

DESCANSO

Spring – Summer 2021



The Camellias
of Descanso:
The Untold
History

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Growing the Garden

by Juliann Rooke, Executive Director



Spring is a great time in the garden. Right now the camellias are finishing their season, the cherry trees are getting ready to bloom and thousands of tulips have been planted and are almost ready to burst, creating a kaleidoscope of color.

And just like the garden, we as an organization continue to bloom and grow. The new year is an opportunity to look back at our history, but also look ahead.

In this issue, you will read about our changing history regarding our camellia collection. Wendy Cheng, Associate Professor of American Studies at Scripps College, wrote a history of the Descano camellias. What she found and shared with us made us reconsider how we talk about our collections. As we learn about our history we will create new ways to share it with you.

We look back, but also to this new year. Do I feel optimistic about 2021? I do. It provides us with a new canvas. While programs will still be on hold this spring, we will have special surprises in the garden and opportunities for visitors to learn about flora and fauna. We are also inviting artists to create surprises. So many of you loved the wishing tree and Halloween decor that we know you'll love what's coming next.

Later in the year, I look forward to bringing programs back into the garden and opening the Sturt Haaga Gallery. I also look forward to welcoming you after hours and for special events. I can't wait for Carved and Enchanted Forest of Light. Our long-time members know what wonderful holiday traditions these are. New members may experience these wonderful events for the first time.

*Thank you for being
part of the gardens
and growing with us.*

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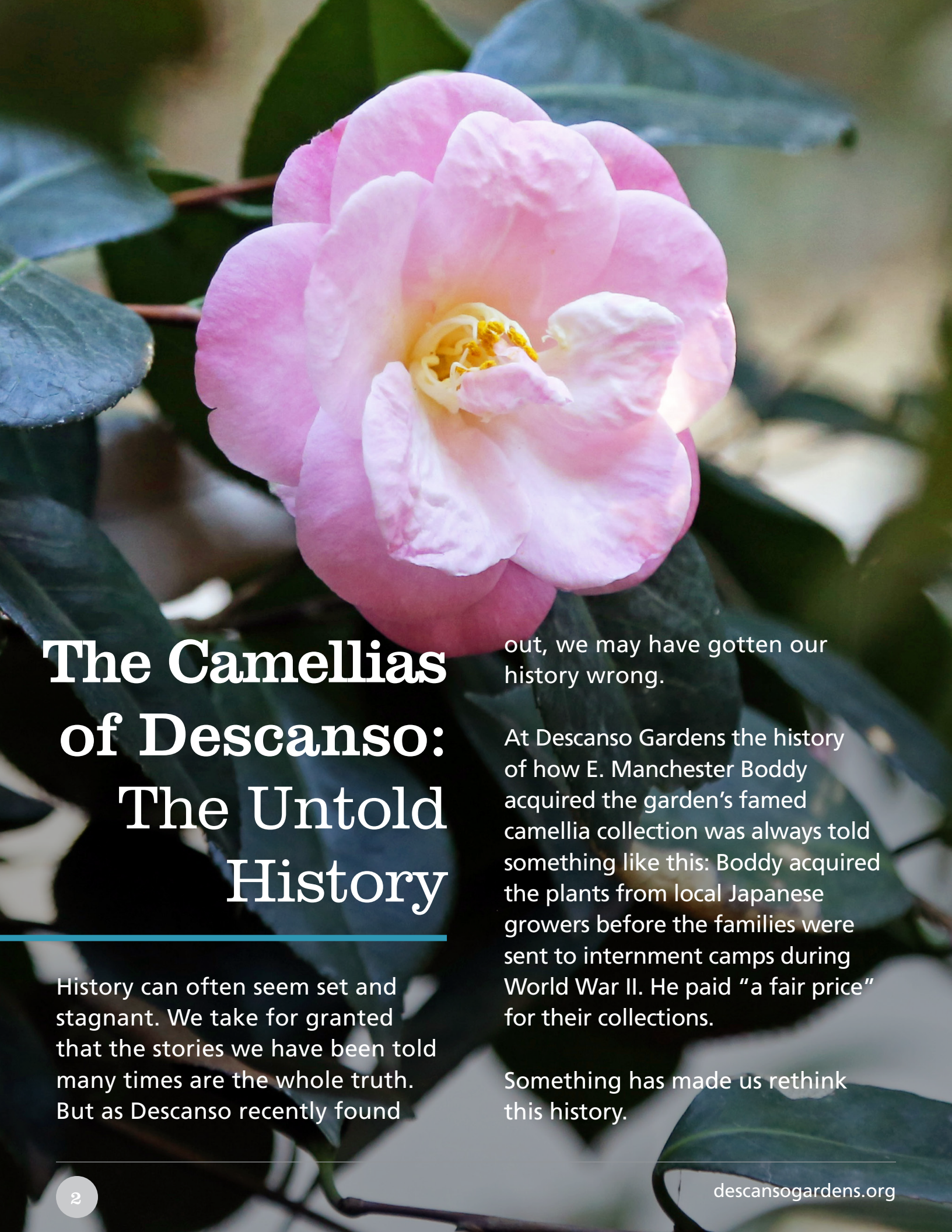
Our Mission

