

The *Camellia*
REVIEW



Front Cover: 'Tomorrow Park Hill'
Photo Credit: Brad King

Inside Cover: 'Ruta Hagmann'
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An Invitation to Join

Annual membership - \$25 includes subscription to *The Camellia Review*, three issues per year.

Sponsoring member: \$50 Sustaining Member: \$100 Patron member: \$150

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Memberships can also be paid online at socalcamelliasociety.org.

Please welcome our newest member, Eleanor Muller

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Announcements

After many years of hosting a camellia show in the City of LaVerne, the Pomona Valley Camellia Society merged last year with the Southern California Camellia Society (SCCS). The terms of that agreement stipulated that the SCCS would host a camellia show in LaVerne in 2015 which was done.

The SCCS Board of Directors voted to decline continuing a 2016 camellia show in LaVerne. Instead the SCCS will host a show the weekend of January 30-31, 2016, at the Los Angeles County Arboretum in Arcadia. This SCCS camellia show is in addition to the SCCS shows January 23-24, 2016, Descanso Gardens in LaCanada and February 13-14, 2016, at the Huntington Gardens in San Marino.

Thoughts From The Editor

Brad King, Editor



As the new editor of the Camellia Review it is my privilege and pleasure to thank Bobbie and Mel Belcher for editing the Camellia Review for twenty one years. It is clear that your new editor will not serve that length of time as he would be more than a century old.

The Camellia Review will continue to be published three times a year—Fall, Winter and Spring. Kristina Hooper is the new production Editor and therefore responsible for the layout and design. There will be several feature camellia articles in each issue illustrated with camellia images. There will be five departments in this

year's Camellia Review which means there will an article on a Camellia Species; Camellia Art; What's New at Nuccio's; Tea and a closing article "Parting Shot" in each issue. This issue's cover is the outstanding 'Tomorrow Park Hill' introduced by Ralph Peer and named for his estate in Los Angeles.

Jim Fitzpatrick's story with photography by Barbara Carroll on their visit to Dan Charvet's Heartwood Nursery and the Mendocino Botanical Garden reports on camellia surprises. This nursery and the Botanical Gardens are worthy additions to camellia lovers' bucket lists.

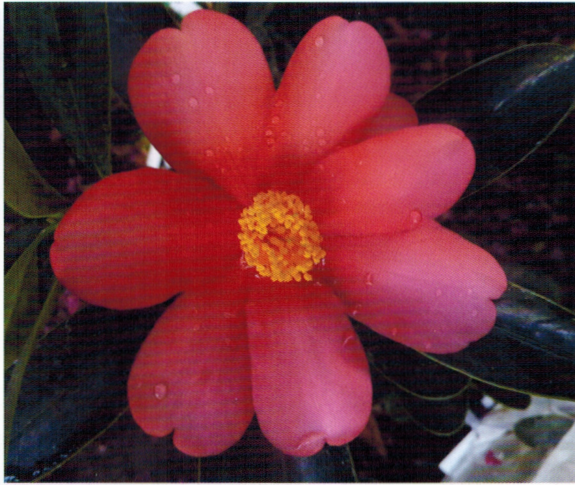
The problem of keeping camellias healthy during a drought with mandatory water restrictions is addressed in "How to Prepare Your Camellia for Mandatory Water Restrictions".

Joey Goldfarb selected a timely article from our Camellia Review Library "Garden Talk". The author addresses the problem of bud drop linking this phenomenon with camellia care in the fall.

Don Bergamini reports on the 2015 California Camellia Show winners. This is a great place to look for camellias to add to your collection. Usually this means a fun visit to Nuccio's Nurseries. Anne Dashiell's article "What's New at Nuccio's" reports on their newest introduction, a gorgeous large to very large *C. japonica* "Ferris Wheel" which is now available at the nursery. A short article on the "Tea Plant" will tell about this camellia species value commercially and offer descriptions of strains for landscaping that also can be harvested to make delicious tea. Beth Stone's contribution is a beautifully illustrated article "A Passion For Camellias" about the botanical art exhibit that served as a complement to the 2015 Pacific Camellia Society camellia show at Descanso Gardens. *Camellia Azalea*, an amazing camellia species, is this issues report for the camellia species department. The department "Parting Shot" by Linda and Joe Tunner brings this issue to a close with their wonderful article "Reflections and Recollections...Camellias and Water".

We are always looking for camellia articles and writers to publish. Deadlines for submitting articles to Editor Brad King (bdk@usc.edu) are FALL: September 1, 2015; WINTER: December 1, 2015; and SPRING: February 1, 2016.

