The Camellia Bulletin

Volume 11, Number 3 April, 1958

FINLANDIA VARIEGATED

—Courtesy Schwabacher-Frey Co.

Published by

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CAMELLIA SOCIETY, INC.

The Camellia Bulletin, in keeping with the fundamental concept of the amateur organizations it serves, is a non-profit enterprise published quarterly (Jan., Apr., July and Oct.) by the Northern California Camellia Society, Inc. Its principal objects and purposes are furtherance of the enjoyment and benefits derived from the culture of camellias and the dissemination of knowledge related thereto. By special arrangement with, and through the co-operation of, the Pacific Camellia Society, The Camellia Society of Sacramento and The Camellia Society of Santa Clara County, this Bulletin is also available in conjunction with membership, which is open to the general public upon application to the Secretary of any of the societies mentioned, at the respective addresses shown above. For full membership in the Northern California Camellia Society, Inc., and with respect to all persons resident in the counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco and San Mateo, the annual dues are $5.00—outside that area, limited membership privileges, including the right to all Society publications, are $3.00 per year. MEETINGS are held on the first Monday of each month November through May, at 8 p.m. in the Claremont Junior High School Auditorium, Oakland, and include an informal flower display and refreshments. All matter regarding the content of the Bulletin should be addressed to the Editor. CHANGE OF ADDRESS should be reported promptly to your Secretary, as the Post Office will not forward periodicals.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

For the most part, the shows are now over and by and large, the curtain has fallen on the 1957-8 camellia season. What has been learned from one more year of camellia experience? All told, we attended seven different camellia shows this season at the following locations: New Orleans and Slidell, La.; Gulfport, Miss.; Mobile, Ala.; San Jose, Sacramento and Walnut Creek, Calif. In the South, once again cold weather laid a heavy hand on the exhibitor, while in Northern California prolonged rain and a mild February followed by some frost in early March, combined with petal blight, tended to place some limitation on the number and quality of blooms exhibited, in most instances. Nevertheless, almost without exception all of the camellia shows seen were first class and quite up to par, once again demonstrating the indefatigability of the camellia fancier.

This constituted the second consecutive season in which abnormal and untimely cold weather dealt the shows in the South quite a blow, many being postponed and some cancelled outright, largely by reason of the lack of representaitve and adequate blooms. Here in California, petal blight, which unfortunately shows up worst when a flower is in the fullest stage of development, unquestionably played a major part in holding down the number of top quality blooms exhibited. Notwithstanding all this, no apologies need be made for the calibre of the shows we saw, and, at Walnut Creek, in particular, the quantity of blooms exhibited proved to be almost embarrassing.

In retrospect, we have two distinct impressions: (1) there is great need for more and better cold-resistant types of camellia (2) some practical means of combatting petal blight must be found. With respect to the first item, there has been underway for some time an unorganized but presumably effective program of hybridizing which gives promise, through the inter-breeding of the species, to yield a type or types of camellia that will prove superior to the straight japonica in the matter of cold resistance. In fact, the Williamsii hybrids (*saluenensis x japonica*) have already proved their worth in the even more difficult climactic conditions prevalent in the British Isles. We are informed that these hybrids seem to perform satisfactorily under their conditions, whereas the japonicas will, at times, shed practically all of their buds. While there are, as yet, very limited forms of these hybrids available, most being of the single or semi-double types, the magnificent formal double which Prof. E. G. Waterhouse of Australia developed and to which he gave his name and one or two peonyforms of great promise produced here in California, indicate quite clearly that, in time, all the flower forms will be represented in this *Williamsii* strain of hybrid. In such event, the camellia fancier will be able to supplement his collection with at least a few of these cold-resistant and distinctive-flowering types so that, under almost any conditions, he will still have some blooms. In fact, they are so unique that he would want them irrespective of their hardiness.

At this stage, it is quite evident that the petal blight problem offers a far more serious challenge than the cold problem. For one thing, we seriously doubt that, as yet, there has arisen an equally powerful incentive to develop a cure. In the case of cold resistance, besides the amateurs there are many professionals actively engaged in plant breeding and, with such lures as the All-America Selections Award, for example, the financial reward for outstanding achievement in the breeding of new and better camellias in itself constitutes a powerful inducement. On the other hand, there is no comparable situation in the pathological field, to our knowledge, and perhaps the first step the amateur organizations should take in this regard should be to set up a substantial prize, say $10,000.00, to be awarded the person who first discovers an eradicator or control for petal blight that is acceptable to the societies. We have no doubt this sum could be raised easily, as untold numbers of the larger collectors would willingly give $100 each toward such a fund, we are certain. While the chemical trade is now working on the problem, there are certain limiting factors involved, particularly as regards the potential market. It costs millions to bring out a new insecticide or fungicide and, of

(Continued on Page 20)

THE A.C.S. ANNUAL MEETING

The thirteenth Annual Meeting of the American Camellia Society, held in New Orleans January 30 to February 2, inclusive, set a new record from the standpoint of attendance, over 600 persons being registered—fitting testimony to the popularity of the Crescent City as a meeting place and the undiminished interest notwithstanding a rather trying winter for camellia fanciers. There was a very creditable representation from California.

The program of entertainment provided by The Men's Camellia Club of New Orleans, who held their 18th Annual Camellia Show in conjunction with the meeting and otherwise arranged a complete schedule of events running the gamut from garden tours to such other diversions as horse races and a Mississippi River boat trip, filled every hour not taken up by the social and business meetings. To the Men's Club and those very generous individuals such as the Ernest Judices, Mrs. Sigmund J. Katz, the Gregg Armstrongs and others who did so much to make our stay enjoyable, many thanks and our deep appreciation for your kindness.

At the meeting of the Directors, Mr. Ralph S. Peer of Los Angeles was chosen to serve another term as president, and all of the California officers and directors were likewise re-elected. Mrs. Sigmund J. Katz was elected Director-at-Large to succeed her late husband and Mr. Frank Dowd of Charlotte was named Director for North Carolina, while Mr. H. E. Ashby of Charleston, President of the South Carolina Camellia Society, was the newly elected director for that state. All other officers were re-elected including the newly-appointed editor, Dr. Herbert S. Wolfe of Gainesville, Fla., who had succeeded Arthur C. Brown, now confining his duties to secretary, effective with the latter's relinquishing of the editorship January 1, 1958.

At the meeting of the Governing Board, memorial resolutions were unanimously adopted in recognition of the invaluable services rendered the Society by two outstanding members and Directors-at-Large who passed away during the year, Mr. John P. Illges on December 27, 1957, and Mr. Sigmund J. Katz, on January 3, 1958, the loss of whom will be keenly felt by the Society for many years to come.

Last, but not least to the writer, was the approval in principle of the Camellia Rating Plan presented by him to the Governing Board for A. C. S. sponsorship and adoption, as more fully described in our last issue, which will now be tested thoroughly by eminently qualified judges, within the next few months. If the results are satisfactory, it is expected that some such system of rating camellias generally will be instituted by the national society. This, coming on the heels of the new Inter-Society Relations Committee set up for co-ordinating the efforts of the local societies with those of A.C.S., is concrete proof of the sincerity of purpose of the national society and its endeavor to be of real service to the camellia-growing public. All who believe in this sort of thing should support President Peer and his administration in their efforts to attain the goal of 10,000 members this year, by joining the American Camellia Society or recommending it to your friends. —D.L.F.

