountains of camellia species habitat areas. He told me that he found some cultivated *C. japonica* plants in many places but no wild *C. japonica* forests. Obviously he was searching for *C. japonica* in the wrong places. Today information about camellia species in China is better organized and more available to the outside world.

I believe the evolution of camellia species has been developing over a long biological time, beyond the human establishment of nations or tribes. Many natural forces such as water flow, wind, birds, animals, earth movement and even human migration would channel the spreading of camellia species.

Professor Gao Jiyin once told me about one of his interesting findings. He found that one camellia species habitat was confined within a very limited small area, basically among a few ridges of rock formation. Mr. You Muxiam, Vice President of Chinese Camellia Society, indicated in the recent ICS meeting in England that the

habitat of *C. azalea* is associated with mountain streams and was found only on either side of riverbanks in narrow strips along the stream flow. It is safe to suggest that the many rivers in China could serve as natural transporters of camellias from Yunnan and Sichuan Province to the east and to the south of China

I agree that some of the *C. japonica* trees could have been destroyed due to a long history of



Harvested camellia wood being transported for construction or home use

human agriculture activity. During my trips on country roads in China I have seen that many post-sized 4 to 6 inch diameter trees are being used for constructing farmhouses or for other structures. Yet there is another important factor in Chinese culture.

Ten famous flowers are listed as the floral standard in China. The Chinese classical flowers should be very unique in elegance, fragrance, coloration or appearance. The sentimental value and appreciation of flowers have been very universal in China. A single flower form, which would include many camellia species growing in the vast wild

mountains and countryside, would draw little attention for consideration as a show flower

In early March 2008 before my departure from China, I learned that the Dali Camellia Society had reported the discovery of a huge forest of wild *C. reticulata* near Dali City. I thought that mountain locals likely had seen the area often for over one thousand years but only recently learned the important role of the wild form of *C. reticulata*. The elaborated appearance of today's camellia flowers, *C. japonica* and *C. reticulata*, were actually originated and evolved from the wild single form flower of camellia species.

I found out later that I would join a team of three botanical scholars. Dr. Nih Hui, Professor of Lin-Bo University is also known for her expertise in DNA analysis on camellias. Dr. Li Giyuan is the Chief of the Research Department of Subtropical Forestry Research Institute at Fuyang, Zehjiang Province and is also an accomplished camellia

breeder in China. Mr. Wang Guming, head of Dinhai Agricultural and Forest Bureau, Zhoushan, Zehjiang Province published a research paper in Huangzhou, China in 1998 about the distribution of *C. japonica*, the "East China Tea Flower," among the



Dr. Ni Hui collecting samples

Zhoushan Islands. This three-person team was making a joint effort to collect leaf and flower samples from three Zhoushan islands. They had already collected samples of wild *C. japonica* from Japan and Taiwan Province in previous years. A comparative study on the samples of wild *C. japonica* will be made by methods of DNA identification at their

research institutes.

It took us three days to collect camellia samples respectively from three islands, Zhoushan, Putuo and Taohua Island.

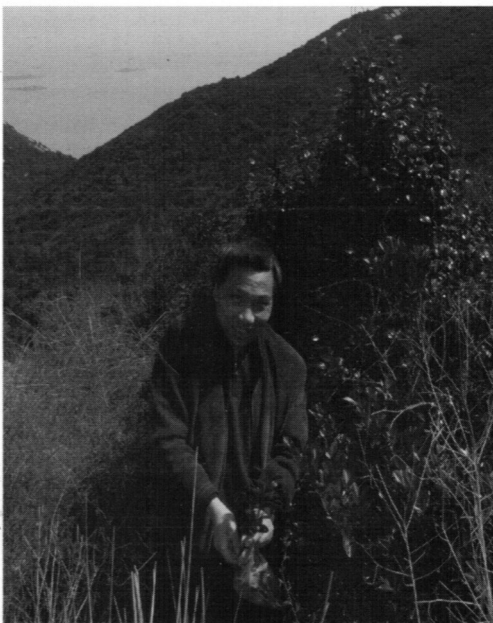
1. Zhoushan Islands: The well-preserved wild hilly area is the habitat of *C. japonica*. The valley-like sloped land is open to the sky and sea breeze and camellia bushes are numerous. Under the sun, the leaves of *C. japonica* bushes show the shining reflection as seen in my picture. The plants are about 5 to 7 feet and healthy in appearance. Obviously it is hard to tell the age of wild camellias even when they are about 3 to 4 inches in diameter. The soil is loose, reddish in color and the root seems to reach down between a sub layer of gravel and soil mix. The flowers are red, single and small in size.

2. Putuo Island: I visited this island during 2003 ICS post tour. We saw a few rather large camellia trees around Buddhist temples and also a large camellia tree near some old

houses. Putuo is one of four famous Buddhist shrines in China. Millions of visitors and worshippers walk on the trails year round. However, in the sheltered areas only a short distance from the trails, there are many wild *C. japonica*. The plants are tall, 10 to 18 feet, and the canopy area is shady. We spotted many young seedlings on the ground and many seedpods were collected from the branches. The flower is identical to that of camellias at Zhoushan Island. This finding indicates to me that, under different environments, *C japonica* would modify its plant appearance to adapt to either a harsher or better environment.

3. Taohua Island: This "Peach Blossom Island" is beautiful and has a rock formation base shore with a sandy beach. A very long wooden deck trail is an easy way to walk along the shoreline to see breathtaking nature and sea waves. The wild *C.*

*japonica* are scattered among the other natural bushy plants along the trail. Wild *C. japonica* plants are very close to sea where the plants are more stocky and short. The flower is also a single red; however, we spotted some plants with wide streaks of color variegation on the petals in white and pink.