Camellia Species: *C. azalea* (*C. Changii Ye*)
Article and Photos by Bradford King



C. Changii Ye

This is the most exciting camellia species to be introduced in years because it blooms in California in hot summer weather from June through March. In its native China and at Longwood Gardens green house in Pennsylvania it can bloom every month of the year with its peak blooming season summer through fall. The flower is a medium bright red single with five to nine petals that looks like an azalea flower. The flowers are borne singly or in clusters at the tip of new growth. In fact new growth may occur all year which is why this plant can bloom under optimal conditions every month of the year. Buds become red and elongated as they mature such that they look like lipstick ready to be applied.

The center of the flowers has a cluster of yellow anthers. The red flower with yellow anthers is very attractive--clear and bright. The leaves are a long narrow oblong with a very smooth surface that has a very thin light green edge with a raised mid vein. The total package of leaves, buds, and flowers make this a worthwhile landscape plant that grows bushy and slowly to a maximum of ten feet.

The hot days of fall seem to induce blooming. In fact 100 degrees or more seems to their liking as long as the soil remains moist. When there are several days with day time temperature in the 60's blooming ceases but is triggered by mid-70's and 80's. There is no danger of damage during winter cold here in Southern California. They will survive temperatures as low as 23 degrees.

In general it appears best to grow them like japonicas—dappled sunlight, partial shade or under 50% shade cloth even though they love hot weather. In China they grow in a warm moist climate. At Nuccio's the new grafts are protected by two layers of 50% shade cloth, when rooted they are grown in full sun under 50% shade cloth. New plants may be propagated by cleft grafting in spring and early summer—later than japonicas that are usually grafted in February. *C. azalea* is notorious for its poor growth on its own roots—cuttings usually don't take and those that do grow slowly and weakly.

Camellia azalea is frequently called *C. changii ye* in scientific circles. It is placed in Section *Camellia* with 50 camellia species along with *japonica*, *reticulata*, and *saluenensis* out of the total 280 or so camellia species. This makes one optimistic that *c. azalea* may be crossed not only with japonica cultivars but also *reticulata* and *saluenensis*. It is fertile as a pollen parent but less successful as a seed parent. Nuccio's have had seed sets but the seeds have not germinated. My plants also set seeds from controlled crosses and produce seeds that only occasionally germinate producing weak seedlings. When *C. azalea* pollen is used on *C. japonica* cultivars the resulting seeds germinated readily but the seedlings grow slowly unless grafted.



C. Changii Ye buds

Camellia azalea is an exciting camellia that should make for a great small dense moderately slow growing landscape camellia that will bloom in warm climates during the summer and rebloom on new growth in fall and winter thus extending the flowering season.

Camellia Garden/Nursery Tour of the California North Coast

By James J. Fitzpatrick

Photos: Barbara A. Carroll



'Shelter Cove'

In late May 2015, my wife and I visited several camellia sites in Mendocino County, California: the Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens (MCBG) situated between the town of Mendocino and Fort Bragg and the Heartwood Nursery in Fort Bragg. Both visits were full of surprises not the least of which were camellias still blooming in May.

The Mendocino climate is much cooler than most of California with an annual rainfall (before the current four-year drought) of approximately 30-35 inches. The latitude is the 39th Parallel with daytime summer temperatures rarely exceeding 80 degrees. We both commented that the climate was quite similar to both Porto, Portugal and Galicia, Spain (Latitudes 41 and 42 degrees north) where we witnessed extraordinary camellia specimens during the International Camellia Congress in March of 2014.

Dan Charvet, who has guest lectured several times at the Southern California Camellia Society meetings, is the curator of the camellia collection at MCBG as well as a famous camellia hybridizer and proprietor of Heartwood Nursery just a few miles inland from Fort Bragg. We spent several hours with Dan who gave us a comprehensive tour of Heartwood Nursery surrounded by conifer forests with Redwoods, Douglas Firs, Bishop pines and other trees. Dan's property has six greenhouses with approximately 10,000 plants in pots. Each year Dan hand-

pollinates 2,000 flowers, harvests around 1,000 seeds (many of his seed pods are the size of small apples) of which about 800 germinate and on average 600 survive long-term. He almost exclusively uses an expensive potting mix, Sunshine Professional Growers #1 for germination. He employs an elaborate paper tag coding system with many plant specimens sporting hundreds of tags. Dan's selection criteria include resistance to petal blight, variegation and overall suitability of the plant for landscape purposes. If the blooms are suitable for show so much the better.

The cool foggy climate is not conducive for growing most *C. Reticulata*, and *C. Sasanqua*. However, Dan uses some hybrid crosses derived from *C. Reticulata* (most notably 'Purple Gown' and 'Buddha'), *C. Sasanqua* ('Yume' a hybrid derived from 'Shishigashira') and *C. Yunnanensis* to further cross-pollinate with other camellia hybrids. Dan registers on average just one cultivar a year from this production!