COVER FLOWER

Finlandia Variegated: Also known as Aurora Borealis, Margaret Jack and Speckles, this distinctive sport of *Finlandia,* which has given us so many beautiful mutations *(Monte Carlo, King Lear, Finlandia Red, Finlandia Blush)* is perhaps the strongest grower and longest-blooming of all. The medium large flowers are borne on a rather erect plant having better foliage than the others, of semi-double form usually with a few rabbit ears. The most outstanding feature of the bloom, aside from its splendid form, is the marking—a combination of bright red peppering and usually narrow striping on a basically white background. This is one of the top variegated camellias, with a great deal of individuality. It starts to bloom during the latter part of early season and continues until the beginning of the late season, always having good substance.

GEOGRAPHY AND CAMELLIA WEATHER

Roy T. Thompson, Glendale, California

A camellia bloom is an elastic cellular sack filled with water; a flower bud showing color is the sack before it has been filled and expanded. The stems and branches of the plant are the water pipes connecting the blooms with the water supply. The extent to which the flower expands depends simply on its supply of water, and this supply depends, in turn, on the number of flowers which have to be filled through the available pipes, the water supply itself, and the amount of evaporation, or loss of water, which takes place during the process. If the weather is cool and the process of filling the flower with water long drawn out, and evaporation at a minimum because of high humidity, the flowers will have a chance to reach their maximum expansion and best condition. If, however, warm weather hastens the opening of the flower, the sack becomes only partially filled, especially if the surrounding air is dry enough to cause evaporation from petals and leaves.

The key to the opening of the flower is heat; after the flower-bud has been formed and is awaiting opening time, heat will trigger its opening action. This does not mean great heat; sometimes the amount of heat is small and barely enough to start the opening, for camellias are winter-blooming plants and accustomed to what we call cool weather. If the temperature remains relatively low during the entire opening process, the flower may reach its maximum expansion and best condition, but if the heat comes on in great degree, or too suddenly, the flower will open rapidly and fail to reach its maximum capacity; it may even become flabby. (Balling, incidentally, indicates a disproportion between the amount of heat present and the available water supply, i.e., the heat calls for faster opening action, but the plant cannot supply the water fast enough to open its buds; hence they "ball.") Since the flow of water through the plant stems has fixed limits, too sudden or too great a demand for water to fill the flowers will produce small ones. The ideal circumstances for flower opening would then seem to be (1) long lasting and uninterrupted cool weather, and (2) relatively high amounts of water in the surrounding air to prevent undue evaporation. In other words, the cooler the weather (so long as the temperature is at or above the triggering point) and the higher the humidity, the better the chance for perfectly conditioned and maximum-sized flowers.

Certain geographical sections of California provide these weather conditions more regularly and more consistently than others, and in these sections large flowers are more likely to occur as a regular and dependable event. However, since weather is notably capricious, it may produce big flowers sporadically and unpredictably anywhere that camellias are grown. One of the sections where large flowers are produced with consistent regularity is the Fresno area.

To many visitors at the Fresno camellia shows the large flowers come as a distinct surprise. Many times over the writer has heard the remark, "My goodness, you wouldn't expect good camellias in that hot place." (They are mostly Southern Californians who see Fresno only once a year as they pass through it on their summer vacations.) But it is not the hot summer which opens a camellia; it is the steady and uninterrupted cool of the winters. According to Dr. Bonner, summers are important to camellias in the matter of bud formation and nutrition, but, given favorable summer conditions, it is the winter weather pattern which determines the size of the blooms. Fresno apparently has a most favorable pattern.

Other features besides size seem to be characteristic of many Fresno blooms; color is frequently several shades lighter, and texture invariably firm. The firmer texture can, perhaps, be explained by the near saturation of the petals; color may be influenced by the greater expansion of the cellular structure of the petals.

Fresno is not, of course, unique in this respect; there are many other areas in the state where big flowers are produced, notably the Ramona Valley, Sacramento and the

(Continued on Page 15)

THE SAN JOSE SHOW

The Northern California camellia show season was opened auspiciously on the 2nd of March, when the Camellia Society of Santa Clara County staged its 16th Annual Camellia Show at the Civic Auditorium in San Jose. Although this is exclusively a men's organization, as is usually the case the good wives had a lot to do with the affair and a little artistic touch here and there gave evidence of the feminine participation. When you come right down to it, when things are really hectic such as at show time, the little lady is almost indispensable!

Oscar E. Tomlinson, working as General Show Chairman under President Richard Roggia, did a bang-up job and the overall effect with a lovely garden-scene background contributed by James Rare Plant Nurseries was very pleasing.

Although the day of the show was sunny and pleasant, the weather immediately preceding had not been propitious to development of the perfect bloom, with strong winds and a frosty morning or two. Notwithstanding this, the display of non-competitive blooms was of sufficient quantity and quality to make the show a complete success from a horticultural standpoint.

In lieu of competition, a large and most interesting review section on glass was again featured and the choice cut flowers prominently displayed were the center of interest.

THE SACRAMENTO SHOW

(As reported by R. C. (Dick) Brown)

The 34th Annual Show of The Camellia Society of Sacramento was held on the week-end of March 8-9, in the beautiful Memorial Auditorium, climaxing a week of camellia festivities

The Camellia Show was the responsibility of General Show Chairman Ferd Scheid, and it was quite up to past high standards. The overall show design was worked out by Vice-President Erwin Nowak and J. Carroll Reiners, landscape architects, who devised a fresh layout that was very pleasing. The highlight was a color-illuminated fountain, around which was banked hundreds of camellias en masse and the designers were rewarded with well-earned plaudits for this excellent feature.

Unfortunately, due to severe storms and a frost or two immediately preceding the Show, the number of blooms exhibited was somewhat reduced, compared with previous years. Nevertheless, the quality was high and the attendance greater than ever, and there was not the over-crowding that occasionally results from an excess of blooms.

Several other innovations were made this year. Exhibitors were for the first time permitted to display their blooms with not more than two leaves, which seemed to enhance the beauty of the flowers. Also, a new division was created for the best collection of exactly 15 named varieties—no more and no less. This had the virtue of attracting many of the smaller collectors and the addition proved quite popular.

A brief tabulation of the award winners follows:

SWEEPSTAKES: Dr. Ralph Gladen, Modesto, California.

Runner-Up: Dr. Fred E. Heitman, Lafayette, California

BEST CAMELLIA JAPONICA IN THE SHOW:

Harold Clark, Sacramento, with a king-sized *Tomorrow*

Runner-Up: K. O. Hester, with a beautiful *C. M. Wilson* bloom

BEST CAMELLIA RETICULATA IN THE SHOW:

D. J. Faustman, with a fine bloom of *Crimson Robe*

BEST THREE CAMELLIA JAPONICA: R. A. Seyfried, *Mathotiana*

BEST TRAY OF SIX JAPONICA: S. L. Bouque, *Purity*

BEST TRAY OF THREE RETICULATA: P. J. Daube, *Noble Pearl*

BEST COLLECTION OF FIFTEEN VARIETIES: Harold Clark

LARGE COLLECTION (25 or MORE BLOOMS): C. W. Lattin, Oakland-Santa Cruz

BEST CAMELLIA SEEDLING: David L. Feathers, Lafayette, *Forever,* a picotee-type formal double in two contrasting shades of pink, with recurved, margined inner petals.

In the Arrangements Section, the theme was "The Camellia Capital Entertains". The winner of the best as well as the most outstanding arrangement was Mrs. Richard Payne of Sacramento. First Runner-up was Mrs. Rex Fulton of North Sacramento and the Second Runner-up was Mrs. John Traub, also of Sacramento.

