

THE *Camellia*
REVIEW





INSIDE COVER: 'CHERRIES JUBILEE' Photo by Bradford King

FRONT COVER: 'GLEN 40 VARIEGATED' Photo by Bradford King

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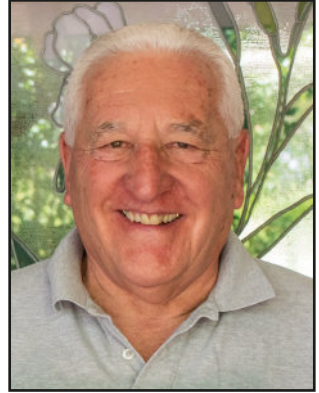
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THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR

STATE OF THE SOCIETY

BY BRADFORD KING

The Southern California Camellia Society completed three camellia shows in 2024. There were two at the Los Angeles County Arboretum, one at The Huntington, and a camellia display at Descanso. The February 24 and 25 Show at the Los Angeles County Arboretum had over 500 blooms with Best of Show, *C. amplexicaulis*, entered by Libbie Stull. The Best of Show is awarded the George Lewis Cup.



George Lewis donated a perpetual trophy to the Southern California Camellia Council, which was awarded beginning in 1987. The George Lewis Trophy is a 14" diameter sterling silver bowl placed

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on a 14" wooden base where plaques list the names of each year's winner.

Besides all the beautiful camellias seen at the camellia shows, a children's interactive Camellia Treasure Hunt was instituted by Barbara Council. She also organized a table display that encouraged visitors to touch the different textures of camellia flowers.

The Society donated four camellias to the Los Angeles County Arboretum that were bred by Dr. Clifford Parks when he was their horticulturist. The camellias are 'Dr. Clifford Parks', 'LASCA Beauty', 'Spring Mist', and 'Blue Twilight'.

This issue includes "New Camellias from Nuccio's." Their 'Antique Rose' and 'Plugged-In Purple' were seen on the show tables this camellia season. While the pending sale of Nuccio's Nurseries is in the works, they will continue to be in business as usual for at a few more years. Therefore, you have time to visit the nursery and select a beautiful camellia or lovely azalea.



'BLUE TWILIGHT'





‘ANTIQUE ROSE’ PLANT IN BLOOM

NEW CAMELLIAS FROM *Nuccio's*

BY BRADFORD KING

In 2023, Nuccio's Nurseries introduced four new camellias that have interesting names and two lovely foliage camellias in 2024.

'Antique Rose' is a non-reticulata hybrid with an unusual deep lavender pinkish red small to medium semidouble to rose form double flower.

Antique roses are also known as heirloom roses. While many are fragrant, the camellia 'Antique Rose' is not. However, they both can grow in shade and are low maintenance. Nuccio's named the camellia 'Antique Rose' as it resembles an antique rose color and flower shape. Its unusual color is hard to reproduce in a publication as the mix of pink, red, and blue tint are not part of the rainbow of colors in a printer's digital programming.

I'm a fan of the *C. sasanqua* 'Big Wheel' due to its deep rose red color with large well-spaced petals. It blooms in the fall with narrow somewhat fluted petals on a fast upright bushy plant.

In the 1970s, my now adult children grew up riding the Big Wheel brand of low riding tricycles. They raced them and played tag as well as perfecting spin outs. Big wheels were made of hollow plastic which made them reasonably priced. They provided a safe ride due to the large front wheel which provided stability and was much easier to ride than a tricycle. The pedal connected directly to the manhole sized front wheel instead of a chain.



'ANTIQUE ROSE'



‘BIG WHEEL’

Nuccio’s ‘Coral Castle’ is distinctive, as it is the only registered camellia bred in America between *C. japonica* and *C. amplexicaulis*.

The name reflects its coral red flower. The medium flower is semidouble and somewhat cup shaped. The pretty buds are red like their parent *C. amplexicaulis*. When mature, it will make big good looking landscape plants.

What is a coral castle? On the internet it shows a group of limestone sculptures by an eccentric named Edward Leedskalnin who lived between 1887 and 1951.

The sculptures are comprised of many large stones weighing several tons sculpted to look like chairs and tables, as well as a water fountain and a sundial. It is a tourist attraction located in Miami-Dade County, Florida. It is noted for the legend that it was built by the sculptor’s supernatural abilities to carve and move stone through magnetism.

The expression “plugged-in” means fully aware, connected, and engaged. A curious term to use for a small single brilliant deep orchid pink camel-



'CORAL CASTLE'



'PLUGGED-IN PURPLE'

lia bloom. 'Plugged-In Purple' is a *C. pitardii* variety *pitardii* seedling that blooms midseason.