Dan is very welcoming of visitors so just call ahead [(707) 964-3905] for directions because Heartwood is reached by back roads and he will be happy to give you directions and arrange a tour. The MCBG [(707) 964-4352] is located on 47 acres overlooking the Pacific Ocean. The Garden is usually open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. except Thanksgiving, Christmas and the Saturday after Labor Day. Many native Northern California plants as well as several outstanding varieties of Rhododendron inhabit the MCBG.

The MCBG camellia collection was first established in 1985 with more plants added in 1989 and 2003. These are all planted in the slightly acidic soil and include 11 cultivars as well as numerous species. They are also planted under large conifers to shield them from the ocean winds. Several striking specimens include 'Fran Charvet,' 'Autumn Sunrise,' 'Salute' and a corkscrew 'Unryu.' It is certainly a worthwhile visit if you are traveling in the Fort Bragg/Mendocino area. Both Heartwood Nursery and the Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens can easily be visited within the same day.

Prior to visiting the Mendocino area, we wanted to visit the Humboldt Botanical Gardens in Eureka, California but it was closed for renovations on the day we tried to visit. Serendipitously, our travels took us to the little town of Ferndale where we observed in the Ferndale Historic Cemetery, a colossal camellia in bloom that we estimated was over 110 years old by observing the dates on the tombstones it was covering! We heartily recommend a visit to all the above for the camellia enthusiast.

Colorful Camellia Names

Article and Photos By Bradford King

Most frequently camellias are given the names of family and friends. A number of camellias have used the flower color as a part of their name. Others have been named based on a key bloom characteristic such as their petal shape. A name that accurately describes a flower is a good marketing strategy. Colorful camellia names are interesting and vivid reminders of the bloom. Let's look at some colorful examples.

A black opal is an especially rare and valuable gemstone. Pure opal is colorless with impurities generally responsible for the yellow and red hues. The opal is the month of October's gemstone. The finest opals have been found in Australia and New Zealand. Therefore it is not surprising that Oz Blumhardt, a hybridizer from New Zealand, named a black red hybrid camellia 'Black Opal'.

The small to medium semidouble flower is a seedling of 'Ruby Bell' and 'Kuro Tsubaki'. It is rarely seen in America just like the 'Black Opal.' We do see 'Night Rider' which is the same cross made by the same breeder. It has a miniature to small semidouble very dark red flower. They both have colorful names. Can you spot their differences?



'Black Opal'



'Night Rider'

Dahlia is a genus of bushy, tuberous, herbaceous perennial plants native to Mexico, Central America, and Colombia. There are at least 36 species of dahlia, with hybrids coming in a variety of colors. Flower forms are variable, with one head per stem; these can be as small as 2 inches and up to a foot in diameter frequently

referred to as “dinner plate dahlias”. The camellia ‘Pink Dahlia’ looks like a typical formal double dahlia hence its name. This *saluenensis* miniature to small flower is orchid pink with slender pointed petals. ‘Pink Dahlia Variegated’ has a strikingly beautiful flower. They were both developed by Kramer Brothers Nursery, Cucamonga, California. Otto and August Kramer grew potted plants, cut flowers and were known for their azaleas, camellias and gardenias. Ben Mackall married August Kramer’s daughter Marie in 1937. After August died, Ben and Marie managed the nursery until 1986 when the nursery closed and the land was sold.



‘Pink Dahlia’



‘Pink Dahlia Var’

A gown is an elegant women’s full length dress for special occasions or a long robe often dark in color worn on special occasions by judges, professors and university students. The English language is tricky and interesting. For example a gown can be an elegant women’s dress or a robe but a robe is never a women’s formal dress. If she was wearing a robe it would most likely be to cover sleep wear to provide warmth and privacy. A physician can’t wear a robe to the office but frequently wears a gown to cover his clothes to maintain sanitary conditions while seeing patients. There are two wonderful *c. reticulata* cultivars whose names are ‘Purple Gown’ and ‘Crimson Robe’ They are elegantly dressed in purple-red and crimson.



'Purple Gown'



'Crimson Robe'

Candles have been used to illuminate human celebrations for more than 5,000 years. However their origin is unclear. The ancient Egyptians may have developed the first candles when they used torches made by soaking the pithy core of reeds soaked in animal fat. However these torches had no wick as do true candles. It is known that the Egyptians used wicked candles in 3000 B.C. The ancient Romans are credited with developing the wicked candle when papyrus was dipped and rolled in melted tallow or beeswax. These candles were used to light homes, for traveling at night and in religious ceremonies.

