

THE
Camellia
REVIEW





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PHOTO CREDIT: **BRADFORD KING**

INSIDE COVER: **'SHOWBOAT'**
PHOTO CREDIT: **BRADFORD KING**

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THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR

COVID 19 AND CAMELLIAS

BY BRADFORD KING

In 2020 the Covid 19 pandemic has caused much pain and suffering to people's health and well-being as well as the economy. We hope for the best and plan for the worst. Therefore, Jim Fitzpatrick discusses the "Horticultural Challenges: Water, Shade, Soil and Pests in keeping camellias healthy. Remember, home gardening and caring for plants is a great way to stay safe and healthy. When you take care of your camellias during the spring and summer you can enjoy lush green foliage and plants with full buds in the fall. Autumn ushers in the camellia season with sun camellias beginning to bloom. The articles "Announcing the Camellia Season" and "Autumn" illustrate the beauty of fall blooming camellias.



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JULIUS (JUDE) NUCCIO ^a DECEMBER 1939 - MARCH 2020

The three best living camellia hybridizers from Northern California will be highlighted in the *Camellia Review*. In this issue it is Don and Mary Bergamini who typically name their camellia introductions for family members. The article “What’s New At Nuccio’s Nurseries” discusses and illustrates the best of their recent introductions. Julius “Jude” Nuccio with Tom and Jim Nuccio have together managed the nursery since the mid 1980’s.

Jude died peacefully at his home on March 5, 2020 after battling cancer for several years. He was 80 years old. He graduated St. Monica High School in 1957. After graduating he began working full time in the Nuccio Nursery founded by his father, Joe, and Uncle Julius. He married Terry his high school sweetheart and they raised a son Joseph and daughters Juliana and Marisa. Jude is survived by his wife, children, grandchildren, and a rich camellia legacy.

In the camellia world new life is found every fall when the seed pods ripen and produce seeds which if planted and cared for bring new camellias into the world. In this issue Joey Goldfarb tells us a brief story about his seedling.

Stay safe and healthy so we can meet again in person.

'NARUMIGATA'



'SHOWA-NO-SAKAE'



ANNOUNCING
THE CAMELLIA SEASON

BY BRADFORD KING

The sun loving evergreen sasanquas usher in the camellia season every year with masses of beautiful blooms. In Southern California one of the best places to enjoy them is Descanso Gardens in and around the beautifully designed Japanese garden. *C. sasanqua* peak in November and are accompanied with displays of wonderful arrangements of potted Chrysanthemums at Descanso. This small Japanese garden features a tea house and a lovely stream landscaped with mass plantings of azaleas and camellias. Several mature plants of 'Narumigata' are along the main pathway and entrance to the Japanese garden with their single white flowers touched with pink welcoming you. The mid-sized blooms may be irregular, flat or cup shaped.

'Showa-no-sakae' is an early blooming sasanqua seen among the 'Narumigata' offering a contrast with their pink semidouble to peony formed flowers.

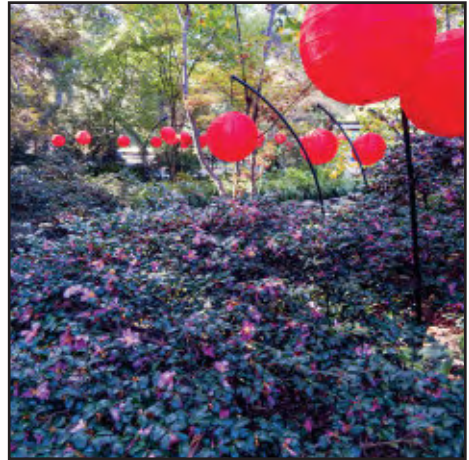
The entrance gate, decorated with colorful mums, gives one a glimpse of camellias and is a good place to take photos. The red lanterns are lighted at night and provide nice color among the trees, azaleas and camellias during the day—a nice Asian decoration that enhances this Japanese inspired garden. Chrysanthemums and camellias are highly valued flowering plants in Japanese culture and make wonderful companions.