Nuccio's most recent introductions are both interesting foliage camellias.

'Stained Glass' has lovely green leaves edged in light yellow to creamy white. It was named by a friend of the Nuccio's.

A camellia with light green and fringed foliage was named 'Centipede' by Tom Nuccio. When we talked about this plant, he wondered if a better name would have been eyelash. Both names reflect the attractive heavily serrated leaves. It grows upright and, when mature, may become somewhat spreading. The red bloom is an irregular single medium to large with twisting petals nestled among the interesting leaves.



'STAINED GLASS'



'CENTIPEDE'



'MAGNOLIAEFLORA' BUSH IN BLOOM



BLUSH CAMELLIAS CAN MUTATE

BY BRADFORD KING

The popular ‘Magnoliaeflora’ has mutated two beautiful camellias to add to your garden. ‘Magnoliaeflora’ came from Japan to Italy in 1886 as ‘Hagoromo’. It was raised by nurseryman Yasaburo Saida and was illustrated in *Kokin-yoranko* in 1842 according to the Japanese Camellia Society. It is unclear who renamed this cultivar, but since it is a profuse bloomer with a flower like a magnolia, the English name captures its flower characteristics.

‘Man Size’ is a sport from ‘Mag-



‘MAGNOLIAEFLORA’



'MAN SIZE'

noliaeflora' caught by Walter F. Wilson, Jr., who was better known as Hody. This sport has a pure white anemone flower which blooms freely. When entered at camellia shows, it usually is the top winner as a miniature or small camellia. The name refers to the size of a man's boutonniere. Hody Wilson was superintendent at the Hammond Research Center in Louisiana from 1936 to 1975. He was internationally known for his camellia breeding and was responsible for creating the camellia garden there. 'Man Size' is his most famous introduction registered in 1961.

'Rudy's Magnoliaeflora', a sport of 'Magnoliaeflora', has all its wonderful qualities. It has a heavy blooming medium nicely formed semidouble rose red flower that is clean and crisp looking with a cluster of golden stamens.



'RUDY'S MAGNOLIAEFLORA'

The plant is compact and bushy blooming in midseason. However, too often one white line mars a petal. This genetic mutation was caught by Rudy Moore, the camellia horticulturist in the 1980s at The Huntington Botanical Gardens in San Marino, California, where it was introduced in 1988.



'RUDY'S MAGNOLIAEFLORA' WITH A GENETIC WHITE LINE

Burgundy Flowers

Those of us whose favorite color is burgundy usually are reserved and tend towards introversion with a fondness for flowers and plants that are dark red. This includes Amaryllis, Camellias, Daylilies,

AMARYLLIS

Amaryllis bulbs are favorite holiday gifts since they bloom during the holiday season. In Southern California, we look forward all year for them to rebloom in the garden where they are able to naturalize. However, they are typically



AMARYLLIS

Flowers and Foliage

BY BRADFORD KING

Desert Rose, and Roses. In addition, we appreciate the foliage of Red Maples, Red Bud, and Oxalis. When a dark red flower also has burgundy leaves, we are particularly pleased.

grown in small pots where there are freezing winters. Hybridizers have developed bright red, pink, white, and multicolored cultivars, but a very black red amaryllis flower will grab your attention. New bulbs will bloom during the winter, but when planted outside, they bloom in the spring year after year.



'KURO-TSUBAKI'



'NIGHT RIDER'

CAMELLIAS

'Kuro-tsubaki', the black camellia, is the iconic dark red *C. japonica* cultivar which has been known in Japan since 1896.

Its seedling 'Night Rider' is valued for its small dark red flower. The small non-reticulata hybrid was introduced by Oz Blumhardt in 1985. This New Zealand bred cultivar also has red roots and is an example of a flower whose new foliage is also a wonderful red color.

More recently, a sport of 'Nuccio's Bella Rossa' caught in China has found its way to America where it has begun to be a winning show flower. 'Bella Jinhua' (Red Leaf Bella) is also an example of a dark red flower whose new foliage is especially noticeable, as it is a glossy very dark burgundy before it turns green.

DAYLILIES

Daylilies or *Hemerocallis*, which in Greek means "beauty for a day," have

individual flowers that last only one day. Since there are so many buds and blooms, there are numerous flowers every day for weeks. There are thousands of beautiful Daylily hybrids; many have multi-colors and beautiful markings. Many will also re-bloom, and all are easy to grow. They grow 1 to 4 feet tall and wide with long slender green leaves that arch gracefully. The two hybrids I grow that are black red are 'Acapulco Night' and 'Midnight Magic'. Usually, daylilies are divided to share with friends, dug in fields at local nurseries, and are found at garden shops in pots. However, propagating by proliferation is another way of developing identical cultivars. A small plant (slips) occasionally will develop on some cultivars midway up the scape (the flower stem). They look like miniature plants with roots developing over time. This usually requires a long growing season for a good root system to develop. The proliferation may be cut from the plant and rooted



'BELLA JINHUA' AND 'BELLA JINHUA' LEAVES



'MIDNIGHT MAGIC'

to produce a new plant. 'Midnight Magic' is one of the cultivars that regularly proliferates, so I have seven planted in a group.