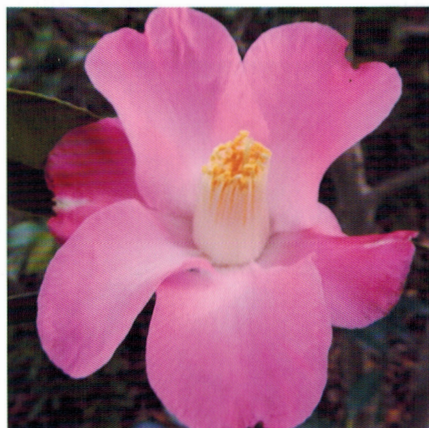


'Crimson Candles'

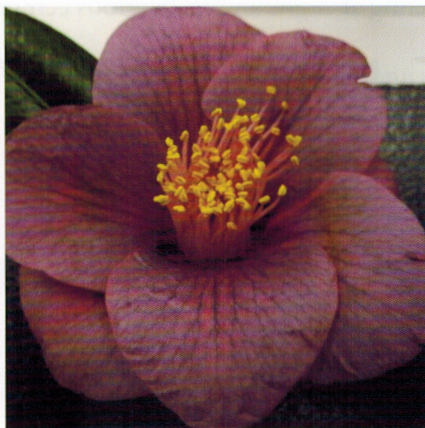
Dr. Clifford Parks known for breeding cold hardy, fragrant and *reticulata* hybrid camellias introduced 'Crimson Candles' a *C. reticulata* X *C. fraterna* seedling in 1955. The flower is a bright rose red small single late season bloomer that is cold hardy. It looks best on the bush in full bloom like a candle arbor.

When candles and a lovely bouquet of flowers decorate a dinner party, it is celebration time. The Nuccio's celebrated their introduction of 'Coral Bouquet' with its rich coral pink medium to large single flower that is toned lighter in the center with wavy petals. Camellia enthusiasts celebrate these hybrids because of the wonderful new color tones.

Another color breakthrough is the *japonica* hybrid 'Grape Soda'. The small to medium single flower has unique lavender to lavender red petals that tend toward purple. The name and color conjure up the image of drinking grape soda from a bottle in hot summer weather. In Boston these soft drinks were "Tonic". The word may refer to tonic water, a drink traditionally containing quinine; soft drink, a carbonated beverage; tonic (physiological), the response of a muscle fiber or nerve ending typified by slow continuous action; Herbal tonic, a herbal medicine with tonic effects; Tonic (music) a concept of musical theory and even an American rock band.



'Coral Bouquet'



'Grape Soda'

In conclusion the English language including camellia names are at times beautiful and colorful!

California Show Winners 2015

By Don Bergamini

The results are in and the new release by Nuccio Nurseries was the big eye catcher of the judges. It was 'Julius Nuccio' winning both in the single entries as well as one of the top winners in multiples. 'Frank Houser' was still a big winner in the multiples classes. Newer varieties to take some of the top spots were 'Red Devil', 'Tudor Baby Var', 'Chris Bergamini', 'Senritsu Ko', and 'Barbara Goff'. Have fun looking at the list of winners and see which ones you will get for next season. Take care of your plants and see you next year on the camellia trail.

SINGLE ENTRIES

Japonica Lg/VLg

Julius Nuccio	10
Junior Prom	4
Elaine's Betty	3
Royal Velvet	3
Carter's Sunburst	2
Elegans Splendor	2
Silver Triumph	2
16 others with 1 each	

Japonica Med

Lady Laura	5
Margaret Davis	5
Happy Harlequin	4
Nuccio's Gem	4
Nuccio's Jewel	4
Astronaut	2
Miss Charleston Var.	2
Satsuma Kurenai	2
Veiled Beauty	2
13 others with 1 each	

Small (Any Species)

Red Devil	6
Spring Daze	5
Hishikaraito	4
Tama Peacock	3
Black Gold Var	2
Black Tie	2
Red Hots	2
Tudor Baby Var.	2
15 others with 1 each	

Miniature (Any Species)

Chris Bergamini	4
Man Size	4
Night Rider	4
Little Michael	2
8 others with 1 each	



**'Tudor
Baby Var.'**
Photo by
Brad King

Reticulata & Reticulata
Hybrid

Ruta Hagmann	6
Barbara Goff	5
Frank Houser Var.	4
Linda Carol	4
Frank Houser	3
Arcadia	2
Black Lace Peony Var.	2
Harold Paige	2
John Hunt	2
Larry Piet	2
Pearl Terry	2
Phyllis Hunt	2
Sir Robert Muldoon	2
16 others with 1 each	

Species

Nitidissima	3
Egao	2
Shibori Egao	2
Shishi Gashira	2
2 others with 1 each	

Non-Reticulata Hybrid

Island Sunset	6
Lucky Star	4
Honeymoon	3
Julie Var.	3
Nicky Crisp	3
Senritsu Ko	3
Buttons N' Bows	2
First Blush	2
High Fragrance	2
Hot Stuff	2
Showboat	2
10 others with 1 each	