Descanso Gardens is a unique Southern California landscape distinguished by its specialized botanic collections, historical significance, and rare natural beauty. Our mission is to practice exemplary stewardship of Descanso's distinctive character and assets; offer people an experience close to nature; and cultivate understanding of the natural world and people's place in it through inspiration, education and example.

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The Camellias of Descanso: The Untold History

History can often seem set and stagnant. We take for granted that the stories we have been told many times are the whole truth. But as Descanso recently found

out, we may have gotten our history wrong.

At Descanso Gardens the history of how E. Manchester Boddy acquired the garden's famed camellia collection was always told something like this: Boddy acquired the plants from local Japanese growers before the families were sent to internment camps during World War II. He paid "a fair price" for their collections.

Something has made us rethink this history.

Wendy Cheng, Associate Professor of American Studies at Scripps College, recently published “Landscapes of Beauty and Plunder: Japanese American flower growers and an elite public garden in Los Angeles.” Cheng researched the history of the camellia collection and its acquisition. What she found was that the long-held story that Boddy paid a “fair market value” was just not true. Documents and interviews also indicate that Boddy may have acquired camellias that he renamed and credited to himself and his collection. After Cheng shared her findings, Descanso Gardens pledged to continue learning about its history and begin to tell the true history of the camellias.

“I had been coming to Descanso since I was young,” said Cheng. “I grew up in San Diego, but we would come here because my parents loved camellias. Recently, when my son was born, I was working at home and looking around, and started thinking about Descanso again.”

Cheng became interested in the San Gabriel Valley nurseries that were prominent last century and that led her back to Descanso and the sale of camellias from these businesses to Boddy. She combed through documents including court cases, receipts of sale, archives, books, letters and spoke with family members.

“The story that was being told seemed to stand out because it did not match history... I pressed on it because it was interesting to me,” Cheng said “I was happy to find whatever I found. I was open to any outcome.”

Descanso Gardens was the former estate of newspaper publisher E. Manchester Boddy. Along with the house he built on the property, which still stands, he also established a large garden that included collections of roses and lilacs among other plantings. But his most famous collection was camellias.

If you visit Descanso between December and February, you can’t help but marvel at the camellias. There are so many. The flowers in red pink and white (even rarely yellow) not only decorate the camellia canopy but also spread themselves in beautiful piles on the ground. Visitors often use the blooms to spell out messages or form hearts or other shapes. Descanso is home to North America’s largest camellia collection and has been designated an International Camellia Garden of Excellence by the International Camellia Society.

How did Boddy come to collect so many unique plants? In 1942, Boddy purchased the nursery stock of at least three Japanese-owned nurseries. Two grower families, the Yoshimuras and the Uyematsus, sold their life’s work prior to their incarceration by the United States government during the Second World War. These plants, including rare and unique breeds of camellias, became the basis of the camellia collection.