A very fine compliment was paid the arrangers at this show by an acknowledged and nationally-known authority on arrangements, who said that the exhibits at the Sacramento Show were the best seen this year, which included some of the well-known shows held in the South.

In conclusion, we can all remember the 1958 Show as being one of the best and thus quite up to the high standards of the past.

CAMELLIA CHATTER

This has been, to put it mildly, a most unusual blooming season in Northern California. Very moderate temperatures in January, followed by persistent rainfall in February and a blustery, relatively cold and wet March combined to bring about rather extraordinary performance in quite a number of camellias. For one thing, there has been rather an intermingling of the blooming seasons, with many of the late sorts being earlier than usual and a few mid-season bloomers refusing to come out in the wet. *Blood of China,* which has been exceptionally fine here this year, was out earlier than *Rose Dawn,* although the former is rated late and the latter mid-season. *Fred Sander,* certainly not noted for outstanding performance here, has been exceptionally good and, because we had no frost to speak of all winter, has had none of the burnt margins normally resulting from its sticking its nose out about November and getting it well frost-bitten. *Celestine,* certainly a much underrated variety insofar as we are concerned, has been simply sensational this year, probably due to the mildness and moisture. On the other hand, our whites on the patios, normally as outstanding as anything on the place, have been much below par this season, several showing bud drop. Undoubtedly this is due to the fact there has been inadequate warmth and light with so much overcast weather, because we normally have most of them set back 8 or 10 feet inside the eaves. For the first time, we have noted bud-drop on some plants in the ground or in containers in the weather under oaks. *Hana Fuki,* usually dependable and beautiful, has been almost worthless this year, buds or partially-opened flowers dropping before they matured. *Masterpiece,* in perhaps the most favorable environment we have on the place, and in the ground, has not yielded a single usable flower, most buds blasting completely and those blooms which did open all had multiple centers—up to *four* in one flower! We had one or two immense *Drama Girl,* but only four blooms on a 5-ft. plant in the ground—right next to *Masterpiece,* incidentally. *Elizabeth Le Bey* has, however, been terrific (planted in a container). In the course of a rather busy speaking engagement schedule, we have noted the great number of questions relating to the pruning of camellias. This has led to a certain amount of reflection on the subject and we are going to propound a theory in this regard. On the premise that (1) a camellia is a slow-growing tree and (2) the "fruit" of a camellia is its blossom, would not it follow that, to some extent at least, a camellia tree should be pruned in accordance with the basic principles of pruning applicable to fruit trees—at least, to the citrus fruits, which are evergreen as is the camellia? We prune a fruit tree to shape it and to direct its energy into the young wood, which, as is the case with all forms of life, is most vigorous. Pruning out the weak growth and the old branches that are improperly positioned will throw greater strength into the usable flowering wood. Many camellias set low branches that act as a sort of "skirt". When the plant is large enough to shade the root system without these, for the sake of neatness and particularly to facilitate petal tidiness it is advisable to remove such growth as, in most cases, the flowers on such branches are of little value because of mud splash or contact with the ground. Unless the camellia is being used as a ground cover espalier, or as a pendant shrub, it will make for better symmetry and plant form to keep

(Continued on Page 10)

THE N.C.C.S. SHOW AT WALNUT CREEK

Winding up the season here in Northern California was the 13th Annual Camellia Show presented by the members of the Northern California Camellia Society under the leadership of President John D. Beers, with Walter Peterson assuming the big responsibility of Chairman of the Show Committee. Perhaps the most notable thing about this undertaking was the wonderful spirit of helpfulness and good fellowship displayed by all those who took part. Because we should emphasize this matter of good spirit and collaboration, without which any amateur undertaking of the sort would be absolutely impossible, mention is made that there were several people working on this show (and their good wives, too) who have never failed to have a hand in this annual event since it began, near the close of the War—in 1946.

It seems to me that an Annual Show is not so much an exposition of how big or how well we can grow camellias as it is of good fellowship—how we can work together as a team motivated primarily by the thought of worthwhile accomplishment. It is hard to think of a way in which this could be exemplified more strikingly than through the example of a group of people, with an innate love of camellias, carrying tables, climbing up a ladder, moving tubbed camellias in the rain 'til midnight or otherwise laboring in a fashion which mere money could not buy—all with the thought of a common objective: to create something of beauty which the less fortunate general public can enjoy momentarily. This, to me, is the quintessence of the amateur spirit—the love of that which is beautiful. It is what makes a camellia society.

To get back to the Show itself, it was again our good fortune to have a real artist, Robert M. Graves of Walnut Creek, give us the benefit of his ability as a landscape architect. Beginning with the beautifully-conceived spring garden displays fronting the entrance to the auditorium (see cut) continuing through the most interesting and artistic pattern of the angled exhibit tables and terminating overhead, where Dr. Robert K. Cutter's attractive hanging-basket camellias and the plastic hemispheres filled with camellia blooms conceived by Robert Graves made a graceful and unique aerial attraction, the show was particularly well done esthetically. An outstanding feature and a most welcome addition to any camellia show were the many beautiful specimen potted plants in full bloom, largely contributed by Harold L. Paige of Lafayette, a master of container culture.

The courtesy collection exhibits were sufficiently numerous to add interest and keep one up to date on the newer sorts, as well as get ideas very readily for a well rounded-out collection for the garden. Notable also were the reticulatas, more numerous than in any previous N.C.C.S. show and of very high quality. By actual count, the reticulata blooms entered in competition numbered 123!

The only possible criticism might be that the entries were too crowded. All in all, there were about 4,305 cut flowers in the show, including those in the ante room devoted to arrangements. In regard to the latter, the theme was "Camellias at Home and Abroad" and this was divided into five classifications: Arrangements suitable for the entry hall, living room, dining room, den and play room. The entries were on a non-competitive basis although graded for artistic excellence and were of very high calibre, for which Arrangement Committee Chairman Mrs. H. N. Hansen is due a great deal of credit.

Some closing comments about this show: For the first time, it was held under American Camellia Society auspices and thus came under standard rules and regulations. Notable was the high quality of such normally rather indifferent performers as 'Blood of China' and 'Fred Sander'. The mildness of the earlier part of the season resulted in a greater showing of the late bloomers, which provided new interest. Attendance was quite up to expectations, although handicapped by rain on opening day.

To all those who worked so faithfully and untiringly, on the planning, setting up, tearing down, transportation, tickets, corsages, book sales, hostessing, information, judging, registration, advertising, program and, when it was all over, the refreshments, all credit is due and we hope we overlooked no department! There follows a resumé of the

trophy and award winners, with a list of the top competitors to the extent space will permit.

Sweepstakes Competition—First Ten	Award Ribbons 1st	2nd	3rd	Total Points Scored
1: C. W. Lattin, Oakland-Santa Cruz (Winner)	67	99	83	482
2: B. W. S. Hollingshead, Orinda (Runner-Up)	60	34	40	288
3: Dr. Fred E. Heitman, Lafayette	49	32	17	228
4: Dr. Ralph Gladen, Modesto	23	35	20	159
5: O. L. Davis, Orinda	19	15	8	95
6: L. P. Brooks, Concord	17	11	7	80
7: C. C. Viegas, Sacramento	13	9	13	70
8: Newton Pratt, Sacramento	13	8	4	59
9: Roy W. Tess, Orinda	9	12	7	58
10: S. B. Davi, Pittsburg	10	10	6	56

Clifton W. Lattin as winner of most points as well as blue ribbons, took the Northern California Camellia Society Trophy as well as the American Camellia Society Gold Certificate, with B. W. S. Hollingshead winner of the Runner-up and Silver Certificate awards. It is noted that, with a single exception, the order of finish based on total points was exactly the same as if based on blue ribbons, only.