C. Nitidissima, Photo by Brad King

MULTIPLE ENTRIES

Japonicas

Veiled Beauty	6
Royal Velvet	5
Julius Nuccio	4
Nuccio's Carousel	4
Prima Ballerina	4
Astronaut	3
Haro No Utena	3
Lady Laura	3
Wildfire	3

Cherries Jubilee	2
Dixie Knight Supreme	2
Grand Prix	2
Herme	2
Kramer's Supreme	2
Mrs. D.W. Davis	2
Showtime	2
Snow Chan	2
Tata	2
19 others with 1 each	

MULTIPLE ENTRIES CONTINUED

Boutonnieres (Any Species)		<i>Retic & Retic Hybrids</i>	
Man Size	7	Frank Houser	10
Freedom Bell	6	Frank Houser Var	4
Pink Perfection	6	Sir Robert Muldoon	4
Spring Daze	4	Terrell Weaver	3
Red Hots	3	Curtail Call	2
Chris Bergamini	2	White Retic	2
Hishikaraito	2	12 others with 1 each	
Lemon Drop	2		
Night Rider	2	<i>Non-Retic Hybrids</i>	
Nitidissima	2	Jury's Yellow	3
Shikibu	2	Lucky Star	3
Tama Electra	2	Buttons N' Bows	2
Tama Peacock	2	Coral Delight Var.	2
10 others with 1 each		Senritsu Ko	2
		Waltz Time Var.	2
Species		13 others with 1 each	
Egao	2		
2 others with 1 each			



'Pink Perfection', Photo by Brad King

How To Prepare Your Camellias For Mandatory Water Restrctions

By Bradford King

The need to reduce consumption of water in California is an urgent issue. Mandatory water restrictions are in place and full cooperation is necessary. How do we save our camellias?

If you haven't already done the following things do them as soon as possible. Check every outlet, faucet, valve and washer to insure you have no leaks inside or outside your house.

INSIDE THE HOME

Make a strong effort to limit the use of water inside your home in order to have water for your camellias. Numerous suggestions and recommendations have been circulated in newspapers, magazines and the internet. Adopt as many as possible. Remember to recycle water when possible. For example my dog loves fresh water twice a day. Her bowl contains two cups of water so the remainder is used for plants, not thrown down the sink. I have changed fish tank water once a week for 60 years, so the tropical fish live for years. I now save and use the 20 gallons of water removed from nine tanks on plants. You too may have personal ways to save or recycle water.

OUTSIDE THE HOME

A key is to have a rational plan. The typical lawn uses high amounts of water and in fact in many cases is overwatered. Install timers to limit application; water after the sun goes down so there is less evaporation loss, not in the early morning. Never use the "California rake" that is using a hose to clean walks, driveways and around the pool. Sweep them with a broom or have the gardeners do this for you. When washing the car, tools, tables, chairs use a pail of water and recycle the water on the lawn or use it to flush the toilet. When watering a shrub or tree it is best to do one deep watering rather than many small ones.

SAVING YOUR CAMELLIAS

1. Focus on saving your best plants. Keep the show winners and most needed landscape camellias. Let the "dogs" die including those with poor flowers or those struggling to survive. In short, cut your losses.
2. Install a drip system and be sure it is operating correctly. Automatic systems are convenient and useful but will need to be monitored to insure they are working properly. Not infrequently, one plant or area gets too much moisture and another not enough.

3. The camellias in pots should be potted up one size using moisture retentive soil (a little less sand or perlite and more light soil, bark or coarse peat moss). These larger containers can then be placed in an empty larger pot. The larger container will use less moisture and the second pot will help by insulating thereby reducing heat and assist in retention of moisture.



**Nuccio's 'Bella Rossa Crinkled'. The second pot helps insulate the roots.
Photo by Brad King**

4. When possible plant your favorite cultivars in the ground. Camellias in the ground need less water than those grown in pots.

5. After sundown spray the camellia foliage with a mist sprayer. This will delay the evaporation of moisture from the leaves.

6. Prune your camellias drastically as a water saving strategy. With less leaf area there is less loss of moisture through transpiration. This is best done in the spring to save water loss during the summer. In the winter when cutting blooms for the home or a show prune back stems thereby reducing foliage.

Well established mature camellias are hardy and can survive with less moisture than younger plants or those in containers. Many older camellias have survived past droughts some even making it with only the rain provided naturally.

In summary make a home and garden water restriction plan which is in compliance with the mandatory restrictions and maintain the plan. Finally make water priorities which will sustain your best plants especially your most valuable camellias.