DESERT ROSE

Desert Rose (*Adenium obesum*) is a succulent with small trumpet-shaped flowers that bloom in the summer. They are usually grown in containers,



DESERT ROSE



'DIABLO'

as they perish outdoors in chilly rain (45°F). It does well outdoors in frost free areas in Florida. This was where Lynn and I first learned to appreciate the small bright red and white profuse flowers. Hybridizers have developed more complicated flowers in a wide range of colors, including dark red, and nurseries carry these new hybrids. They are typically grafted by attaching the double flowering scions with super glue to vigorous rootstock.

ROSES

Roses are extremely popular cut flowers and are widely grown in full sun. They begin to bloom in spring as the camellia season is ending, which is one of the reasons to have a rose garden. There are a wide range of colorful roses available. Some of the most popular are red, which includes 'Firefighter', 'Olympiad', 'Mister Lincoln', and 'Chrysler Imperial'. One of the darkest red is 'Diablo', another name for the Devil.

RED MAPLES

These small deciduous trees are very decorative. They are native to the eastern states, but hybridizers have developed dozens of beautiful cultivars. For



BLACK JAPANESE MAPLE

example, the coral bark cultivar has light green leaves with red edges, and new stems are a lovely shade of coral. Red maples usually have red stalks and stems. Most Japanese gardens will have a few wonderful specimens, which are carefully pruned. I fell in love with them when I was a sophomore at Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania and watched my 80-year-old landlady digging seedlings that naturalized in her lawn. I planted one of her seedlings at my parents' home. It reached 50 feet over the next 40 years. They grow well in California, but the foliage may get muddy looking in late summer due to smog and high summer temperatures. Since they are deciduous, this is not a serious issue, as new foliage is beautiful. While their flowers are tiny and can easily be overlooked, the propeller like seed pods are interesting. Unlike camellias, they have male and female flowers. The 'Black Japanese Maple' has black red leaves that, as they age, become deep purple.

RED BUD

The Red Bud (*Cercis canadensis*) trees are a 15 to 20 feet tall ornamental tree that are native to the eastern states and can be grown in zones 4 through 8. They were not able to thrive in New England where I grew up but were



CLOSEUP OF LEAVES





RED BUD FLOWERS



OXALIS TRIANGULARIS

spectacular when in bloom with native dogwoods every spring on the Gettysburg Battlefield, now a National Military Park. New cultivars have been hybridized that have masses of lovely light pink flowers in spring. Flowers appear before the dark reddish purple heart-shaped leaves. The mature foliage becomes dark green.

OXALIS

There are several dozen varieties of Oxalis bulbs on the market. They are grown for their attractive triangular shaped leaves with interesting markings. They grow in partial sun outdoors in zones 6 through 10 and do well indoors with bright lighting. The flowers are tiny with soft colors. The *Oxalis triangularis*, also known as “Purple Shamrock,” make lively windowsill plantings that light up the winter months and look nice in flower arrangements.

RUBY-STAINED PATTERN GLASS

People whose favorite color is burgundy have a habit of enjoying wonderful objects. Both Lynn and I share a strong preference for dark red flowers and foliage but also became collectors of Ruby-Stained pattern glass. My moth-



“RED BLOCK” AND “RUBY THUMBPRINT”

er collected “Red Bock,” one of the four dozen ruby-stained glass patterns produced in the 1880s and 1890s in the Pittsburgh area. When antiquing, it is more fun to be looking for something particular rather than wandering randomly in a shop. Since we both loved ruby colored glass, we started to collect “Red Block” and “Ruby Thumbprint.” The covered butterdishes look like a Kings Crown, a name used for “Ruby Thumbprint” when the pattern is clear glass.

When at the ACS camellia convention in Pensacola, Florida, on an after dinner walk with camellia friends Jim and Eileen Dwyer, we spotted an etched ruby glass pitcher and tumblers. We just had to return the next day to buy the set.