Best Grown Camellia Japonica Bloom

O. L. Davis of Orinda won the H. L. Paige Trophy with an exceptionally fine *Kramer's Supreme.* Runner-up was the same exhibitor's *Charlotte Bradford.*

Best Three Camellia Japonica

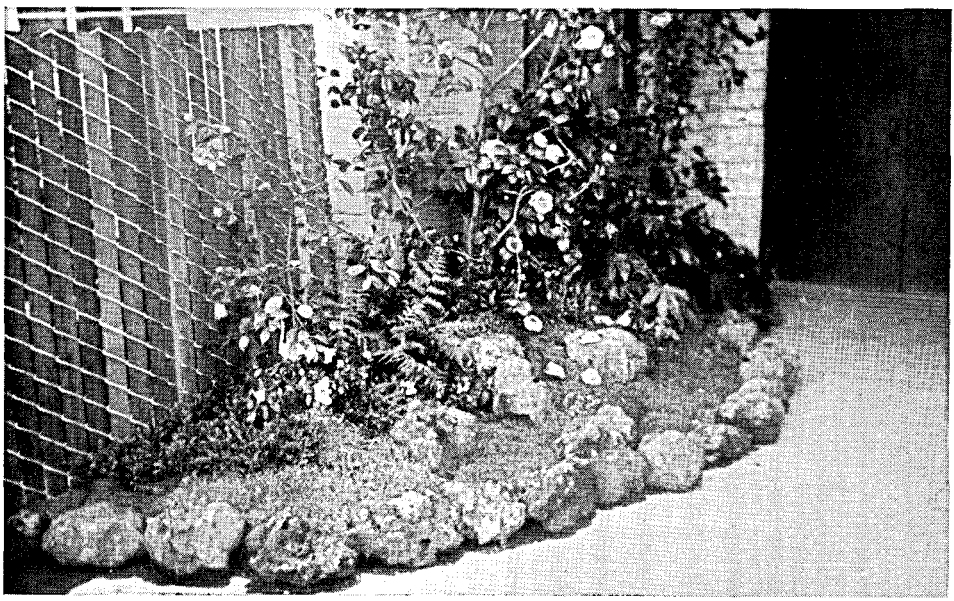
R. F. Lewis of Walnut Creek took the B. W. S. Hollingshead Trophy with a fine set of three *Blood of China.* Newton Pratt was runner-up with *Fred Sander.*

Best Seven Camellia Japonica

Woodford F. Harrison of Berkeley won the C. W. Lattin Trophy with a fine tray of *Eleanor Hagood.*

Best Twelve Camellia Japonica (Collection)

Barlow W. S. Hollingshead of Orinda won the Certificate of Award for this class with a dozen beautiful blooms.



Garden scene landscaping at entrance to Auditorium — one side.

Best Twelve Camellia Japonica (One Variety)

Dr. Fred E. Heitman of Lafayette won the Dr. G. Myron Grismore Memorial Trophy with his beautifully-matched *Fred Sander* blooms.

Most Outstanding Potted Plant

The Sylvia May Wells Trophy was won by Woodford F. Harrison's splendid *Hana Fuki* (Mrs. Howard Asper).

Best Reticulata Bloom

The Mary-Elizabeth Purcell Brown Trophy went to Mrs. Horace Breed of Orinda, with a magnificent *Capt. Rawes.*

Best Seedling Award

Milo E. Rowell of Fresno won the D. L. Feathers Trophy with his Seedling #551—a very fine large, vivid red semi-double with gracefully waving petals which was considered of sufficient merit to be awarded the Highly Commended Certificate of the American Camellia Society.

Special Award ribbons, in recognition of their valuable contribution to the Show, were given to Richard C. Brown of Sacramento, Dr. Robert K. Cutter of Berkeley, David L. Feathers and Harold L. Paige of Lafayette, Skipper Kent of Walnut Creek and Dr. John D. Lawson (Camelliana Nursery) of Antioch, for their courtesy exhibits of flowers or plants; to Robert M. Graves, landscape architect, Orchard Nursery of Lafayette, McDonnell Nursery, Sunset Nursery and the Walnut Creek Gardener's Association for their artistic contributions in the way of landscaping and other decorative effects.

CAMELLIA CHATTER

(Continued)

the lower branches, at least, pointed upward. Remember, also, that judicious pruning tends to take the place of disbudding, thus giving flowers of a larger average size.

It has been about ten years since our first bloom from the earliest arrivals of some 40-odd Australian varieties sent us by some of our good friends from "Down Under". Thus we now feel qualified to comment on their performance here and what we think of them. Taking the japonicas alphabetically, *Aspasia Macarthur* and its various sports (which we know better here—incorrectly—as the "Paeoniaeflora Family"), *Camden Park, Lady Loch* and *Otahuhu Beauty,* are all beautiful and dependable in the warmer areas but generally unsatisfactory near the coast. *Australis* has been good and is getting better since put in the ground. This flower has a fine, high form and is rather unique, although the plant seems a bit weepy. *Jean Lyne* and its rose-pink sport, *Edith Linton,* are highly satisfactory growers and bloomers with good flowers, their only weakness being fairly short flower life and consequent shattering. *Great Eastern* is one of our favorites, its slow, stocky growth being particularly adaptable to container culture, while the flowers, of a most pleasing shade of dull red, are large, showy, long-lasting and have distinctive form and height. Our experience with *Leviathan* has been limited, but it seems to have taken hold here quite well. *Mrs. H. Boyce,* a sport of the large, late formal white camellia, *Paolina Maggi,* is breathtakingly beautiful in soft, well-veined pink faintly edged white. It holds the bud well and the plant is good, with large, attractive foliage. *Mrs. Swan,* a pale rose-pink single, we gave up on as there are others we like better and this type of flower has limited usage. *Nancy Bird,* a sport of *Jean Lyne* but quite different in form and color, having a tuft of petaloids in a semi-double frame and varying from white to pink base with splashes of deeper striping, is interesting but less upright than its parent. *Prince Frederick William* must be rated as among the finest of the very popular light-pink formals, though darker than both *Pink Perfection* (Frau Minna Seidel) and *Eleanor Hagood.* Its foliage and growth habit are both good and this one is here to stay. *Spencer's Pink* is good. *The Czar,* an Audusson-like bloom of a lighter, brighter red, seems to be a slow grower that would make a fine container specimen and will take the sun. Add to the foregoing the Waterhouse hybrids—*E. G. Waterhouse, Lady Gowrie* and *Margaret Waterhouse,* naming them in my order of preference.

IT'S THE WATER

Ray H. Soehren, Sacramento, California

Did you ever stop to realize how many times you have read bits of advice on how to water your camellias? The information in the nursery catalog, the advice on the bag or box that your favorite brand of fertilizer comes in, the garden column of the Sunday paper and on up through an almost never-ending procession to and including the best books on our favorite subject. The chances are that many of the items you read relative to watering had certain things in common with all the others. For example (1) keep the soil damp by watering once a week (2) syringe the foliage frequently, and (3) it was probably written by some well meaning and qualified person, for a national audience, but based on his experiences in a specific geographic location.