A Passion for Camellias

by Beth Stone

The 50th annual Pacific Camellia Society Show in Van de Kamp Hall at Descanso Gardens in La Canada California had a beautiful addition! The Botanical Artists Guild of Southern California (BAGSC) created a Botanical art exhibit , “A Passion for Camellias”, to complement the flower show. Contributing artists: Diane Daly, Estelle DeRidder, Clara Josephs, Joan Keesey, Sue Kuuskmae, Patricia Mark, Mitsuko Schultz, Gilly Shaeffer, Janice Sharp, and Beth Stone submitted a combined total of 20 art works. BAGSC members were on hand all that weekend to answer questions and to provide demonstrations.



Clara Josephs, *Camellia japonica* ‘Berenice Boddy’.

Watercolor on paper © 2015, all rights reserved.

The craftsman style elegance of Descanso’s Van de Kamp Hall filled with table after table covered with wildly diverse Camellia blooms was a beautiful setting for botanicals. The artworks were well received by Camellia flower exhibitors and the public alike as a refreshing addition to the floral display.



Beth Stone, *Camellia japonica* 'Guilio Nuccio',
C. j. 'Pearl Marginata' and *C. wabisuke* 'Sukiya'
Watercolor on paper © 2015, all rights reserved.



Janice Sharp, *Camellia sinensis* "The Tea Camellia".
Colored pencil on paper, © 2015, all rights reserved.

As the usual group of Camellia growers mingled with BAGSC artists over the show weekend it became clear that both groups had a lot in common! First of all, everyone shared their delight with the unquestionable beauty and seemingly endless variety of Camellias.

Next, keen observation and attention to detail emerged as a common trait. There is an attention to detail that enables experienced growers to differentiate between dozens, maybe hundreds of varieties. They've trained their eye to recognize distinguishing subtleties in flower petal shape, markings and color tones. They've honed their ability to look at a table of flowers and select 1st place blooms where others may see endless perfection.

Botanical artists study their subject before even beginning to draw it. They observe distinguishing features of a variety and try to capture its essence. They consider how to best present their specimen to illustrate its features with scientific accuracy. Artworks often include depictions of the backside or profile of camellia blooms in order to present information about how the calyx is composed and how it attaches to the stem. Inclusion of details such as empty calyxes or leaf damage from insects enhances the realism of the depiction.

Finally there are the specialized techniques which are employed. Camellia hobbyists study the growth habit of camellias in order to prune their plants to the desired shape and size. They anticipate future blooms by pruning to allow space for each bloom to open fully. They expertly differentiate between flower buds and growth buds for dis-budding and gibbing. Flower exhibitors take exquisite care with the blooms to prevent scratches/blemishes both on the bush and in transport. Finally they choose how to place each bloom on the show table or an exhibit tray to accentuate its beauty.

Botanical Artists master the mechanics of pencil, paper, brushes and paints to render an image of what nature has created. The majority of the artworks in this show were created with Watercolor on very smooth paper. Some were executed in colored pencil. Both media require a very patient layering of color. Finally the artist becomes skilled in choosing a composition which is beautiful to the viewer, grabbing attention then drawing the viewer in for more detailed study.

At the request of Descanso Gardens, 11 art works from the initial display of 20 have been re-hung in the historic and beautifully restored Boddy House where they are expected to remain well into 2016. Art works were selected to represent as many contributing artists as possible. The area where the botanicals are hang-

ing invites close observation, along the interior hallway leading to and spilling into the kitchen.



During the show we were fortunate to have BAGSC artist Gilly Shaeffer demonstrating painting the under layers of a leaf. She prepared a poster board which showed her techniques: becoming acquainted with drawing the subject, working out composition, color matching, establishing form with shadows. Photo by Brad King.

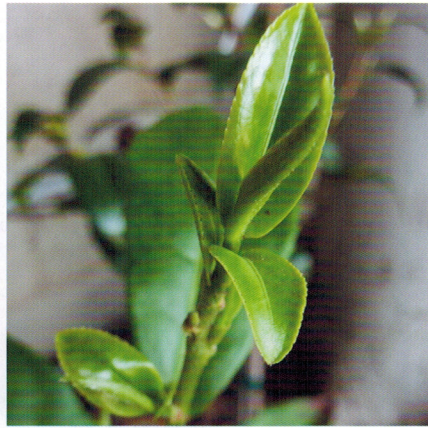


BAGSC artist Tania Norris and SCCS member Hiromi Sato share views on artistic expression. Assorted prints and note cards for sale by the artists participating in the show served as examples of this art form extended to the rest of the plant world. Photo by Beth Stone.

Many thanks to David Brown, Susan Armstrong and Cris Martinez of Descanso Gardens for welcoming BAGSC's "Passion for Camellias" to the Boddy House.