Dr. Wang Guming

A brief of the research paper Investigation on the Distribution and Habitat of Wild *C. japonica* in

Zhoushan Island was published in 1998 by Wang Guming:

Zhoushan Islands is at the south of the Yangtze River opening to the East China Sea. It is composed of a group of 1383 islands. The researchers visited 10 larger islands where a variety of wild *C. japonica* trees were found. The island area is warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer compared to the mainland area. Rainfall is about 936.3 to 1330.2 mm. Average annual temperature is 15.6 to 16.6 ° C. and the non-frost period ranges from 251 to 303 days. The ground is saturated with reddish thick fertile soil and/or with a medium gravel-type composite. The area can be windy and possibly salty in certain locations. *C. japonica* bushes were found in areas 10 meters from seashore to 300 meters elevation in hilly area. Many other plants including *Distylium gracile*,

*Cyclobalanopsis*, *Machilus thunbergii*, *Liquidambar formosana*, black pine and so many others are found in the same location. The height of wild *C. japonica* ranges from .5 meter to 3.5 meters. However, only 46 old and large wild camellias trees were counted during their visit most of which were preserved within the Buddhist temple area. The tallest one is over 33 feet.

In conclusion, I had a wonderful trip and learned more about the habitat of wild *C.japonica* in China. I



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am grateful for the invitation to visit Zhoushan islands. Research study will reveal the relationship about the origin of *C. japonica* among China, Taiwan Province and Japan. There have been direct efforts to preserve habitat areas of wild *C. japonica* in China. I can't wait to see their research results, which will be published about one year from now.



Notice the sunlight reflecting off the camellia leaves.



A graduate student is collecting samples at Peach Blossom Island.

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## CAMELLIA HYBRIDIZERS: WHAT ARE THEY THINKING?

Bradford King  
Arcadia, California

What goes through the mind of a camellia hybridizer? Have you ever wondered how the Nuccio family developed more than two hundred new camellias? What does probability theory have to do with John Wang's approach to hybridizing? What did the contrarian thinking of Meyer Piet contribute to hybridizing? How does the thirty five years of experience help Dan Charvet breed landscape camellias? This article focuses on these questions.

The Nuccio family have been growing and hybridizing camellias since 1935. Almost every year they make new introductions; for example this year it is 'Rosy Pillar', a single rose pink medium bloom sasanqua with wavy petals. It is a good landscape choice where width is limited because it grows upright like a column. How have the Nuccio Nurseries introduced so many wonderful show flowers and excellent landscape camellias?

First and foremost this was accomplished through hard work, patience, experience, and the strong ties among this gregarious Italian American family. BUT, what went through the minds of Julius and Joe in the 1940's and 1950's? Well, I can't presume to know. However, when we examine the tremendous body of the Nuccio's work, we discover one very important truth—the great significance of chance. Yes chance! Not luck! This powerful concept underlies the science of genetics. It was highlighted in Darwin's publications on evolution. But what does this have to do with camellias? Nuccio's Nurseries has planted thousands of camellia seeds every year for seventy-three years. Jude Nuccio estimated between 35,000 and 45,000 last year. The goal is to develop a few camellias over the next five to ten years that are good enough

to offer to the public. This is the power of chance and the genetic variability that lies within a seed.

The most common listing in the Camellia Nomenclature of the thousands reviewed is "chance seedling." The second most common is "chance seedling—insert the name of a camellia." This leads us to ask, what is a chance seedling? I could say the result of Mother Nature. However, if we apply the first sex education lesson it would be the "birds and bees." Specifically, the pollen from one flower is transferred to a second flower by bees, insects and hummingbirds. This becomes the seed parent. If a seed pod develops and the seed within is allowed to germinate a "chance seedling" with unknown parentage is the outcome. A camellia grower who harvests many unidentified seeds and germinates them may have hundreds of chance seedlings. It is nature's way of developing new plants. It is the original and most basic method of hybridizing. Since it works, it continues to be used.

A "chance seedling" of (insert name of a camellia here) is also accomplished the natural way—through the birds and bees. However, in this case the grower keeps track of the name of the seed parent until it blooms which could take up to ten years. This is a simple idea and simple to accomplish with a plant label. However, "Lady Luck" may interfere over the ensuing years. For example, your grandson playing in the garden removes the labels and proudly presents them to you. Or a Santa Ana windstorm in February knocks over most of the three year old seedlings and blows the tags all around. Or a skunk looking for grubs overturns a hundred five year old plants leaving the labels in a random mess. Now you have a "chance

seedling" of unknown parentage.

An excellent example of Nuccio's hybridizing is their work with 'Tama-No-Ura'. They were aware that the genetic white border was a unique and appealing trait of this japonica. Is the picoteed border an inherited trait? The answer was a resounding "Yes!"

They collected hundreds of seeds from 'Tama-No-Ura' and germinated them. The final result was the introduction of nine varieties with white borders. These are "chance seedlings" of 'Tama No Ura' because the seed parent is known but not the pollen parent.

The Nuccios have used chance and marinated its potential with hard work, experience and years of dedication. This is not luck. It is harnessing the power of genetic variability to produce new camellias.

Chance is part of probability. How do we improve on chance? John Wang, of the Northern California Camellia Society, best articulates probability theory in his writings, talks and hybridizing program. As he says, if one throws four dice each with a six on every side, it would take over a thousand trials to get all of the sides to come up with a six. Therefore, if each die represents one of the following flower characteristics—color, flower size, petal appearance and flower form—this illustrates the low probability of developing a new camellia. John wants to increase the probability of producing unique and distinctive camellias. These are his recommendations.