Items (1) and (2) are certainly good common sense until we get to the recommendation as to the frequency rate of watering which cannot be the same everywhere. When it comes to item (3), a prescription written for a cool, humid, coastal area, for example, would be catastrophic if followed here in the central valley of California where summer temperatures often top 100° for days on end and where the not-infrequent north wind will dehydrate foliage, root ball, container and all in a matter of twenty-four hours or less. This combination of heat and north wind is particularly devastating to canned plants or those in clay pots. It is seldom that information relating to watering camellias makes any mention of the kind of water that one uses to accomplish the job.

This article deals not with how to water your plants, but rather with the water itself that you use, or more specifically, the chemistry of the water. If the thought of "chemistry" frightens you—as it would most of us—let's just say it deals with the pH and the hardness of the water; and I hasten to add that the experiences related here are those pertaining to a specific, localized area and certainly will not be exactly duplicated anywhere else in the country. The subject and the ideas set forth herein are, nevertheless, broad. It must be left to the reader to fit the solution to his own problem. You may some day be surprised to learn that you do have a water problem.

The "Camellia City," as Sacramento has been called for many years, has an abundant supply of excellent and inexpensive water, drawn through a municipal filtration plant from the American and Sacramento Rivers. This water has a hardness of between 65 and 70 parts per million (ppm) and a pH of 6.8. It is ideal camellia water from the pH standpoint as well as hardness, being slightly on the acid side of neutral and quite soft. However, our home, in an outlying area, is supplied by municipally operated wells and pressure systems rather than through the filtration plant using river water.

The thousand or so camellias in our collection—all in containers except twenty and all fairly small—must be irrigated with this well water which has a pH of 7.5 to 8.5 and a hardness of 340 ppm. It is so highly alkaline that it leaves a residue of salts on the foliage and virtually "rattles" out of the pipes.

The collection that we now have was begun in 1951 and I dare say that the plants in our lath houses were as healthy and vigorous as could be desired until the summer of 1955. After three seasons of normal, healthy growth and color the earliest acquisitions showed a peculiar chlorosis, while terminal growth on plants five feet high was limited from an inch or less to a maximum of about four inches. At the close of the growing season the foliage of previous years took on the russet color of frost-bite and slowly began to drop. Signs very similar to die-back were beginning to be evident. A full, beautifully-shaped and healthy looking plant of *Mathotiana* lost all but its current season's leaves and they were mighty few. A nearby *Elegans* died back at the terminals until, though still struggling for existence, it had only about two dozen leaves. These two plants were in the ground. Our soil is a sandy loam and well drained, but this was typical of what happened to nearly every plant we had during the spring and summer of 1956. The salts in the water had built up so strong a concentration in the soil during this period of about five years that the plants were being killed.

Skipping further details, suffice it to say that after losing about three years' time and about 150 plants we finally studied, read and researched our way to the realization that "It's the Water." Actually our study of soils, waters, fertilizers and the elements of each was quite enlightening and we made some interesting discoveries through our talks with various sympathetic persons.

With the valuable help of our County Farm Adviser, a camellian himself; the chief chemist of the Water Department; the owner of an agricultural supply firm and the local manager of a large commercial fertilizer company, what appears to be a very successful remedial and preventive program has carried us to the point where, although not proud of our plants, at least we are now not quite so ashamed to have others see them.

Our soil, of an excellent structure and with a normal pH of 7 in its virgin state has built up to a pH of 9.5 through years of well water irrigation. This is in the "highly-alkaline" section of the pH scale in which, theoretically, camellias could not survive. One of the obvious solutions would be to soften the irrigation water as we do our domestic water but this would have involved a considerable cost both for original installation as well as in maintenance.[1] There is also a problem involved here in getting the elements back in to the extent that is necessary for good plant growth. Another possibility and the one recommended by our farm adviser was to add phosphoric or sulphuric acid to all of the irrigation water. This would be somewhat hazardous with children around as well as a real headache in trying to replace piping as fast as the acid ate it out. Either of these would have been fine on an agricultural scale with the proper equipment but for small backyard operations was not practical.

To begin with, we have placed 45 plants of *Imperator* from our root-stock supply in a test area and are maintaining 15 different continuous tests on them. It will probably be several years before an ideal and permanent method is determined but we are satisfied that the obstacle is one that can be overcome. Meanwhile, I want to tell you what saved my plants and thus far is bringing them back to health, and at the same time pass on some odds and ends that were learned in our study of the condition.

The acidity or alkalinity (pH) of a soil can become quite involved and certainly have far-reaching repercussions. Since an alkaline soil condition is definitely detrimental to camellia culture and because it locks in the iron, zinc and other trace elements that would normally be available or added through fertilization, the first objective is to swing the soil back to the ideal pH of somewhere between 4.5 and 6.4.[4] (Actually, the "ideal pH" will probably never be known if for no other reason than the fact that different soils will react differently with slight pH changes.)

Correction of an alkaline condition is generally brought about commercially through the addition of materials containing sulphur or its near relatives, sulphuric acid or gypsum.[2] The gypsum, containing calcium, also serves to help with soil structure because the calcium causes an action in the soil that tends to create larger particles and thus improves the drainage.[3] In most cases, favorable plant growth in a given pH range is not due to the pH *(hydrogen ion concentration)* but rather to the optimum conditions accompanying such a soil reaction. The *availability* of soil nutrients, perhaps more than anything else, governs the plant's rate of growth. It is known that the availability of nitrogen, phosphorus, calcium, magnesium, manganese, copper, iron, zinc and perhaps some other food elements varies with the soil pH. Generally, a slightly acid soil will give the best results. In some cases of very low pH (high acidity) toxic amounts of certain elements such as aluminum and manganese may be released.[4]

[1]Artificially softened water is not good for camellias or any other plants. It differs chemically from naturally soft water.

[2]Gypsum is inadvisable for camellias unless used with great moderation.

[3]Root aeration being essential to camellias, care should always be taken that soil particles are not too fine.

[4]The preponderance of opinion seems to be that the detriment arises from locking in rather than releasing excess amounts of trace elements for which reason a pH range of 5.5 to 7 would seem preferable.

The phosphates are the most insoluble of the chief soil nutrients. At a pH between 5.0 and 6.0 they will often unite with the aluminum clays and thus become less available. At the slightly acid range of 6.2 to 6.5, fixation of phosphate is the lowest, consequently it is in this range that phosphates are most readily available to all plants. Potassium is not greatly affected by soil reaction, being most readily available at a pH in the range of 6.0 to 7.0.

The conversion of nitrogen in organic matter and ammonia compounds to nitrates is a familiar process, in the case of crude sources of nitrogen in the soil, being accomplished by soil bacteria. The bacteria are a form of plant life and thus affected by the same conditions that govern growth, including soil moisture, aeration, and temperature. In order for these bacteria to function to greatest advantage the pH, among other factors, must be at the ideal point. In soils below pH 5.5 the converting power of the bacteria is retarded. This retardation also occurs above pH 8.0, another reason for maintaining a proper pH level.

Amongst the most promising agricultural chemicals for our problem was sulphuric acid, which contains 95% active ingredients and 31% equivalent sulphur. It is ideal where a strong, fast reaction is required but because of its hazard and damaging effects, as was mentioned earlier it was cast out as a possibility. (Incidentally, it is interesting to note that one drop of sulphuric acid in fifteen gallons of water having a pH of 9.2 will reduce it to 6, so potent is the straight acid used commercially for large-scale agricultural work.) Another likely chemical was soil sulphur. It looked ideal with its 95% to 99% equivalent sulphur except that this requires three to four months to become available to the plant under ideal conditions. Further, if applied to the surface of the ground the fumes are so potent that they will burn the foliage off the lower portions of the plant.[5]

Finally it was decided to use aluminum sulphate. Because it is water soluble it would become immediately available and since it contains about 15% sulphur would provide the rather rapid acidity that was necessary. Because the high pH of the soil had caused a phosphate fixation and because the sulphur-starved root system (a lot of root growth but of very fine texture) needed some quick help we applied superphosphate at the same time.