The story told by Descanso was that the sale was that the growers were given a “fair price” but Cheng’s research has proven otherwise. Records show that the number of camellias purchased by Boddy from F.M. Uyematsu’s Star Nurseries to be around 320,000. According to Uyematsu’s wartime business correspondence, Boddy paid \$50,000 for the lot, or 15.5 to 16.6 cents per plant.





It's difficult to say exactly how this price compares to pre-war market values for camellias according to Cheng's paper. However, as early as 1908, Uyematsu reported selling camellias for 50–65 cents per plant, and during the war, the Star Nurseries manager reported selling a dozen camellia plants for \$3, or 25 cents each. According to Yoshimura family records, Boddy purchased an additional 34,200 camellia plants and over 50,000 azaleas from them, among other plants; for their entire nursery stock, he paid approximately a fifth to a quarter of its estimated value. In other words, while more than "a few cents on the dollar," in each case, Boddy's "fair price" was still just a fraction of the value.

Marian Uyematsu Naito, F.M. Uyematsu's daughter, and Star Nurseries' bookkeeper after the war said: "To hear my brother [Francis G. Uyematsu, who ran the nursery after his father] tell it, it was more like...I don't want to use the wrong words. But we probably didn't get, you know, what they were actually worth...he [Boddy] got 'em for a song."

Along with the question of price, the research also showed that Boddy often took these rare and unique plants and claimed them for himself. While Boddy got the bulk of the named varieties (including dozens of the best varieties obtainable at the time imported from Japan

in 1930), there were also a certain number of seedlings as yet unnamed.

These can be traced to plants Uyematsu had been cultivating privately. Uyematsu himself had this to say: "I was very sad to have to part with my seedlings which I had nursed for over 12 years," according to documents. While the number is unclear, the horticulture staff at Descanso is looking at the history of each camellia to determine its story.

In the summer of 2019, Descanso Gardens took down the historical display at the Boddy House in order to temporarily redecorate it as a Pasadena Showcase House of Design. The Gardens' Director of Education, Emi Yoshimura (no relation to the camellia-growing Yoshimuras), took advantage of the opportunity to change the signage.

Descanso Gardens is currently seeking to better reflect the complexity of the origins of its camellia collection, and to finally acknowledge the Japanese-American camellia growers. The garden horticulture team has started marking various camellias developed by F.M. Uyematsu with red plant labels so the impact of his plants on the landscape is more visible. This is just the beginning of Descanso's exploration into the history of the camellia forest.

Grow Your Own Camellias

by **David Bare,**
Director of Horticulture

It is said that Descanso has the largest collection of camellias in the country. Some say it is all of North America. All I know is that we have our hands full. Our horticulture staff of 13 covers a lot of territory, both in and out of the camellia forest, and we often find ourselves trying to catch up with the monthly chore load. So we have distilled our camellia care down to its essence.

We start with the soil. When planting in the winter we try to make the hole larger than the root ball, to add a few shovels full of compost, and to make sure the soil is well-drained and stocked with organic matter. Camellias thrive on humus and compost and the addition of leafy matter and a good mulch will make a world of difference in our essentially mineral soils.

Camellias want an airy, organic root run. We try to plant a little higher than the plant sits in the nursery container, knowing that over time the organic matter will settle. If you plant too low those roots will stay too soggy and rot. We make a little saucer ring around the plant with soil to hold water but after a few months of establishment, I like to smooth that out.

Camellias want to be moist but never wet and this can take a bit of practice in both soil amendment and watering practice. Every condition is different and it is best to get your finger in there and figure what is up.

We rely on organic fertilizer here, feeding the soil which feeds the microorganisms that in turn feed the plants. Cottonseed meal and compost are what we have on our menu. It is best to begin to feed when you begin to see new growth but organic fertilizer really presents no threat of fertilizer burn. Just make sure the plant is moist before applying. Though recommendations say you can fertilize every 6 or 8 weeks from April to September we usually are only able to accomplish one application annually.