First, think like an artist in the midst of the creative process so you can envision the new bloom.

Second, set clear hybridizing objectives.

Third, select parent plants that have the characteristics of your objectives.

Fourth, screen parent plants thoroughly to ensure that the seed parent sets seed.

Fifth, be disciplined. Specifically,

repeat the identical crosses to produce many seedlings, germinate all of these seeds from controlled crosses, and cultivate all of them until they flower.

The following is an illustration of how I understand what John Wang is saying. First, in my mind's eye I see a very large rose *reticulata* bloom with wavy petals and a white border growing on a substantial plant. This is my artistic vision and my objective. There are no genetic white borders, to my knowledge, on any *reticulata* hybrid. Thus, if my objective is obtained, the flower would be unique and distinctive. What seed parents fit the objective? I am considering 'Margaret Davis' or 'Tama Americana'. They are both beautiful rose red medium flowers with white borders that grow well. 'Margaret Davis' is visually preferable with its more complicated peony flower form and show-winning successes, but it doesn't set seed or have much, if any, pollen. I would, therefore, choose the semidouble 'Tama Americana' as it sets seed and has pollen. We need a second parent with traits fitting our objective. It must be a *reticulata* but it won't have a white border because that trait doesn't yet exist. In my opinion 'Frank Houser' fits the objective. It is rose red, very large, semidouble to loose peony flower with rabbit ears, has a vigorous open and upright growth habit, sets seed and has an abundance of pollen. In this illustration either parent can be seed parent or pollen parent which should increase the probabilities for success if we remain disciplined and follow John Wang's recommendations.

This recipe for increasing probability is a hallmark of John Wang's successful hybridizing program. However, Meyer Piet portrays a different point of view by what I call his "contrarian" thinking. The problem-solving skills Meyer developed in the aerospace industry undoubtedly contributed to his

success as a camellia hybridizer. He was a non-linear thinker, one who could think outside the box. Meyer Piet reasoned that, since popular easy-to-cross camellias when crossed with each other resulted in uninteresting flowers, they were a waste of time and space to cultivate to get results. Meyer reasoned that using difficult, non compatible crosses could produce unique seedlings. Therefore, he picked *C. granthamiana* to use as a seed parent. It is a large single white specie that is not usually compatible with other camellias. In addition, it takes up to a year for seeds to germinate even in a green house. This contrarian line of reasoning led to a brilliant red bloom with white speckles and large rabbit ears when he crossed 'Crimson Robe' with *C. granthamiana*. He named this *C. reticulata* hybrid 'Sean Armijo'.

The themes of chance, probability, scientific reasoning, and creative problem solving are all part of a camellia hybridizers mind set but so is the accumulation of knowledge gained through experience. Dan Charvet's thirty-five years of experience breeding camellias for the landscape highlight this significance. Dan is from Fort Bragg in Northern California where the average summer high is 65°F. He discovered that *C. japonica* do not set seed in these low temperatures. He also found that *C. reticulata* will set flower buds and set seed in very low heat. Therefore, *C. reticulata* and its hybrids became the basis of his program. He focused on breeding landscape camellias that are

self-grooming, look good in bloom, have attractive foliage, are strong and vigorous and have deep roots that enable the plant to conserve water. Toward these ends he developed his own seed plants.

Based on this data and experience Dan offers several important insights. First, contrary to what many of us have learned, *C. reticulata* hybrids are not difficult to root. Second, it is not necessary to use the highest quality of parents. Dan writes, "I have two very productive seed parents of *C. pitardii* var. *yunnanica* x *C. yunnanensis* each of which, based on their morphology alone, are worthless as garden plants." He reports that when these plants were crossed with a fragrant F2 cross of *C. japonica* 'Crimson Robe' x *C. fraterna* the results were seedlings in various forms, sizes and colors.

Experience and a willingness to experiment are common factors with all of these successful hybridizers. They all also share a passion for camellias and dream of better varieties. An additional similarity is their profound belief in the genetic variability of camellias especially when the lesser known species are part of a hybridizing program.

In conclusion, we have had a glimpse into the minds of several hybridizers. The importance of chance, probability, genetic variability, discipline, non-linear thinking and experience when woven together into whole cloth are the thinking processes of a camellia hybridizer.

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## CAMELLIA AND AZALEA CULTURE IN THE SOUTHERN NEVADA, LAS VEGAS DESERT AREA

Howard Wald  
Las Vegas, Nevada

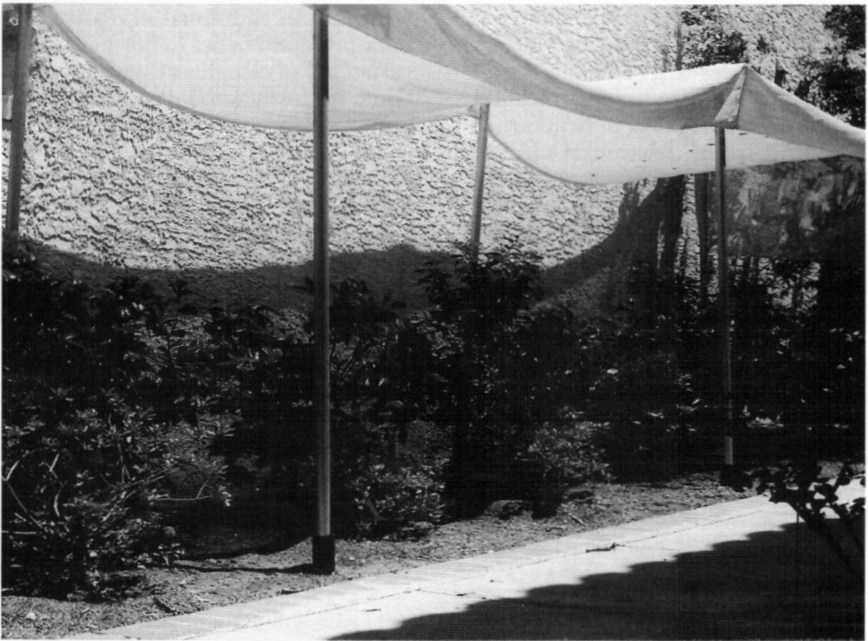
When my wife and I retired from Glendale, California and settled in Las Vegas, Nevada, we attempted to create a garden environment similar to the one we enjoyed at our home in Glendale. We quickly learned that many of the plants and trees we were familiar with simply would not make it here.