The first treatment, which consisted of one-half teaspoon of aluminum sulphate and one teaspoon of superphosphate per gallon can container was applied dry and immediately well watered-in. (It should be noted that aluminum sulphate will draw moisture out of the soil so quickly that it will tend to cake in a matter of half an hour or so and perhaps the extra work of mixing in solution would be a more successful method of application.) This treatment reduced the pH in the soil from 9.5 to 6 in forty-eight hours or less and interestingly enough to a depth in the container of at least four to six inches, which is more than the soil depth in the average can. Our experience shows that the alkalinity is effective for at least two months with the same undesirable water being applied. Only time will tell what rate of application will be required in the future to maintain the proper pH. Both current growth as well as the older, once badly discolored leaves, have responded to this initial application to the extent that in four weeks the improvement was noticeable, while in six to eight weeks considerable improvement was evident.

Two additional dosages of the same proportion and in the same manner have been applied at two-month intervals. This was in addition to a normal feeding schedule of a prepared "Camellia food". The program was started late (mid-March) but this fact notwithstanding, this year's growth is better than in recent past years, both in amount and quality. Bud set is normal or better and based on the few early blooms that we have had at the time of this writing the indication is for at least normal blooms. The grafts that were made last winter were not treated but were given just a pinch of a commercial Camellia food that contains aluminum sulphate.

[5]There are no experimental data nor other recorded instances of this happening.

Treatment and fertilization has been discontinued until the current blooming season is nearly past. What we will do at that time will depend on the condition of the plants and the soil. Soil sulphur is now added to all potting-mix soil and we try to keep some mix made up a few months in advance so that the sulphur will be at least partially available when used. Eventually we may be able to pot or repot nearly everything in a good acid mix to begin with and reduce the maintenance of pH to an annual application or less. Based on our limited knowledge of the entire condition to date it appears likely that this annual or semi-annual 'shot' will be in the form of aluminum sulphate in solution.

Remember that no matter how formidable or disheartening an adverse condition may seem there is undoubtedly a rather simple remedy for it. If you notice more than a couple of plants that have similar unhealthy symptoms, give them some help. Don't baby them to death with fertilizers, additives, chemicals and all of the various cure-alls that are on the market but on the other hand don't let them die for want of one or two easy cures. If you have a problem you will find, as we did, that there are many trained and qualified people who are more than willing to help if properly approached. Study the symptoms, determine the cause and go to work on it!

A full year's work will be amply rewarded by a few weeks of beautiful color in your garden and the dark, glossy foliage that is the unmistakable mark of a healthy camellia.

If this article serves to create an inquisitive thought in the minds of its readers or prompts you to spend the three or four dollars for soil and water testing kits to completely equip your "chemistry laboratory", the writer will be richly rewarded and can promise that you will be, also. It would be interesting to hear of the experiences of others who have encountered similar problems and to learn of their findings and solutions.

OTHER REFERENCES:

(1) "The Effect of Several Materials on Soil pH and the Growth of Small Camellia Plants"—W. D. Kimbrough and R. C. Hanchey—Louisiana Agr. Exper. Sta., Baton Rouge—published in American Hort. Soc. Sci. Proceedings 65-436-38, 1955.

(2) "Effect of Varying pH on Growth of Camellias"—J. Bonner and Shigeru Honda —*Camellia Research Bulletin*—So. Cal. Cam. Soc.—1950.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

We are grateful for the kind supervision of H. P. Olmo and Omund Lilleland of the University of California at Davis in regard to technical matters and the footnotes herein.—Ed.

OREGON LETTER

International Garden of Tomorrow

One of the many interesting attractions planned for Oregon's Centennial Exposition and International Trade Fair to be held in Portland next year to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the state is an "International Garden of Tomorrow."

This spacious, artistically landscaped, properly cared for garden will be adjacent to the large Horticultural Hall and in the traffic center of the spacious Centennial site.

The assistance of arboretums, botanical gardens, colleges, governmental agencies, horticultural societies, garden clubs, commercial growers, etc. from all parts of the world is being solicited to help make this a most unusual and interesting planting.

The latest and best hybrids, rare species and 'yet to be released' hybrids of all types of flowers, shrubs, etc. will be displayed and properly labeled as to the name of the plant and donor. Donors will receive additional recognition in a souvenir booklet that will give descriptions, and in many cases illustrations, of the plants or their blossoms.

There can be little doubt that this feature will attract garden lovers from all parts of the world and get much valuable publicity.

The committee of experts in charge of the event will appreciate your suggestions together with a description of any material you or your organization would be able to

(Continued on Page 16)

THE LOS ANGELES SHOW

Five camellia societies—Los Angeles, Pacific, Southern California, Temple City, and Orange County—organized as the Los Angeles Camellia Council—staged the combined show this year at Descanso Gardens. This was the third consecutive year that this plan was followed and it further confirmed the wisdom and many advantages of this kind of cooperative show. This year's show was managed by Mr. Harold Dryden of the Southern California Society.

The show dates were March 1 and 2 and all the physical features which have made past shows notable were present, but there were some notable improvements, especially the improved lighting in the large tent where the individual flowers were shown. The grounds were not so soggy as last year, but the weather was just as cool, a factor which helped preserve the flowers for the second day.

Flowers did not come up to the general level of quality set by the two previous shows for the simple reason that this year's peak of camellia bloom came well in advance of the show dates. However, there were still enough fine flowers to make an outstanding show and the attendance was well above last year's record.

Actual entries in Division I (individual blooms) reached 2003, and represented 504 varieties.

Following is the official list of awards:

SWEEPSTAKES
Dr. E. Clark Hubbs, Glendale, California ..... 33 firsts

SWEEPSTAKES RUNNER-UP
Merle S. Gish, Riverside, California ..... 17 firsts

BEST JAPONICA — Amateur ..... *Guest of Honor*
Dr. E. Clark Hubbs, Glendale, California

BEST JAPONICA RUNNER-UP — Amateur ..... *Mrs. D. W. Davis*
Edwards H. Metcalf, San Marino, California

BEST RETICULATA — AMATEUR ..... *Cornelian*
Thomas H. Stull, Bakersfield, California

BEST RETICULATA RUNNER-UP ..... *Buddha*
Masao Nishimoto, Pasadena, California

BEST MULTIPLE JAPONICA — Amateur
Edwards E. Metcalf and Dr. E. Clark Hubbs

BEST MULTIPLE RETICULATA — Amateur
Masao Nishimoto

BEST SEEDLING OR SPORT ..... *Seedling #203*
McCaskill Gardens, 25 S. Michillinda Ave., Pasadena, California

BEST JAPONICA — Professional ..... *Kramer's Supreme*
Kramer's Nursery, Upland, California

BEST RETICULATA — Professional ..... *Moutancha*
Nuccio's Nursery, Altadena, California

* * *

GEOGRAPHY AND CAMELLIA WEATHER

(Continued)

Lafayette-Walnut Creek area. One of the most remarkable features of this geography-weather complex is that it manifests itself in most irregular patterns; areas which are close together geographically sometimes exhibit widely different camellia blooming patterns for no apparent reason, but steady temperatures and humidity may be the answer. There is yet much for the camellia grower to learn in this interesting field.