The Tea Plant

Article and Photos By Bradford King



Camellia sinensis (the tea plant) is the most widely grown camellia worldwide and is commercially the most important camellia. It is found in nature from India through China to some of the islands in the western Pacific. Tea is the beverage of choice after water throughout the world. It is the most popular beverage in China which has over 1.357 billion people. The first report of processed tea imported to America was by the Dutch into New York in 1650. Today in America iced tea is more popular than hot tea especially in California and the southeast due to the warm climate. The iced tea in the south is traditionally highly sweetened. India is the largest producer of tea but retains 80% for their own people. Thirty countries today grow tea; Kenya and Sri Lanka (Ceylon) are the largest exporters. Tea is consumed in over 150 countries with Turkey, Morocco, Ireland, Mauritania, and the United Kingdom the top five consumers according to Wikipedia.



'Rosea Tea' Photo by Gene Philips

Camellia sinensis has become a popular landscape plant as it forms a well-shaped bush that blooms in autumn and early winter. It produces many buds. The single small white (occasionally pink) flowers with yellow anthers bloom on the tips of the branches and in the leaf axils. Tea is made by harvesting the new leaves.

Nuccio's Nurseries in Altadena, California offers two forms-- *C. sinensis* (89#3) which is the strain sold as the traditional tea plant and *C. Sinensis* 'Moundy' a selected seedling that has a more compact mounding growth habit which makes it a good choice for limited space. The flower is also white but slightly larger.



Tea Blooms at Nuccio's

In California the tea plant is grown in partial shade like the *japonica* cultivars but in the lowlands of Charleston, South Carolina where it is humid with plentiful rain it can be grown in full sun. The Camellia Shop/Tea Shop in Savannah Georgia sells quality *c. sinensis* plants for readers living in in the southeast. One they offer has a lovely pink flower.

The Camellia Forest Nursery in Chapel Hill, North Carolina offers four strains. *C. sinensis* Large Leaf has large, thick, leathery leaves forming a multi-branched 12 to 15 foot tree. It is a triploid—double the chromosomes of most tea species which accounts for the larger leaves and flower as well as the thicker leaves and

stems. The larger leaves make collecting the leaves for tea easy—"your bag will fill up fast". *C. sinensis* variety *sinensis* 'Small Leaf' has small white flowers borne on a compact multi branched shrub that grows to 6 feet. It is popular in Japan and grows best in fifty percent sun or light shade and is hardy to zone 6B. It makes a good landscape plant with its small white flowers whose leaves can make a delicious tea. This nursery has introduced two of their own strains— *C. sinensis* 'Christine's Choice' selected by Christine Park from the nurseries tea test plot and *C. sinensis* 'Dave's Fave' which has large, rounded leaves and short internodes making a vigorous well rounded bush with abundant shoots for making tea. In summary the home gardener may enjoy growing a number of these shapely plants in the landscape and harvesting leaves to make his/her own tea; a topic to be addressed in the next issue "How to Make Tea".

Garden Doctor By Paul B. Engler

Editor's note: Interesting and informative articles previously published in the Camellia Review have been a staple of this publication. Beginning with this issue Joey Goldfarb has selected articles that we believe will inform and entertain our readers. At least one will appear in each of this season's Camellia Review. Garden Doctor was published in the La Times Home 9/1/85 and in the November-December Vol 47 #2 1985 Camellia Review. This article addresses bud drop and bloom failure topics that continue to be of interest today.

Most gardeners associate camellias with only the winter months. Actually much camellia bud drop and bloom failure can be traced to neglect in early fall. Since little can be done once flower buds begin to drop during the blooming season, fall is the time to take preventive action.

Adverse weather-particularly hot dry autumns-are responsible for much bud dropping. Although these conditions may be uncontrollable, you can counteract them by proper watering and feeding. Using mulch to keep shallow roots cool and keeping the surrounding atmosphere as moist as possible helps prevent the drying of flower buds. During warm weather you can maintain humidity by sprinkling the tops of camellia shrubs each day. Since hot sunlight beating down on moist foliage may result in sun-scalding of leaves, sprinkle in early morning and in the evening.

Some camellia varieties set an unusual large number of flower buds, and considerable bud drop can -and should- occur naturally. With these varietal types,

remove buds by hand whenever natural thinning is inadequate. Bud removal also helps with some of the fully double varieties that tend to develop “bull heads”—a condition in which flower buds swell into a normal fall bud but do not open completely or fail to open at all.

Occasionally, worms will feed on the tips of camellia flower buds and prevent them from opening. Such pests should be controlled with Sevin as soon as they are detected. Weevil feeding on the plant crown and surface roots can weaken the plant to the point that it will drop all of its buds.

Too much fertilizer can force new growth at the expense of the flower buds and will cause bud drop. For these reasons, fertilizing should be scheduled for the spring and summer and discontinued before early fall.