Roses and irises do very well in Las Vegas as do many fruit tree. We were advised that camellias and azaleas simply would not survive here. Las Vegas sits in the middle of an arid high desert. It is very hot and dry in the summer (110° to 118°) and cold and dry in the winter. Sometimes it freezes. Worst of all, however is the so-called "soil." It consists of sand and rock with frequent caliche underlay, does not drain well and has less than 1/2 of

1% of organic material. Worst of all, it is highly alkaline. To further complicate matters, the water available for irrigation is also alkaline.

Although the local nurseries advised against attempting to grow camellias, we decided to take up the challenge and give it a try in 2002.

We had a flowerbed in which we had been growing irises. This bed was located with a neighbor's house just to the east of our own house to the west. This provided shade in the morning and, most importantly, protection from the afternoon sun. We previously prepared this bed by removing the rocks and introducing a large quantity of organic material in the form of commercial mulch. Luckily, drainage was excellent. Of course, we had to change the acid



Summer canopy protecting garden from sun. The canopy goes up early June through late September.

alkaline balance of the soil which we did with the introduction of several bales of peat moss. Irrigation was provided by conventional pop up sprinklers, which were adjusted to provide some spray for the foliage.

After allowing the bed to "mellow" for a period, we ordered an assortment of camellias, azaleas and a few gardenias from Nuccio's Nursery in Altadena, California. We had done business with Nuccio's and their knowledgeable staff for several years when we lived in California and can attest to the fact that they are the best. Nuccio's staff expressed concern for the success of our project, but they helped us select plants they believed would provide our best chance.

The plants were shipped with balled roots and, upon their arrival, we immediately set about planting. The principle that guided us through the planting process is one that all serious gardeners in Las Vegas follow. "If you want to plant a \$10.00 plant, you must dig a \$50.00 hole." Following this principle, generously sized holes were dug, lined with quality peat moss and then filled in with more peat moss. This planting material was watered as we worked to ensure that it was moist all the way down the sides and to the bottom of

the hole.

I must say at this point that, in spite of our best efforts, none of the gardenias survived. The other plants struggled initially as well. During the peak of summer — June, July, August and September, they received three to four hours of direct sun during the hottest period of the day and you could almost see the damage to the foliage taking place. To protect the plants we rigged a PVC pipe frame and secured a sun-shielding material to the top. This step, together with periodic light spraying with water from a hose, made all the difference.

We lightly fed a commercial camellia-azalea plant food listed at 4-8-4 (Nitrogen-Phosphate-Potassium). These feedings included a sprinkling of Kerex super iron chelate for alkaline soils followed by a thin topcoat of peat moss. The feedings followed the schedule recommended in Nuccio's catalog. Our experience has been that, when feeding camellias and azaleas, particularly in a



A five-year old 'Moonlight Bay'

hot dry environment, less is better than more. Nuccio's catalog information indicates that over feeding can cause damage that will take years to correct.

Following the procedures listed above, we enjoy a thriving camellia and azalea garden that displays shiny

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healthy foliage and an abundance of flowers during the blooming season.

We were recently in Los Angeles and stopped by Nuccio's to pick up a couple of azaleas. Tom was aware that our gardenias had not survived and asked us to try a new one — 'Miami Supreme' grafted onto *Gardenia Thumbergia*. We planted it and it appears to be doing well and has a new bloom and four buds about to open. Some of you may wish to give it a try.

In conclusion, the steps for a successful camellia-azalea garden in a hot, dry, high desert environment, we have done well with the following:

1. Prepare an acid-rich bed with good drainage
2. The bed should be in an area protected from the sun.

3. Water with sufficient frequency to keep the soil damp but not web.

4. Feed lightly and in accordance with the schedule in Nuccio's catalog.

5. Scatter peat moss lightly over the bed at each feeding.

These methods have worked for us and we hope they will be helpful to those of you who want to grow these beautiful plants in a less than perfect environment.

*Editor's note: Howard's patience and enthusiasm should encourage those who are struggling with less than perfect growing environments. Thanks for sharing the results of your hard work and your pictures, Howard.*

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## NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CAMELLIA SHOW 2009 Show

### Best Flower of Show Sweepstakes

Most Blue Ribbons  
Runner-up

### Award of Excellence Challenge Award

'Ruta Hagmann'

Gordon & Barbara Goff

Don & Mary Bergamini  
Don & Joan Lesmeister  
Don & Mary Bergamini  
Don & Mary Bergamini

### Japonica — Very Large

Best Single  
Runner-up Single  
Best Tray of 3

'Junior Prom'  
'Swan Lake'  
'Junior Prom'

Tony & Natalie Miranda  
Larry & Nancy Pitts  
Tony & Natalie Miranda

### Japonica — Large

Best Single  
Runner-up Single  
Best Tray of 3

'Rachael Tarp'y'  
'Lady Laura'  
'Nuccio's Carousel'