AUSTRALIAN NOTES

THE DRY SEASON IN SYDNEY—After eight or nine almost record years of wet, Sydney gardeners were dismayed when they were placed under severe restrictions on the use of water for gardens. The use of hoses or sprinklers was completely banned. Buckets and watering cans were permitted, the only limit being the endurance of the gardener and his family. Many azaleas were lost, but camellias, generally, have stood remarkably well. Some trees look even better than usual, the reason probably being that they have had just enough water and not too much.

One of our members, however, began to wonder whether camellias were deciduous, so many leaves were dropping off! A clue may perhaps be found in the fact that the household bath water all went to the camellias, and it is possible that this has left too high a concentration of washing soda in the soil.

This may not, however, be the whole story. It has been observed that camellia plants infected with ring spot mosaic (tomato spotted wilt) tend to lose their leaves much earlier. Sometimes the leaves fall during their second season, leaving only the more recently produced leaves on the plant. It is possible that all established varieties are infected with this very widespread virus disease. Under conditions of good growth the disease is masked, but it reappears under less favorable growing conditions. The disease is not transmitted by seed and seedlings are of course disease free, until infected from an outside source. (N.B. This paragraph expresses a personal opinion of the editor and the idea has not yet been subjected to discussion.)

Sun scald was caused by the above-average heat during January. A member has supplied the following list which contains some surprises. The plants were mulched with cow manure, leaf-mould, and spent hops, and appear to be growing under identical conditions. The older leaves only were damaged.

SEVERE BURN: *'Isabella', 'Lady Loch,' 'Margherita Coleoni,' 'Mrs. H. Boyce,' 'Mrs. Swan,' 'Roma Risorta,' Rose La Reine.'*

SLIGHT BURN: *'Elegans,' Paolina Maggi,' Prince Eugene Napoleon.'*

Long range weather forecasters promised rain by May or June. Happily they have been proved wrong and some torrential rains broke the drought early in the year. Regular rain since has made it almost unnecessary to use the hoses and sprinklers that we are now allowed.

Camellias have responded to the rain and the hot humid weather with some tremendous second growth. This may cover up some of the flower display. It has been interesting to observe, particularly in sasanquas, some buds that had all the appearances of flower buds breaking into leaf. One wonders at what stage the initiation of flower buds actually occurs. Previously one thought it possible to tell which would be leaf and which flower buds as early as the Christmas season.

(Reprinted from Newsletter No. 3 of the Australian and New Zealand Camellia Research Society.)

' ' '

OREGON LETTER

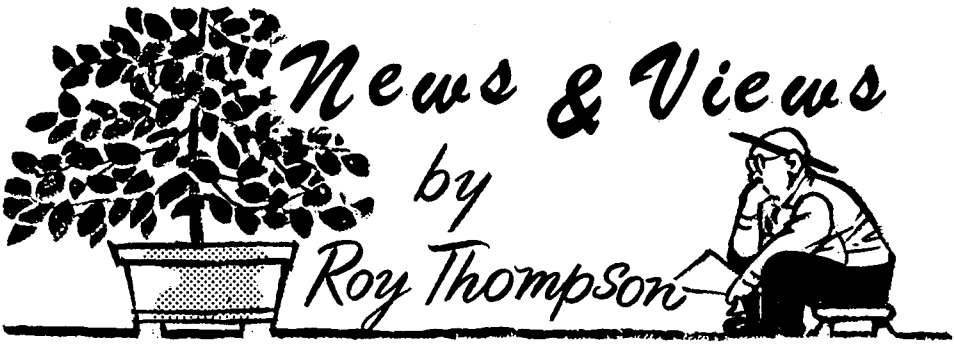
(Continued)

supply. Also, your suggestions of any material we should try to obtain together with the source, if known. (We have already been assured of the assistance of many foreign countries, botanical gardens, etc.)

Hoping that the idea appeals to you and that you will reply at your earliest convenience, I am

Sincerely,
MORRIE L. SHARP
Oregon Centennial Commission
c/o Oregon Journal
Portland 7, Oregon

P.S. For the protection of new and rare plants, proper precautions will be taken to prevent 'scion snatching'.



Sooner or later the camellia societies in California are going to be obliged to undertake a public education program on the subject of petal blight. Rumors and reports are rife concerning the development of a chemical cure for petal blight, but the real effect of these rumors is to relax the efforts of those who are battling the disease. Such rumors have been in circulation many years, but they are still rumors, and petal blight goes marching on. This year, particularly, has been a bad one for the disease and many good show flowers were ruined at a time when flowers were needed. Even though a sure fire chemical cure may be in the making, a campaign of public education will be necessary in order to inform the general public as to the nature of petal blight. The only sector now informed is that composed of camellia society members and nurserymen.

An inspection of the large number of seedlings being grown at the Huntington Botanical Gardens in San Marino throws a new light on the future of camellias, for these seedlings reveal a new trend. Looking back a dozen years and comparing the "best" varieties then with the "best" today, one realizes that there has been a distinct movement away from size as an outstanding requirement of camellia excellence, and a greater emphasis on other features such as beauty, character, delicacy, etc. Competition among newer varieties has been growing more and more severe, and this can mean only one thing: there are more and more excellent new varieties, so many, in fact, that a great many—at least fifty per cent—of the "top" varieties of a dozen years ago are now in the second or third rate category. Considering the long time, relatively, that it requires to develop a new camellia variety, this change has been remarkably fast. But the jet age is upon us, and camellias are no exception to the prevailing trend. We have progressed from the *Bleichroeder* Era into the *Tomorrow* Era at a relatively high rate of speed.

The Huntington seedlings are especially rich in "hybrids," that is, crosses among the "species" such as *Saluenensis, Pitardi, Cuspidata,* and others, and these seedlings in turn have the "blood" of *japonicas, reticulatas* and *sasanquas.* The wave of hybrids started in England more than two decades ago and has, in the last few years, attained momentum here. It has not, by any means, yet reached its peak. Nor has that other wave of "straight" japonica seedlings even approached its peak. It should be emphasized that japonicas still "rule the roost" and probably always will. Reticulatas are glamorous when in bloom, but it is now clear that, as a year round adornment to the garden, they fall far below japonicas.

A recent example of this new trend in camellias is *Dian Hartman.* This is a white anemone ranging from 3¼ to 4 inches in diameter, and it has a combination of features which gives it a distinct individuality. Technically it must be described as variegated, for in each flower there is a touch of delicate pink, sometimes a single petaloid, sometimes a small stripe—just enough color to set off its delicate whiteness. Once in a while there will be a whole petal of pink, but not often. The central mass of small petaloids reminds one of Victorian lace, but this mass is broken by several fluted "rabbit-ears"

and sometimes replaced altogether by a group of rabbit-ears. The outer guard petals are invariably wavy and are a prominent feature of the flower. With these features varying from flower to flower, one never finds two alike, but all of them have the feeling of lacy delicacy and lightness which gives this variety its distinction. *Dian Hartman* has a "face" and character which will not easily be mistaken for any other.

Another example of the trend is the increasing attention being paid to the miniature and boutonniere types. These two classifications and the names attached to them are now fairly well established in Southern California. A committee of the Los Angeles Camellia Council is now at work on the project of giving greater importance to miniatures in the show schedule for next year; they were included in this year's show at Bakersfield and will probably become established as a regular feature next year at Fresno. San Diego pioneered the project, and it has now become a feature of the Santa Ana and Pomona shows. There is sound basis for the separate classification of miniatures; by reason of their small size they have an individuality and character unlike anything else in camellias and have a right to be treated on an equal basis with other classifications.