The pathway in the Japanese garden has multiple plantings of camellias. Especially attractive are 'Jean May' with its shell pink double flowers, the masses of single irregular pink flowers of 'Hugh Evans' and the lovely rose red flower of 'Shishi Gashira'.





'JEAN MAY'



'HUGH EVANS' AND LANTERNS



'SHISHI GASHIRA'



TEA PLANT FLOWERS



'DAIKAGURA'



'MEMMAI'

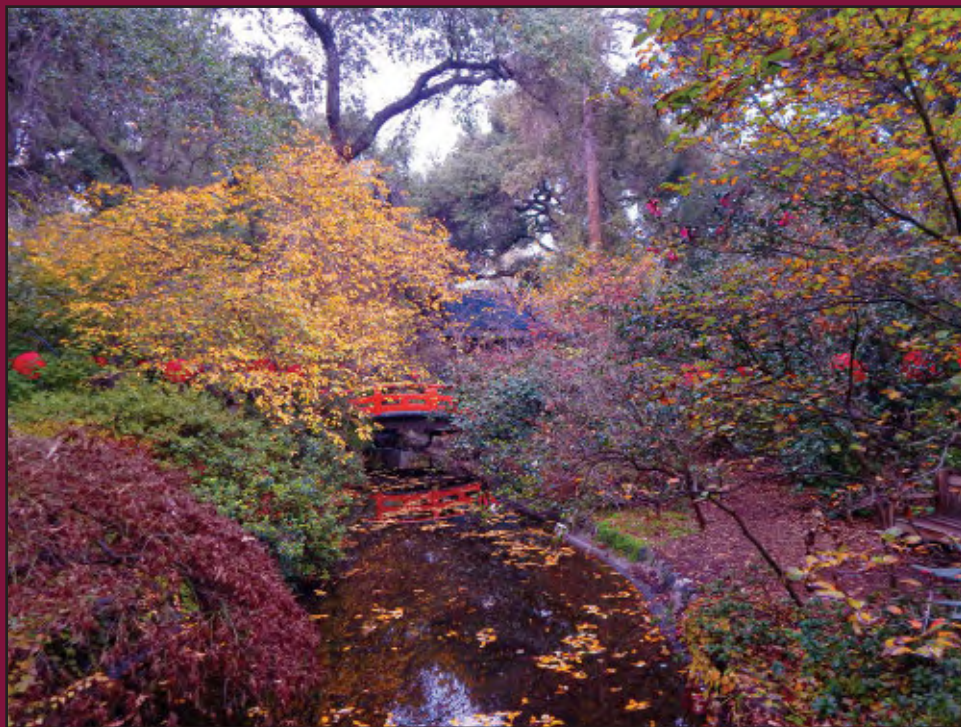
Do not miss the mature, beautifully pruned *C. sinensis* (tea plant) on the far side of this garden. We usually see *C. sinensis* growing as manicured hedges where the new leaves are harvested for making tea. This camellia species blooms early and is especially attractive to bees. The small white flowers hang down on long flower stems (pedicles), a classic characteristic of this species.

Small red tubular flowers on a small bushy plant have caught my eye the last few years with its early flowers. It was introduced in 1991 by Hayakawa who named this *C. vernalis* ‘Mennai-Chidori’ which means “Blind Plover” in English. The Japanese frequently have picturesque names for camellias. This is an interesting but confusing name as plovers are sturdy small to mid-sized shore birds with white and black or brown plumage. The eyes are black and beaks black or yellow in America. Further investigation using *The Sibley Guide to Birds* published by the National Audubon Society brought clarity. The Mongolian Plover (*Charadrius mongolus*) is rarely seen in America but known in Asia. It is colored like other plovers except in its adult breeding plumage when it has a distinctive white throat and a rufous breast. Why a blind plover? Perhaps a translation error or Hayakawa observed a blind Mongolian plover... What do you say?

‘Daikagura’ is one of very few *C. japonicas* that reliably bloom in the fall. The medium to large bright rose red bloom with white variegation is seen throughout Descanso.

The combination of camellias and chrysanthemums in Descanso Gardens makes taking a fall walk delightful.