Typically camellias do not require a lot of pruning, just keeping the interior open to air circulation and removing branches that might cross and rub. It is best to prune just after flowering before new buds set. Other pruning considerations are overall symmetry, health and bearing of flowers. In the last few years, we have experienced severe weather insults that have burned the plants and outright killed a few. These plants require pruning and clean up once the weather has cooled. If the severe weather does not return, then the plants will begin to look better in the coming years, but this is sadly a long process of recovery and a daunting task in our acres of camellias. Dead wooding, which is removing twigs and branches that have expired down to viable buds, can take hours on a mature plant. It can take years to turn such plants around. But I am often reminded when I find plants we've worked on years ago, how worthwhile the effort can be.





A Story of Care and Cultivation: A Walk Through the Camellias

by **Diana Nightengale**, Camellia Collection Horticulturist

When I started in this position I knew I was taking on a giant task working my way through the remarkably vast world that is camellia culture, care and conservation with its global reach and thousands of cultivars, varieties and sports. Our collection is so vast that choosing a handful of favorites proved surprisingly challenging. I would see one that I would swear was my all-time favorite only to turn the corner to find another so beautiful it challenged my whole world view.

What strikes me most about camellias is that within each bloom there is this sense of tremendous care and devotion seemingly built into the plant's DNA. For thousands of years, communities collected and cultivated their favorite camellia characteristics and handed down to their descendants a breathtaking heritage that awarded their patience, humility, and tender care for a lifetime. These stories of care and cultivation are hidden away among that glossy foliage that glows in the early morning light, and unveiling those stories has made them that much more special. So I have chosen a handful of my favorite camellias that also hold within their yearly growth and blooms some of the stories that have shaped the larger landscape of the Descanso Gardens that you see today, a landscape that has been curated to reflect the millennia-long story of our devotion to the camellia.

One of the first blooms that may meet your eyes this early spring as you stroll into the gardens is the *Camellia japonica* 'Mary Charlotte.' I have to admit, I have quite a bias towards those blooms with a finely fluted rim and a center of silky ruffles that you wouldn't mind falling asleep in. 'Mary Charlotte' is one of those blooms blushing in pink. 'Mary Charlotte' is not only a dream to behold, it is also a legacy from early 20th century Japanese-American horticultural history. Descanso Gardens' camellia collections could not have existed without the passion, ingenuity, and hard work of the Japanese-American families that ran many of the region's early nurseries. 'Mary Charlotte' is thought to have been among or descended from the cultivars imported from Japan in 1931 by F. M. Uyematsu who had founded the Star Nursery in Montebello in 1912.

We don't know exactly when Manchester Boddy acquired it or what its exact parentage is. Boddy was a customer of Uyematsu's in the 1930s. But when Uyematsu was forced into an internment camp in 1942 and had to leave everything behind, Boddy purchased much of his nursery's camellia stock and planted it here under the oak canopy. In 1947, the cultivar was introduced as 'Mary Charlotte' by Rancho del Descanso as it was known then. Today it blesses our walks through the garden and in fact stands

among a larger grove of beautiful cultivars just outside the Japanese Garden some of which are also thought to have come from or descended from the camellias imported and grown by Uyematsu such as 'Jenny Jones,' 'Berenice Boddy,' 'Daikagura' and 'Setsugekka.'

These camellias ultimately became a part of the business Boddy had established at Rancho del Descanso, shipping these seemingly unusual winter blooming flowers across the country to colder regions that did not have such a luxury. Another legacy from this era still widely extant in our gardens is the *Camellia japonica* 'Elegans,' a cultivar that has since become one of the most widely cultivated camellias in the world with a tremendous array of sports, many of which we also have in our collections. My personal favorite is 'Elegans Supreme' tucked away in our West Camellia Forest. It is a surprisingly large flower reaching up to 6 inches wide, and is similar in form to 'Mary Charlotte,' but its petals have more of a crinkled texture like a flounced petticoat blowing in the wind. Its color is a rich, rosy pink fading to a light coral in the center.