It is a little more difficult, however, to define the special character and distinction of the boutonniere group and its limits or boundaries will have to be arbitrarily established. With or without a special classification, however, this group has its own distinct uses and unique appeal. These moderate sized camellias are especially adapted to corsages, arrangements, and boutonnieres. The boundary line between the miniatures and boutonnieres will probably be established at 2 inches, possibly 2½ inches, while the upper limit of the boutonniere class is still a little hazy. Some regard the 4 inch limit as too great and maintain that a 4 inch flower is a typical full-size japonica. The proponents of the 4 inch limit reply that, since the upper limits of japonica size have been so much extended by the new "supers," the limits for the smaller classifications should now be moved up accordingly. These matters will have to be determined by time and experience. This new problem clearly shows that camellia knowledge and usage is not static, but growing and expanding; in other words it is in excellent health.

—San Diego Union Tribune

Mr. J. O. Henry and Prize-winning Frizzle White

An amazing *Frizzle White* turned up at the San Diego show Feb. 15-16, and won the sweepstakes award. (See cut.) It was entered by Mr. J. Owen Henry of Ramona, a grower and a locality which have achieved many camellia honors. The flower opened two weeks before the show and had been in the refrigerator the last four days of that time. It measured 6½ inches in diameter and 2¾ inches in height, but its finest features was its almost perfect symmetry; six curving "rabbit-ears" rose above the guard petals in an almost perfect cup-shaped pattern. Yet, this unusual symmetry did not destroy the well known looseness of pattern which we associate with the variety. Mr. Henry's flower represents, perhaps, the ideal *Frizzle White* such as we may not see again for a long time.

In prescribing this procedure for that bulging waistline—one that is guaranteed to give you an aching back—it is presumed that your garden has the same as or similar problems to mine. Our section really has had petal blight this year as never before. The early and frequent rains, followed by a few days of unseasonably warm weather, really brought out those terrible brown spots on the camellias and resulted in heavy blooming, with consequent drop of flowers and petals. How tragic this can be! After a whole year of careful attention to the plants we got it — we have it — and "we have had it"!

This problem, of course, requires the picking up of every bloom that has fallen—in fact, every petal—also, that we go over the plants in order to remove the calyx and any remaining petals from blooms that have already fallen. Thus, by careful housekeeping, hopefully we prevent the return of the cycle. Only by so doing can there be any expectation of stopping the spread of the toadstools—and only in this way can you be sure that you do not get petal blight if fortunate enough not to have it already.

Where one has a sizeable collection, this problem brings up other considerations because, while it isn't so bad to have to pick up or rake up whole blooms, those camellias that shatter are, in my opinion and under my conditions good for only one thing—root stock—my aching back tells me so!

It is a little late in the season to suggest that you pick off any bloom that has tiny, dark brown spots or splotches after they spread, or a darkening of the veins in a tree-like pattern, which are usually the telltale signs. But there is always another season and, anyway, this is a good time to suggest that you be careful that these late flowers are not left lying on the ground. We are inclined to let down a little now that the shows are over. Some of the more careful growers even strip their plants of the few remaining blooms—especially those coming from secondary buds. In any case, it is much easier and safer to pick them off the plant rather than the ground—easier on the terminal of the spine and safer because they can do no harm unless left remaining on the ground.

Several seasons of this "picking up" business have inevitably led to certain conclusions. Everybody will not go along with what I am about to advocate but, if your back aches as much as mine, you are pretty likely to agree. First, any variety with a bloom that shatters has no place in our collection. That type of camellia has long since found its way into our grafting department. Sure, *Alba Plena* is said to have the perfect form; *Mrs. Tingley* of similar form has a gorgeous color and *Lady Hume's Blush* is a cute little thing, but who wants the job of picking up the million tiny petals these camellias drop? Then there is another type of camellia that, in my judgment at least, should never have been disseminated. *Admiral Halsey* and *General Eisenhower* "fall off the vine" in a day or two, often before fully opening. These two forms of the same camellia are of little value here, with no reflection, of course, on the celebrated personages from whom they took their names.

As one grows in camelliana experience, many things are learned. I have, for example, learned through my contacts with nurserymen and scion donors to ask such questions as will reveal whether the variety proffered is worth stooping for—certainly many

camellias of today are not worth the back exercise they require of us. Incidentally, after going through the ordeal of picking up petals—I mean literally hundreds of petals, day after day—I have learned the hard way to mark the so-so camellias for a whacking off at the ankles. It is bad enough to stand on my head to graft those planted in the ground, but in time we will have mostly the type that does not shatter and that does not open up today and fall flat on its face tomorrow. (Incidentally, this grafting business proved to be no help to my aching back, either!)

Oh, I forgot, in between these two plain dirt gardener operations, I did our first fertilizing. Of course, you know you should not fertilize unless the ground is clean of blossoms, weeds, etc. So down on my knees I went again, to spread the fertilizer.

During the course of the past several weeks you and I have been visiting nurseries and friends' gardens. We all enjoy seeing each other's camellias in bloom, hoping, of course, to find a "sleeper" in some nursery or something our friend has that is not only one we do not have but is also stupendous. How delightful these visits usually are! However, we do occasionally run across nurseries and friends who do not keep a clean house. There we may see blooms full of petal blight or rot, lying on the ground or in the containers, and it makes one ill to reflect what will happen to the blooms of those fine plants the following year and probably for years to come.

I have been told that a chemical has been developed that has been used to combat blight with great success in trials. There is hope that it will be all that is needed to control this pestilence, and we may have it for our own use very soon. Glory be and amen!

Now that the 1958 season is almost over and we are about to begin preparations for next season, be sure to pick up your few remaining blooms promptly or pick your plants clean. The safest way is, as I have said, to prevent the flower or petals from coming into contact with the ground. If you still want to keep those varieties that shatter, I would suggest planting them in containers to be kept on paved surfaces, from which you can easily sweep them up. Otherwise, supply yourself with a good stock of liniment, for you may expect to get an aching back like mine!

* * *

EDITORIAL COMMENT

(Continued from Page 3)

course, no business can ignore the profit angle and remain successful. We would, therefore, suggest that all qualified amateurs conduct their own private experiments with petal blight controls, with the objective of either or both developing an eradicator or an insulating agent that would shield the bloom from the spores, thus preventing contamination. The field is wide open and some of us are already groping for a solution to this major problem confronting the camellia grower everywhere petal blight is prevalent —and it is spreading, we are sorry to report.

An interesting development arising from this problem (quite aside from its beneficial effects in reducing the human waistline through picking up petals) is its influence, already noticeable here among the larger collectors, on their choice of flower types. Most notable in this regard has been the tendency to look askance at the formal doubles in general—specifically, those varieties which shatter readily or have innumerable small petals. This is as true of the nurseryman as it is of the amateur. Flowers which fall intact have risen greatly in esteem, because of the relative ease with which they may be picked up. One is inclined to wonder whether this scourge may have been here before and if it could have been the cause of the decline in popularity of the camellia in the South in the latter half of the 19th century. This is suggested by the fact that, when the camellia's renaissance occurred, it brought with it a completely new appreciation of the open type of flower, many of which hold intact. It is also interesting to observe here that this is a characteristic of the Williamsii hybrids, although there are exceptions.