Larry & Nancy Pitts  
Don & Joan Lesmeister  
Don & Joan Lesmeister

### Japonica — Large/Very Large

Best Tray of 5

'Nuccio's Carousel'

Don & Joan Lesmeister

### Japonica — Medium

Best Single  
Runner-up Single

'Nuccio's Jewel'  
'Margaret Davis'

Larry & Nancy Pitts  
Leone Wildemann

Best Tray of 3	'Magnoliaeflora'	Bob & Nancy Steele
Best Tray of 5	'Magnoliaeflora'	Bob & Nancy Steele
<b>Japonica — Small</b>		
Best Single	'Grace Albritton'	Julie Enwla
Runner-up Single	'Dahlohnega'	Don & Mary Bergamini
Best Tray of 3	'Splash O' White'	Harlan Smith
Best Tray of 5	'Little Susie'	Bob & Linda Ehrhart
<b>Japonica — Miniature</b>		
Best Single	'Kiku Toji'	Bob & Nancy Steele
Runner-up Single	'Tama-No-Ura'	Bob & Nancy Steele
Best Tray of 3	'Mansize'	Jackie Randall
<b>Reticulata or Reticulata Hybrid — over 5 1/2"</b>		
Best Single	'Phyllis Hunt'	Bob & Linda Ehrhart
Runner-up Single	'Emma Gaeta Var.'	Tony & Natalie Miranda
Best Tray of 3	'Queen Bee'	Bob & Linda Ehrhart
Best Tray of 5	'Paprika'	Larry & Nancy Pitts
<b>Reticulata or Reticulata Hybrid — less than 5"</b>		
Best Single	'Valentine Day'	Larry & Nancy Pitts
Runner-up Single	'Valley Knudsen'	Bob & Joanne Logan
Best Tray of 3	'Valentine Day Var.'	Bob & Linda Ehrhart
Best Tray of 5	'Bravo'	Hal & Deane Burch
<b>Non-Reticulata Hybrid — over 4"</b>		
Best Single over 4 1/2"	'Julie Var.'	Don & Joan Lesmeister
Runner-up Single	'Betts Supreme'	Don & Joan Lesmeister
Best Single under 4"	'First Blush'	Larry & Nancy Pitts
Runner-up Single	'Les Jury'	Don & Mary Bergamini
Best Tray of 3	'Julie Var.'	Don & Joan Lesmeister
Best Tray of 5	'Nicky Crisp'	Don & Joan Lesmeister
Best Tray of 5 Miniatures	'Night Rider'	Julie Vierra
<b>Best Collection of 9 Small/Miniature Blooms</b>		
Don & Mary Bergamini		
<b>Best Collection of 3 Different Size Blooms</b>		
Tony & Natalie Miranda		
<b>Best Collection of 5 Different Japonicas</b>		
Don & Joan Lesmeister		
<b>Seedlings</b>		
Best Large/Very Large	'Shirley'	Paul Goodall
Best Medium		Bob & Joanne Logan
Best Miniature/Small		Gary & Carol Schanz
<b>Youth</b>		
Best Single Japonica	'Black Magic'	Ashley Enwla
Best Single other than Japonica	'Julie Var.'	Ashley Enwla
<b>Best Single named</b>		
after NCCS member	'Ruta Hagmann'	Gordon & Barbara Goff
<b>Novice</b>		
Best Single	'Junior Prom'	Mary Frances Kane
Runner-up Single	'Island Sunset'	Primo Facchini



**CAMELLIA SOCIETY OF SACRAMENTO**  
**84th Annual Show**  
**March 2008**

<b>Best Flower of Show Sweepstakes</b>	'Sir Robert Muldoon'	Don & Joan Lesmeister
Most blue ribbons		Don & Mary Bergamini
Runner-up		Don & Joan Lesmeister
<b>Japonica — Very Large</b>		
Best Single	'Royal Velvet Var.'	Bob & Linda Ehrhart
Runner-up Single	'Black Magic'	Pat Hardman
Best Tray of 3	'Royal Velvet Var.'	Don & Joan Lesmeister
Best Tray of 5	'Royal Velvet'	Helmuth & Leone Wildemann
<b>Japonica — Large</b>		
Best Single	'Happy Harlequin'	Don & Mary Bergamini
Runner-up Single	'Grand Slam'	Hal & Deane Burch
Best Tray of 3	'Mariann'	Hal & Deane Burch
<b>Japonica — Medium</b>		
Best Single	'Veiled Beauty'	Don & Joan Lesmeister
Runner-up Single	'Matterhorn'	Don & Mary Bergamini
Best Tray of 3	'Yours Truly'	Julie Vierra
Best Tray of 5	'Chie Tarumot'	Bob & Linda Ehrhart
<b>Japonica — Small</b>		
Best Single	'Mansize'	Larry & Nancy Pitts
Runner-up Single	'Tada Melbi'	Don & Mary Bergamini
Best Tray of 3	'Red Hots'	Jackie Randall
<b>Japonica — Miniature</b>		
Best Single	'Tammia'	Don & Mary Bergamini
Runner-up Single	'Sweet Jane'	Gary & Carol Schanz
<b>Best Tray of 11 Japonica</b>	'Lily Pons'	Hal & Deane Burch
<b>Non-Reticulata Hybrid</b>		
Best Large Single	'Elsie Jury'	Larry & Nancy Pitts
Runner-up Large Single	'Les Jury'	Don & Joan Lesmeister
Best Single Medium	'Island Sunset'	Bob & Joanne Logan
Runner-up Single	'Senritsu Ko'	Bob & Linda Ehrhart
Best Tray of 3	'First Blush'	Don & Joan Lesmeister
Best Tray of 5	'Waltz Time Var..'	Don & Joan Lesmeister
Best Single	'Freedom Bell'	Bob & Linda Ehrhart
Best Tray of 3 Miniature	'Night Rider'	Julie Vierra
<b>Reticulata or Reticulata Hybrid</b>		
Best Single Very Large	'Sir Robert Muldoon'	Don & Joan Lesmeister
Runner-up Single	'Frank Houser Var.'	Don & Joan Lesmeister
Best Medium to Large Single	'Crinoline'	Don & Joan Lesmeister
Runner-up	'Patricia Haskee'	Larry & Nancy Pitts
Best Tray of 3	'Frank Houser Var.'	Don & Joan Lesmeister
Best Tray of 5	'Pleasant Memories'	Hal & Deane Burch