DESCANSO FALL FOLIAGE

‘AUTUMN DAWN’



AUTUMN LEAVES AND CAMELLIA BLOOMS

BY BRADFORD KING

Autumn, also known as fall, marks the transition from summer to winter when daylight shortens and the temperature cools. One of its main features is colorful fall foliage on deciduous trees then the shedding of these leaves.

Another autumn feature is the beginning of the camellia season. The sun loving *C. sasanqua* begin to bloom in the fall and are also referred to as sun camellias because they may be grown in full sun. There are nine *C. sasanqua* cultivars whose names begin with autumn and four *C. japonicas*. The only one we see in southern California is 'Autumn Dawn' because it is a Nuccio's Nurseries introduction. It has a medium loose peony white flower that shades to deep pink on the petal edges. Dawn is the presence of light just before sunrise. This tells us that 'Autumn Dawn' is therefore an early blooming variety.

The *C. japonicas* 'Early Autumn' and its variegated form introduced by Clarence Gordy are beautiful varieties. We can see this and other of his introductions when visiting camellia shows and gardens in the southeast.



'EARLY AUTUMN'



'EARLY AUTUMN VARIEGATED'



**ALEXIS SLAFER AND JIM FITZPATRICK,
SCCS BOARD AND ACS BOARD MEMBERS**



ANNOUNCING
OF MANY THINGS CAMELLIA

BY JAMES FITZPATRICK

Here follow some horticultural practices employed in the 2019/2020 growing season. The new exhibition practices were used for the 2020 shows.

HORTICULTURAL CHALLENGES

WATER, SHADE, SOIL AND PESTS

A total of sixty individual plants, many potted as well as multi-grafted in ground plants, are confined to a rather small yard in Toluca Woods, California. The yearly temperature varies from a low of 33 degrees to a high of plus 110 degrees. Outside of the four winter months, the average humidity is a range from 10% to 45%!

WATER

If we receive the proper precipitation during our four winter months (now averages 13.5 inches), the plant growth and bud formation is normal. When the rainy days are infrequent, supplemental irrigation is necessary especially when plants are blooming. The Los Angeles City water source always has high concentrations of sodium chloride. When not flushed, the soil can build up injurious salinity levels.

Commercial exterior filters attachable to hose bibs have proved to be inadequate and expensive. In November 2013 I had installed two 200-gallon sealed tanks attached to roof gutters to collect rain. I also collect rainwater in pails which I hand carry to irrigate the camellias until rainwater runs out after which the irrigation system waters twice a week.

During the very hot weather, the five original plants grafted twenty years

ago, with fifteen distinct varieties, seem to benefit somewhat from the constant evaporation of the pool water! The other camellias not near the pool are manually sprayed on very hot days.

SHADE

There is no permanent shade cloth cover except over the patio where the more sensitive younger potted camellias are kept in the summer. There are a few strategically planted trees and large bushes to provide some shade on the east, south and west sides of the property. Unfortunately, the north side is all driveway leading to the detached garage. A forecast of temperatures plus 90 degrees is mitigated with a platoon of patio umbrellas.

SOIL

The soil here is naturally alkaline with a pH of plus 8. To provide acidity, three large plastic composter bins are interspersed among the camellias. Camellia leaf and stem cuttings, vegetable prunings, kitchen scraps, coffee grounds, tea bags and occasional cottonseed meal (6-1-1) form the compost. In the dry weather it takes many months for the organic matter to break down to compost even with additions of water to the bins.

It is now raining the first week of April 2020. Prior to the rain, compost was spread and lightly raked into all camellias. This was preceded by a second application of fish emulsion. Fish emulsion is used once a month in March, April, May and June (if it is not too hot) augmented by cottonseed meal (6-1-1) monthly in the intervening two weeks. Monthly applications of cottonseed meal continue until late September.

PESTS

The incurable pestalotia virus that appeared during the five-year drought (December 2011 to March 2017) destroyed two inground fifteen-year-old camellias (Carter's Sunburst Variegated and Nuccio's Gem), several 5-gallon potted plants and nearly killed two thirty-gallon potted camellias. After having no buds on *High Fragrance*, *Grand Marshal* and *Frank Houser Variegated* for the past two years, all three are producing albeit with well-undersized blooms this year!