RUBY-STAINED PATTERN GLASS



‘SPRING FLING’

SPRING THRILL

BY BRADFORD KING

When spring arrives, some camellias have yet to be seen in bloom. Typically, these spring bloomers keep us waiting to see their faces. Therefore, as spring unfolds, it is a thrill to finally see them! The *C. japonica* cultivars that come to mind include ‘Spring Fling’ and ‘Spring Formal’. While ‘Spring Daze’, a non-reticulata hybrid, may occasionally have earlier flowers, it too is a late bloomer peaking in spring as its name denotes. Many *C. reticulata* naturally are late season bloomers with ‘Harold L. Paige’ being the last to bloom in my garden.

C. JAPONICA CULTIVARS

Nuccio’s Nurseries introduced ‘Spring Fling’ and ‘Spring Formal’, both of which have medium formal double flowers that bloom late in the camellia season.



'SPRING FORMAL'



'SPRING DAZE' OPEN

'Spring Fling' has a clear bright red bloom. The name denotes that an activity is engaged in with energy and abandonment. In a romantic relationship, it may connote a short intense relationship, not unusual for spring break experience.

'Spring Formal' has a lovely deep pink flower with pointed petals. It was named for a spring dance where formal dress is required—women in gowns and men in tuxedos.

NON-RETICULATA HYBRIDS

One of the most beautiful spring blooming camellias is 'Spring Daze', which is also interesting in that it has multiple forms. Most common is the beautiful open loose peony. This photo was taken in early June.



'SPRING DAZE' BUD FORM



'SPRING DAZE' FORMAL DOUBLE



'SPRING DAZE'

However, just as attractive is when 'Spring Daze' has a rose form bud flower before opening to show stamens.

The least attractive form (pictured to the left) has a bluish pink open flower that lacks the vibrant coral pink petal edges. Perhaps most spectacular is when 'Spring Daze' has a formal double flower.

I see all of these variations on the same plant in my garden. It is a thrill to discover three out of the four of these attractive flowers. I also enjoy the play on words, "Spring Days," for its name.

'HAROLD L. PAIGE' LAST BUT NOT LEAST

One of the last to bloom is *C. reticulata* 'Harold L. Paige'. The very large bright red rose form double to peony flower is spectacular when I finally see one blooming. A mature tree found in The Huntington Botanical Gardens can't be missed in full bloom. This wonderful flower continues to be popular and widely grown throughout the camellia world.



'HAROLD L. PAIGE' IN BLOOM



'HIGO HAKU-TAKA'

HIGO TREASURES FROM JAPAN:
'HIGO HAKU-TAKA'

BY BRADFORD KING

This is an ancient first-class white Higo camellia with 120 to 150 stamens and six petals. The snow-white petals are wavy and slightly curved giving it a sense a bird in flight, which accounts for its name that translated to “White Hawk.”

Once a camellia show season in Southern California, there is a Higo class. In 2024, George and Karen Harrison’s entry ‘Higo haku-taka’ was “Best Of Class.”

CAMELLIA SPECIES:

C. IRRAWADIENSIS

BY BRADFORD KING

This species is native to China, in particular the Yunnan region. The small white single flower has an elongated flower stem. It has large slender wavy foliage and blooms midseason. This is a very tall camellia widely propagated in China to be harvested for tea. There is an ancient specimen reported to be over a thousand years old and 29 feet tall in the southwestern area of Yunnan.



C. irrawadiensis



PARTING SHOT:

C. RUSTICANAS

BY BRADFORD KING

C. rusticana are a *C. japonica* subspecies that are adapted to very high snow fall in Japan. They are frequently called “snow camellias.” They thrive in a humid climate and may be difficult to grow in dry areas. They are usually bushy and compact in growth habit with many small flowers. Three of the most popular are ‘Botan-yuki’, ‘Kasuga-yama’, and ‘Shiro Karako’, which, when entered in a camellia show, are placed in the species class.

‘Botan-yuki’ has a miniature anemone blush pink flower with a yellow petaloid center. It blooms midseason on a compact upright plant. The golden petaloids give it a lovely yellow tone.

‘Kasuga-yama’ has a small irregular semidouble red flower blotched with



'KASUGA-YAMA'



'SHIRO KARAKO'

white. It blooms midseason on a bushy upright plant.

'Shiro Karako' has a miniature to small anemone white flower. It blooms midseason on a vigorous spreading plant.

Nuccio's Nurseries has introduced two *C. rusticana* seedlings that are good additions to the garden.

'Campfire' has a profuse small flat single orange red flower with golden stamens. It blooms early to midseason on a bushy upright plant. 'Shooting Star' has a medium semidouble white flower with pointed petals. It blooms mid to late season on a very bushy medium upright plant.



'CAMPFIRE'



'SHOOTING STAR'



‘DAHLOHNEGA’



‘GRAND PRIX’