**Best Collection of 5 Different Miniature/Small  
Best Collection of 5 Different Blooms  
Best Collection of 3 Different Blooms**

Don & Mary Bergamini  
Larry & Nancy Pitts  
Don & Mary Bergamini

**Seedling**

Best  
1st Runner-up  
2nd Runner-up

Tony & Natalie Miranda  
Don & Mary Bergamini  
Gordon & Barbra Goff

**Youth**

Best Japonica over 4 1/2"  
Best Japonica 2 1/2 - 4 1/2"  
Best Miniature Japonica  
Best Non-Retic Hybrid

'Elegans Chandler'  
'Berenice Boddy'  
'Fircone Var.'  
'Coral Delight'

Peter - Will C. Wood  
Rafel Banuelos  
Maggie Kypke  
Reece Stauss

**Best Spray or Stem  
Best Fragrant Bloom  
Best Yellow/Cream Bloom  
Best Japonica Exhibited by  
Sacramento Member**

'Jackpot'  
'High Fragrance'  
'Senritsu Ko'  
'Elizabeth Weaver'

Don & Joan Lesmeister  
Don & Joan Lesmeister  
Bob & Linda Ehrhahrt  
Bob & Nancy Steele

• • •

There is no spot of ground, however arid, bare or ugly,  
that cannot be tamed into such a state as may give an  
impression of beauty and delight.  
—Gertrude Jekyll

Gardeners are good at nurturing and they have a great quality of patience,  
they're tender. They have to be persistent.  
—Ralph Fiennes

Gardeners instinctively know that flowers and plants are a continuum and that  
the wheel of garden history will always be coming full circle.  
—Francis Cabot Lowell

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## CAMELLIA STATIONERY

The increasing cost of postage has forced us to raise the price on our beautiful Paul Jones camellia note cards. Sets of 8 cards are now \$8.00 per set in the US and \$10.00 per set outside the US. If any camellia society would like to use these cards as fund raisers, orders for 25 or more sets are priced at \$7.00 each in the US and \$9.00 each outside the US.

Cards can be ordered by sending your check payable to Southern California Camellia Society, 40641 Via Amapola, Murrieta, CA 92562. Prices include tax and shipping.

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Each July Tom and Dody Gilfoy have a picnic/barbeque in their beautiful garden and invite their camellia friends. From the looks of the smiles, everyone had a great time.  
See more smiling faces on page 22.

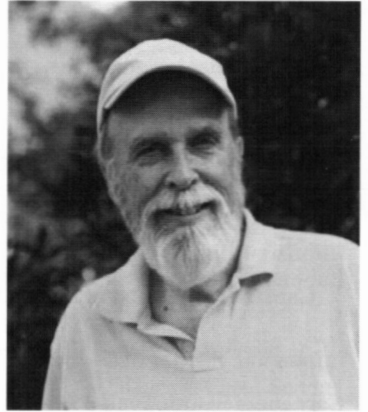


Hostess Dody and  
Helen Maas

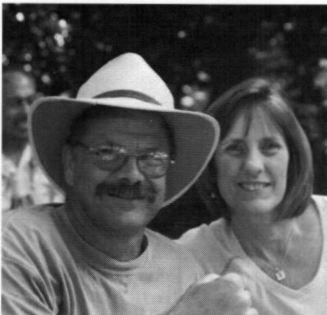
Chef  
George  
Harrison  
did a great  
job on the  
barbeque!



Kristina Hooper, our  
Webmaster



Tom Gilfoy, the congenial host



Steve and Nancy Mefford  
Steve is President of Orange  
County Camellia Society



Beth Stone, our VP and  
Foreign Representative

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# NUTRITION OF CAMELLIAS

Tokuji Furuta

Associate Professor horticulture,  
Alabama Polytechnic Institute, Auburn, Alabama

The subject of camellia fertilization or nutrition brings forth more diverse opinions than almost any other topic on camellia culture. Usually this stems from a lack of sufficient experience with the culture of ornamental plants, especially broadleaf evergreens of a semitropical nature. Many persons will swear by a system or material, while others will swear at the same thing. All of this demonstrates that the camellia is capable of growth under a wide range of nutritional treatments.

The growth of any plant is the result of the interplay of the environment and the genetic makeup of the plant. While the environment rarely influences the genetic makeup directly, it does influence the expression of the genes. All the various components of the environment, both atmospheric and soil must be optimum for the plant to make best growth.

Since so many factors influence growth, any one factor that is lacking or is below optimum will limit the growth of the plant. Increasing the intensity of one or more of the other factors will not result in more growth. More growth will result only when the intensity or amount of the limiting factor is increased. For example, we may compare this to a dam made up of gates of varying heights. The amount of water held by the dam is influenced by the shortest gate. Only when the height of all the gates are at the top of the dam will the maximum amount of water be held. This is true of all factors affecting plant growth, or of all the essential nutrient elements. Thus only when all the elements necessary for plant growth are available at the optimum amount will best growth be realized.