Last summer six potted plants suffered an infestation of spider mites. They had plenty of shade but probably insufficient air circulation. The infected plants were quarantined away from the non-infected. Frequent treatments with both commercial anti-mite products as well as homemade diluted apple vinegar were not effective. Once new growth started pushing out this mid-March, all the infected leaves were painstakingly removed and dispatched to the trash. So far, things look okay but too soon to tell.

Noticed very little *petal blight* this season.

EXHIBITION PRACTICES

GIB, REFRIGERATION AND DISPLAY

GIB

Those little plastic “bread tags” are attached to the stem behind the gibed bud to identify and segregate the treated flowers from the non-treated. At all Southern California shows these treated flowers must be entered into their respective classes. The total attempted gibs this past season was 723. Usually gib from early November through December 31st. Never gib species or smaller non-retic hybrids. Thanks to Toni McKenna of the Virginia Camellia Society for providing a superior gib blend than those used previously.

REFRIGERATION

An absolute essential especially when the winter temps hover in the 80-degree range. One large refrigerator in the garage stores six large boxes and two smaller boxes. Often there are more blooms than can be refrigerated. Overflow of blooms are stored overnight with frozen blue ice blocks or ice packs in the bottom of an empty box with the box containing blooms placed over the ice pack box. The ice blocks and packs must be replaced daily and best to rotate the boxes inside the refrigerator with those outside.

Here is an unorthodox process. Used cheesecloth to lightly cover the flowers stored in water in their cups in lidded boxes. The cheesecloth seems

to whisk away the excess condensation from the blooms. The downside is that the cheesecloth needs to be changed out every 24-48 hours with dry cheesecloth. If not changed, mold will form on the stamens touching the damp cheesecloth. Process has been sustaining show quality blooms successfully for several weeks before they need to be removed for aging or falling off the calix. Margaret Davis and other formal doubles as well as the semi-double Showtime were stored for as many as three weeks and still qualified for head table consideration or eventually were judged to be winners!

DISPLAY

To store dozens of blooms in their respective cups in the boxes for transport, all the leaves are removed and refrigerated and segregated according to size in zip-lock bags after adding a tablespoon of water. Disliked the process of having to add water to the cups the morning of the show. Blooms seem to stay fresher in water especially if cut days earlier.

If you have some of your own best practices, please email me at the address found under the Board Officers in the front of the Camellia Review. Thank you in advance.



'MARGARET DAVIS' TRAY OF 3 WINNERS



DON AND MARY BERGAMINI BRED CAMELLIAS THAT CELEBRATE FAMILY

BY BRADFORD KING

Don and Mary Bergamini live in Martinez, California. They have five children and seven grandchildren. Mary is an American Camellia Society (ACS) accredited judge and attends camellia shows with Don in California and the southeast. She and Don have traveled in Europe and Asia as a member of the International Camellia Society. Don is on the ACS board of directors and served as President from 2013 to 2015. He is also International Camellia Society Vice President for The Americas. In addition to being active in camellia organizations, they grow, show and breed new camellias.

'NORA KATE'



'MARY BERGAMINI'



'DON BERGAMINI'



Don's first introduction was '**Baby Sis Blush**'. It is a color sport of 'Baby Sis' that he registered in 1980. It is a lovely miniature flower.

He has introduced fifteen camellias many of which are named for family members. '**Bryanna Nicole**' is the eldest granddaughter who is attending Saint Mary's College in Moraga where she plays softball.

'Landon Waters' was named for their second grandson who is a student athlete as a senior at Alhambra High School. He plays football and track.

'Siena Elizabeth' is their second granddaughter who is in the second grade at Hidden Valley Elementary.

'Rayna Simone' is their third granddaughter who is also in the second grade at Hidden Valley Elementary and is into dance and gymnastics.

'Irene Bergamini' was named for Don's sister, an avid photographer.

'Nora Kate' was named for Mary's sister who died in 2017 from ALS.

'Mary A. Bergamini' was named by Don "for the love of my life."