Camellias can be thinned and pruned to help bloom development any time before flowering—even as late as September. Most pruning, however, serves primarily to provide home gardeners with plants of particular forms and shapes, not to promote flowering. If a plant spreads over too large an area, shorten only the lower branches.

What's New From Nuccio's

By Anne Dashiell

Photos by Brad King



'Julius Nuccio'

Summer is a quiet time at Nuccio's Nurseries; there's weeding and watering and a certain amount of potting up but customers are few and far between. No one is worried however, camellia season is coming. Last season Nuccio's introduced

camellia japonica 'Julius Nuccio'; a large, handsome, dark red bloom which quickly became everyone's new must have. This season they hope for similar success with 'Ferris Wheel', a large candy striped semi-double bloom.



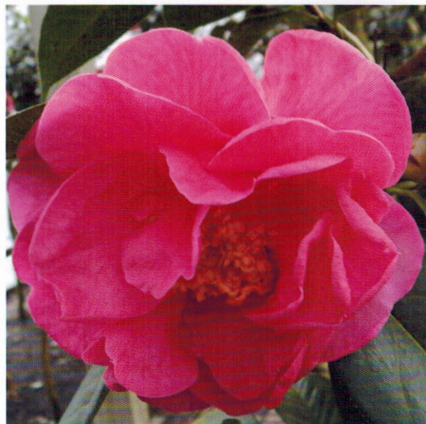
'Ferris Wheel'



Unique foliage of 'Ferris Wheel'

'Ferris Wheel' is a *japonica* hybrid that grows on a large, somewhat rangy plant. Young leaves often have red stripes on them which mirror the stripes on the flowers. The large seed pod also has red stripes. The plant is very prone to sport so growers may find that they have some blooms of a solid strawberry pink and others of solid red.

Another variety that is expected to sell well in the coming year is *Camellia Reticulata* 'Annabelle Fetterman'; a large to very large pale pink, semi double bloom. This lovely bloom is the result of a cross between 'Cornelian' and 'Crimson Robe' was registered by Frank Pursel of Oakland, CA.



'Annabelle Fetterman'

Not available this year but being evaluated for possible introduction in the future is a sport of Nuccio's 'Bella Rosa'; a darker red veined flower with a lighter border and red leaf. This sport was first caught in China where it goes by the name 'Bella Jinhua'. A similar sport is also being developed by Monrovia Nurseries which calls their variety 'Bella Vestita'. The dark red new growth is very striking but as the leaves mature they turn green with red marks, making for a less attractive garden plant than one might wish for. Will this interesting plant find its way into the market place? What name will it carry? These are questions for the future. For now we look forward to the glory days of fall and winter and the beautiful camellias of Nuccio's Nurseries.



Unnamed Bella Sport, Nuccio's Nurseries



Foliage of unnamed sport



Reflections &
Recollections ...
Camellias
and Water

By Linda and Joe Tunner

'Yuri Geshiki'

Forever is composed of nows - 'tis not a different time, except for infiniteness and latitude of home.

From this, experienced here, remove the dates to these. Let months dissolve and further months, and years exhale and years.

Without certificate or pause or celebrated days, as infinite our years would be . . . Emily Dickenson, 1937 ed.

The flowering season for camellias coincides in a lovely way with the changing weather of winter and the beginning of rainy days. Dewdrops collect on the petals and the flowers seem to shimmer with the advent of the rainy season. As the dust and heat of the summer and fall wash away with the rain, the fresh camellia buds start to open and they are a natural addition to



'Henry Huntington'

'Botanyuki'

birdbaths, waterfalls and shallow pools. Anywhere that water collects can be an instant reservoir for a camellia bloom.



'Nancy Lynn'

As you look at the reflections of these flowers on the water surface, you tend to lose yourself and drift back to memories of times and places, people and events, that float by in your mind. Something about the water surface and the way the flower connects the water and the

air remind you that each day is a new experience that is still bound to memories and recollections of older moments in time. You feel like new; like a child again.

When the wind blows and the flowers dance across the surface like little animated boats, every gardener feels a subtle thrill. Something so simple, something so profound and beautiful is happening right here and now. We have always enjoyed enhancing our garden with floating camellias and so we wanted to share some of these images with you and encourage all of you to take a moment to reflect on your lives as you watch your own flower's reflections in the pure water essence. **Please share with us your ideas and images of camellias on water – just write or e-mail us care of the Camellia Review Editor, bdk@usc.edu.**

On March 9, 2014, we were fortunate enough to find ourselves in Portugal at the beautiful Casa do Campo Estate Winery and Camellia Gardens, which boasted some of the most fabulous, large topiary camellias that we have ever seen! It was clear that these people also felt the timelessness of floating camellias on water. Here we capture a moment from that unforgettable day.



Linda and Joe Tunner
October, 2015



PARTING SHOT





'Island Sunset' Photo by Brad King