As all factors are interrelated, the

addition of fertilizers is not always the answer to the problem. The example, yellowing of the young foliage is often seen. The cause is usually considered a deficiency of iron in the soil, but this may not be the true cause. Other things that may lead to the same symptom are: overwatering, disease of the roots, nematodes on or in the roots, overfertilization, and some soil condition resulting in the tie-up of the iron. Thus, addition of iron to the soil may not correct the yellowing condition.

## ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

It is commonly accepted that there are 35 elements necessary for plant growth. While future research may add others, the present list includes: carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, phosphorus, nitrogen, sulfur, calcium, iron, magnesium, potassium, boron, manganese, zinc, copper and molybdenum. Of these, carbon, hydrogen and oxygen come from the carbon dioxide in the air and water. The others fall in the plant fertilizer group, and are generally divided into "major" and "trace" elements. The "trace" elements such as boron, zinc, manganese, iron, copper and molybdenum, are required in minute amounts. However they are just as essential for plant growth as the so-called "major" elements that are required in larger amounts, such as nitrogen, phosphorus, calcium and potassium.

Generally all of the elements essential to plant growth excepting carbon, hydrogen and oxygen are taken from the soil, although they may be absorbed by the leaves. This latter method is suitable only in special cases where soil applications will not help or correct the situation.

Some of the mineral elements

occur as an integral part of the plant substances. Nitrogen, phosphorus and sulfur occur in proteins and certain other compounds. Magnesium becomes a part of chlorophyll, the green coloration of the plant and the site of food manufacture. The role of potassium is not entirely understood. Also, the roles of the other elements in plant growth are not clearly defined, although progress has been made in determining their role. It is sufficient that we know that they are essential for healthy plants.

### **SOIL pH**

The symbol pH is a method of expressing the acidity or alkalinity of a soil. The pH scale is divided into divisions and numbered from 1 to 14, with pH 7.0 as neutral. Thus, 7 to 1 means that the soil is becoming more and more acid. On the other hand, 7 to 14 on the scale means that the soil is coming progressively more alkaline.

The question of soil pH and its influence on plant growth has been debated for many years. The opinion now is that the soil pH is important only as it influences the availability of the various nutrient elements in the soil. Except in a few cases, the pH of the soil does not seriously influence growth. In considering the requirements of the plant, the desirable pH is where the various elements are available in sufficient quantities to ensure good growth but not present in toxic amounts.

Several investigations have been conducted on the influence of soil pH on camellia plant growth. The results all show that the plants will grow well under a wide range of soil pH's from quite acid to mildly alkaline.

Bonner and Honda found that plants of the variety 'Pink Perfection' grew equally well in a pH range of 5.0 to 7.0. Even at a pH of 9.0, excellent growth resulted. Kimbrough and Hanchey found that camellia plants grew well over a wide range, pH 4.0 to 7.6. Similarly a survey conducted

in Alabama showed that excellent plants were possible under mildly alkaline conditions. Wilmot, et al. reported that "in pot culture experiments, camellias were shown to be tolerant of variations in soil pH. Good plants were obtained over a pH range of 3.0 to 7.0. There was an indication that the pH range 5.0 to 6.0 was most favorable for flowering.

Thus there seems to be little support of the contention that camellias "need" strongly acid soils to grow. The influence of the soil pH on the availability of the nutrient elements is the important consideration and, if the elements are available, the soil pH is not important.

### **DEFICIENCY SYMPTOMS**

A study of the nutrient deficiency symptoms of *Camellia japonica* was begun in 1949 by the Agriculture Experiment Station of the Alabama Polytechnic Institute.

During the first year, few differences were apparent in rooted camellia cuttings growing in different nutrient-deficient media. Enough stored food may have been present in the cuttings to sustain desired growth for a short period. This may often be true when camellia plants were established on infertile areas.

More deficiencies began to appear in the second year. Leaves either dropped as chlorosis developed throughout the leaf or dropped after partial chlorosis and severe sunburning. At the end of the two-year period, only the plants getting a complete nutrient solution or a solution deficient only in potassium were growing.

### **CONCENTRATION AND BALANCE**

Not only is the amount of fertilizer element applied important but the amount of one in relation to other elements is important. Balance of the various nutrient elements has become a matter of increasing concern. In many cases, unbalance

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has resulted only in limited growth, while in other cases it has actually resulted in the expression of deficiency symptoms.

Bonner and Honda found that, of the major elements, nitrogen was most important in influencing the growth of camellia 'Mathotiana'. Phosphorus and sulfur levels were less critical. High calcium levels and lower magnesium and potassium levels favored vegetative growth. Increasing the potash levels results in less vegetative growth. All sources of nitrogen—nitrate nitrogen, ammonium nitrogen and urea—were equally good.

Flower-bud initiation and development were less affected by nutrient levels than was vegetative growth, but deficiencies, especially nitrogen and sulfur, limited flower-bud initiation.

In container culture, experiments carried out in a greenhouse using a 1/2 peat, 1/2 sand mixture, Future, et al. found nitrogen most important in the growth of small camellia plants. In relation to one another, a 3-5-4 relationship of nitrogen, phosphoric acid and potash produced the best growth.

Increasing the amount of fertilizer from 0 to 1,000 pounds per acre results in large increases in growth. Increasing the amount to 2,000 pounds per acre produced variable results. In some cases growth increased, in others growth decreased. Applications at the rate of over 2,000 per acre resulted in death of the plants.