Recently he bred a medium to large semidouble creamy white *C. reticulata*. "I wanted something different to name for myself. I think I found it!"

It takes 5 to 7 years before a seedling begins to bloom and several years to

'ASTRO NOVA'





'RENA BERGAMINI'

PHOTO BY DON BERGAMINI



'CHRIS BERGAMINI'

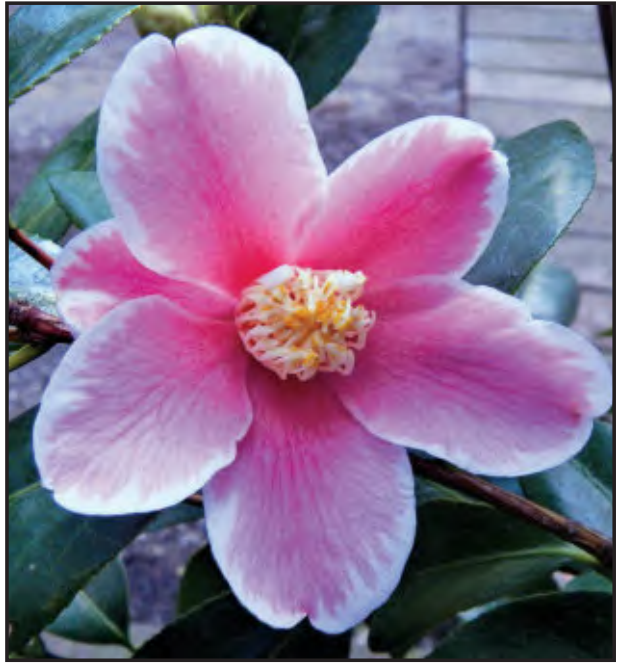


'JUST PEACHY'

evaluate the quality and reliability of any cultivar before it would be deemed distinctive and worthy of being introduced. Therefore, Don began naming camellias for family that were originated by other growers. This is illustrated by ‘Anita Roche’ named for Mary’s mother. Don named it for his mother-in-law, but it was a Ken Hallstone seedling. Don also named Hallstone’s ‘Astro Nova’ which has won at camellia shows.

Jack Mandarich grew many seedlings and gave Don permission to name two for his parents, Mario Bergamini and Rena Bergamini, as well an Aunt named ‘Mary Mustante’.

The most popular of Don’s introductions is ‘Chris Bergamini’ which has a miniature to small white anemone flower with beautiful stripes of pink and red. It was named for their eldest grandson who is working for Tesla installing solar systems. It is propagated by Nuccio’s Nurseries.



‘EASTER BASKET’

Don also introduced an aptly named non-reticulata hybrid ‘Just Peachy’.

This fragrant medium anemone peach pink to cream flower has yellow anthers and white filaments. It is a distinctive peach color toned camellia. I grafted two scions in 2019, but one died and one looks great.

A fun cultivar with a single small bright pink flower with white petal edges looks like an Easter Basket. While Don grows a wide range of camellias, he is noted for his show winning miniature and small camellias like ‘Easter Basket’.

Don is not finished hybridizing. He said, “I still have 2 granddaughters, 3 sons, 2 daughter-in laws to go.” We look forward to seeing what the future camellia seedlings look like.



'NUCCIO'S BELLA ROSSA' AT THE NURSERY



'NUCCIO'S BELLA ROSSA'



'NUCCIO'S BELLA ROSSA VARIEGATED'

WHAT'S NEW AT
NUCCIO'S NURSERIES

BY BRADFORD KING

Nuccio's Nurseries is a family business started by Joe and Julius Nuccio in 1935. They began propagating and breeding camellias and azaleas in their parents back yard before moving to Altadena, California after World War II. Joe and Mary's son was named Julius (Jude). He joined the Nursery after high school on a full-time basis in 1957. Julius sons Tom and Jim joined the Nursery in 1972 and 1980 respectively. Today Tom and Jim run the business since Jude died March 2020. The Nuccio's have introduced over 200 camellias and 100 azaleas. This article highlights Nuccio's recent camellia introductions that you would enjoy growing.

'Nuccio's Bella Rossa' was introduced in 2000. Jude, Tom and Jim Nuccio wanted to name it 'Julius Nuccio' to honor the Nurseries co-founder. Julius did not want a camellia named for himself, therefore, it was named 'Nuccio's Bella Rossa'. The flower is a large red formal double with heavy bud set and a long blooming season. The plant grows bushy and upright making it an excellent landscape camellia which is capable of winning points at a camellia show. Even a small one-gallon plant can have large flowers which makes it a good choice to give as a gift.

It was awarded the American Camellia Society Illges Seedling Japonica Award in 2004. The variegated form, with stark contrasting of white marks on bright red petals, is impressive. After Julius Nuccio retired, the "Nuccio's boys" — Jude, Tom and Jim decided a gorgeous large to very large brilliant red semidouble camellia would be named in his honor. 'Julius Nuccio' was registered in 2014, and the American Camellia Society awarded it the Illges Seedling Japonica Award in 2018. It blooms mid to late season on a vigorous upright plant. If you like a dark red glamorous flower, then this is a "cannot miss" choice.

The first Ferris Wheel was launched June 21, 1893. It was a popular and



'JULIUS NUCCIO'



'FERRIS WHEEL'



'CIRCUS'

magnificent success at the Saint Louis World's Fair. When the fair closed, Ferris became immersed in lawsuits about the debt he owed suppliers. In 1896 he filed for bankruptcy. He died at age 37 from typhoid fever. The original Ferris Wheel was sold in 1904 and two years later scrapped for its metal parts. Therefore, the only official Ferris Wheel expired. However, this iconic amusement park ride lives on at county fairs and carnivals where it whirls through the sky lit up at night where it is the first sight when approaching a carnival. The large to very large white *C. japonica* 'Ferris Wheel' has many random pink and red stripes which make the flower stand out on the plant or on the show table just as the Ferris Wheel does at a county fair. The flared stamens make the semi double flower pop. Occasionally this cultivar has a loose peony or anemone form both of which are showy! It can sport a strawberry colored background flower which Nuccio's have proposed naming 'Circus' when they introduce it sometime in the future.

In 2017 'Shock Wave' was introduced. It is non-reticulata hybrid with a medium single very brilliant deep bluish pink. It has white filaments and yellow anthers. The plant grows fast in an upright open growth and blooms mid to late sea-

son. The bluish pink tinted flower is a pleasant shock to see. The camellia japonica 'Kaleidoscope' was introduced in 2019. The single flower is white with multiple stripes and dashes of red hues in various amounts. It is like a kaleidoscope in that each flower has different colored markings. One may be almost all white, another with a few markings and a few almost all red. However, it is most striking with a mass of irregular colored markings in varying amounts and color tones from light red to brilliant red covering much of each petal. This is also the expected color form which is indeed reminiscent of a kaleidoscope.



'SHOCK WAVE'

A kaleidoscope is made of at least two mirrors positioned at an angle to each other forming a triangle with a collection of objects positioned at one end of the mirrors and an eyehole at the other end. What you see when you

'KALEIDOSCOPE'





'TAMA VELVET'



'TAMA VELVET DUO'



'STOP!'

look through that eyehole is only the portion of the objects that fall within the space of the triangle that are reflected. No two “looks” are ever the same because there are many objects that don’t fall in the triangle space, and they change in each new view. It was invented by Sir David Brewster (1781-1868). This Scottish physicist is remembered for his experimental work in physical optics especially the study of the polarization of light including the discovery of the polarization angle which was named the Brewster angle.

In 2019 ‘Tama Velvet’ was introduced. It is the most recent of the eight Nuccio’s ‘Tama-no-ura’ seedlings. The flower is a medium to large dark velvet red semidouble. The white border is variable and contrasts nicely with dark velvet red petals. It blooms early to midseason. The color is like their award-winning cultivar ‘Royal Velvet’ but smaller with a nice border.