Furtura investigated fertilization using a sandy loam and a clay soil. Again small plants were grown in containers in a greenhouse. The 3-5-4 relationship of nitrogen, phosphoric acid and potash was best. The rate of application of 2,000 pounds per acre was superior to other rates. Nitrogen was most influential on the growth of the 'Pink Perfection' plants. Flower-bud initiation was not materially influenced. More flower buds were

present on plants receiving high amounts of nitrogen, but the number of flower buds per shoot remained constant. Plants receiving high amount of nitrogen had more shoots, and a more compact plant resulted. These experiments illustrate the point that nitrogen is the most important element, though again the 3-5-4 relationship is best.

## OVERFERTILIZATION AND TOXICITY

Proper use of fertilizers is of considerably important. To avoid overfertilization only the proper or safe concentration should be applied at one time. If more fertilizer is needed, repeated applications can be made.

Three methods of application are possible: liquid fertilization, dry fertilization and foliar feeding.

Liquid fertilization refers to the application of the nutrients in a water solution to the soil. Soluble fertilizers are dissolved in water . . . and applied to the soil at the rate of 1/2 gallon per square foot. This procedure enables the gardener to water and fertilize at the same time.

Fertilizers applied dry should be evenly distributed around the plants. If small amounts are used, mixing with sand or peat will increase volume and make even distribution easier. All fertilizers should be watered into the soil immediately after application.

Foliar feeding, the application of fertilizers to the leaves of the plant, allowing the absorption to occur through them, has a place in the culture of camellia plants. However, it should be kept in mind that foliar feeding is useful only under special conditions and as a supplement to regular soil applications. For example, some material or condition may be present in the soil results in a tie-up or fixing of the nutrient; the soil temperature may be too low, or the ground too wet to allow rapid absorption by plant roots; or a quick

correction is necessary for show or other purposes. In addition, foliar feeding is generally confined to applications of trace elements. As previously noted, these elements are required in small amounts for plant growth. Usually only one spraying will suffice for a year. On the other hand, the major elements are required in large amount. While these elements are absorbed by the foliage, repeated sprayings are needed to furnish enough for plant growth.

The method selected for fertilization would depend on the person's equipment and wishes. Whatever method is used, always follow the manufacturer's recommendations. Otherwise, severe damage may occur.

*Editor's note: This is another article from the archives that we felt would be informative and helpful. From Camellia Culture edited by E. C. Tourje*

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One of many tables of lively discussions at the Gilfoys' picnic—maybe they were even talking about camellias!

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## DIRECTORY OF CALIFORNIA CAMELLIA SOCIETIES

ATWATER GARDEN CLUB & CAMELLIA SOCIETY; President—Kathleen Hill, 2419 Koehn Court, Atwater, CA 95301, (209) 357-0782. Meetings 3rd Tuesday, September-June, 6:30 p.m. St. Nicholas Episcopal Church, 1635 Shaffer Road, Atwater.

KERN COUNTY, CAMELLIA SOCIETY OF: President—Ben McMahan;; Secretary—Betty Wachob, 3324 La Cresta Dr., Bakersfield, 93305. For meeting dates and times, call Helen Maas (661)872-2188.

MODESTO, CAMELLIA SOCIETY OF: President—Bob Dorn; Secretary—Julie Entwia, 22005 Dayton Ave., Modesto, 95356. Meetings: 1st Sunday, October-April, 1:00 p.m., 220-A Standiford Avenue, Modesto.

NAPA VALLEY CAMELLIA SOCIETY: President—Nancy McGowen Russell; Secretary—Fran Kane [fkane@sonic.net](mailto:fkane@sonic.net). Meetings: 2nd Monday, September-May. Napa Senior Center, 1500 Jefferson Street, Napa.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CAMELLIA SOCIETY: President—Mary Bergamini; Secretary—Don Bergamini, 2023 Huntridge Court, Martinez 94553 Meetings: 1st Monday, November-April, 7:00 p.m., 1st Baptist Church, 2336 Buena Vista Ave., Walnut Creek. December and May are dinner meetings.

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. Tustin Senior Center, 200 S. "C" Street, Tustin.

PACIFIC CAMELLIA SOCIETY: President—George Harrison. Secretary—Dorothy McQuiston, 6212 Yucca St., Los Angeles 90028.. Meetings: 1st Thursday, November-April, 7:00 p.m., Descanso Gardens, 1418 Descanso Drive, La Canada.

POMONA VALLEY CAMELLIA SOCIETY: President—Marilee Gray; Secretary—Dorothy Christinson, 3751 Hoover St., Riverside 95204. Meetings: 2nd Thursday, November-April, 7:00 p.m., La Verne Community Center, 3680 "D" Street, La Verne.

SACRAMENTO, CAMELLIA SOCIETY OF: President—Joan Lesmeister; Secretary—Julie Vierra, 1048 Longcroft St. West, Sacramento 95691. Meetings: 4th Tuesday, October-April, 7:30 p.m., Studio Theater, 1028 "R" Street, Sacramento

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.

SAN FRANCISCO PENINSULA CAMELLIA SOCIETY: President—Mike Ekberg; Secretary—Christina Isenberg, 240 Polhemus, Atherton, CA 94027 Meetings: 4th Monday, October-March, Veterans' Building Annex, 711 Nevada St., Rm. 20, Redwood City (formerly Peninsula Camellia Society)

SANTA CLARA COUNTY, INC., CAMELLIA SOCIETY OF: President—John Mendoza, 1025 Harrison Street, Santa Clara 95050. 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—Bobbie Belcher 40641 Via Amapola, Murrieta, CA 92562 Meetings 4th Thursday October to April 7:00 p.m., Ayres Hall, Los Angeles County Arboretum, 301 Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia. Meeting is 3rd Thursday in November. No meeting in December.



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### THE CAMELLIA REVIEW

Mel Belcher, Editor

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A view of wild *C. japonica* and the sea

Photos by John Wang



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