‘Stop!’ has a large red anemone flower with white petaloids. It may need to have some size before it sets buds but it is a very fast-growing camellia. It blooms mid to late season on an upright open plant. It has a very showy flower which promises to win show points and be a good addition to your garden. Tom Nuccio doesn’t care for ‘Stop!’ unless it



‘LUCKY STAR VARIEGATED’

has a mass of distinctive petaloids but I think the big cup shaped bright flower is still great even without petaloids.

‘Lucky Star’ is a saluenensis hybrid introduced by Nuccio’s in 1995. It has a rich pink medium semidouble flower that blooms mid to late season. The new release is ‘Lucky Star Variegated’ which has a high white virus that makes this lovely pink non-reticulata hybrid stand out.

In 2020 they named a cluster blooming non-reticulata hybrid with an extensive bud set ‘Party Popper.’ It blooms mid to late season on an upright plant. The flower is a miniature rose form with white to blush toned deeper pink on the petal edges.

What will the next decade of camellias from Nuccio’s look like?



‘PARTY POPPER’

CAMELLIA SPECIES:

C. CHEKIANGOLEOSA

BY BRADFORD KING

C. chekiangoleosa is native to China where it is extensively cultivated for its oil bearing seeds. It is widely distributed even into the northern mountainous regions where camellias grow in China. It has a single, medium salmon pink to red flower. The plant is sturdy, robust and upright producing a handsome small tree. It can produce large attractive seed pods. The flower buds are rusty brown. Dr. Clifford Parks has described it as having a large clear red flower, while Nuccio's describes the flower as small to medium cup shaped salmon pink to orange red. It appears the flower size and color are variable. The ones we have seen at camellia shows in Southern California tend to an orange red tone and are irregular cup shaped with large petals making a striking entry.





HIGO TREASURES FROM JAPAN:

‘MANGETSU’

BY BRADFORD KING

The medium flat single white flower with spreading white filaments of ‘Mangetsu’ looks like a beautiful full moon which is the translation in English. The spreading vigorous plant blooms mid to late season

A full moon occurs roughly every month. When there are two full moons in a month, the second is called a blue moon which is the origin of the phrase “once in a blue moon” meaning it is a rare occurrence. A full moon occurs when earth is directly between the sun and the moon. That is, the nearside of the moon is completely sunlit and looks like a full circle. This is a beautiful sight and never seems to fail to be appreciated just as the wonderful ‘Mangetsu’ catches our eye. The Huntington Botanical Gardens has a wonderful specimen for you to enjoy. It blooms during the winter.



A STORY ABOUT
CAMELLIA SEEDLINGS

BY JOEY GOLDFARB

Last year the bees were busier than ever before. Camellia flowers that had never produced seeds were fertilized.

My list of seeds to collect was twice as great as previous years. When the Nitidissima seeds finally open, they take months longer than reticulatas which take longer than Japonicas, and the seeds were beautiful. They were beautifully round and larger than previous years.

The seeds seem to take longer to sprout than the books say, but I just wait and keep watering, and they finally send their little shoot skyward. I estimate that I got about 95% to sprout.

As you probably know, it takes 4 to 5 years for a new plant to make a flower. The wait can be worth it because you never know what the flower will become. For example, Japonica Nuccio's Gem is a "chance seedling." So there is no telling what bee went to what flower and fertilized another flower.

Waiting for the first flower on a new seedling is always exciting. You never know what you will get!

PARTING SHOT:
'TAMA VINO'

BY BRADFORD KING

In 1947 Mr. Kichiji Tazaki, who was working at a charcoal pit in a forested area on Fukue Island in Nagasaki Prefecture, Japan, found one plant of 'Tama-no-ura'. It was a chance seedling of unknown origin named after the town of Tamanoura where the charcoal pit was located. This *C. japonica* was first exhibited in 1973 in Nagasaki City, Japan. It was imported and propagated by Nuccio's Nurseries in 1979.

Nuccio's Nurseries has introduced ten 'Tama-no-ura' seedlings. Several other breeders have also registered new Tama varieties. 'Tama VINO' has small to medium semidouble wine red bloom with clusters of narrow petals. The burgundy red spreads into the small white border which makes it distinctive from the other Tama seedlings.





DUO OF 'ROYAL VELVET VARIEGATED'