In the 1940s, Boddy hired a well-known horticulturist, hybridizer, and botanist, Walter Lammerts to care for and create new hybrids among his camellia and rose collections. News reached their ears around this time that a variety of *Camellia reticulata* cultivars were discovered

growing in Kunming, one of the largest cities in the Yunnan Province of China. This species was still a rarity in Western gardens at this time. A cultivar that had been renamed 'Captain Rawes' had been introduced to the United Kingdom in the 19th century, but it struggled in these colder climes which discouraged its wider appeal. Boddy and Lammerts coordinated with another American camellia enthusiast, Ralph Peer, and Australian collector Walter Hazelwood to arrange a collecting trip to Kunming in 1948. This trip resulted in the collection of around 20 cultivars, but not all of their plants survived the journey. California and Australia had long suffered with the introduction of invasive and destructive pests and pathogens carried in on new plant collections, so to prevent this from happening with new imports the camellias had to be quarantined and fumigated with methyl bromide. Sadly, the fumigation killed five of the plants acquired by Lammerts and even more of those acquired by Peer and Hazelwood. The survivors were planted out among Descanso and Peer's Hollywood estate, becoming the first locations in the United States to grow *Camellia reticulatas*. You can find representatives of these first cultivars throughout the gardens such as 'Mouchang,' 'Dali Cha,' and one of my favorites, 'Juban.' A perfect little button of a flower at barely 2 inches wide, 'Juban' forms a rosette of smooth petals that are notched along the center edge and apparently can range in color from a peachy-white to a bright pink.





In the 1950s and 1960s, after Boddy sold his estate to Los Angeles County and it came under the care of the Descanso Gardens Guild, a collecting and hybridizing spirit continued with vigor bringing in even greater diversity of species and cultivars from all over the world. Some of my favorites that came out of this collecting spirit is a small collection of Higo camellias. This group of camellias are cultivars of *Camellia japonica* and were particularly admired by and associated with the samurai. They are named for the historic Japanese province of Higo, today a part of the Kumamoto Prefecture, where they were first developed. They have this distinct form with usually a single to semi-double layer of petals with a remarkably large central sunburst of golden yellow stamens. You can see many of the Higo camellias around Feather Falls, but one of my favorites is *Camellia japonica* 'Shintsukasa-Nishiki.' It has smooth white petals that are flecked or dashed randomly with a bright crimson, and even the stamens have a reddish glow at their base. Over the years, it has been hybridized with other camellias to produce many new Higo cultivars.

Another interesting camellia we have acquired over the years is *Camellia japonica* 'Orandakô' with its geometrical rosette of pink-coral petals with central light pink stripes, the petals becoming more and more triangular in shape as they move inward. 'Orandakô' is an older cultivar of Japanese origin with records of its parentage dating back to the 1570s. Interestingly, its Japanese name translates to 'Little Holland' hinting at a still unclear history as to when and how it made its way westward, whether it was acquired by the Dutch sometime during the period when they had exclusive trading rights with Japan (1640 -1853) or even before.

And if you are a lover of deep, velvety reds like myself, I think you will fall in love with *Camellia japonica* 'Midnight.' This cultivar is not quite as old, but just as beautiful with its wide, deep red petals that contrast strikingly against a small central bundle of golden stamens. Introduced in 1965 by our neighbors, Nuccio's Nursery, it is but a hint of the remarkable diversity of cultivars they have introduced to the world since they opened in 1935. With their kindness and

support throughout the years, they have helped us build up the diversity of our collections. And we are lucky enough to care for many of their beautiful introductions, such as another favorite of mine, *Camellia japonica* 'Nuccio's Pearl,' a perfect geometrical rosette of triangular petals that fade from a creamy white center to bright pink edges.

And I would be remiss not to highlight a favorite from our species camellia collections. Reigniting this collecting spirit with a new emphasis on camellia research and conservation, Descanso Gardens embarked on a project in the late 1990s to build up and diversify our collection of camellia species. There are 152 recognized camellia species all originating in East Asia with the bulk of their range stretching across China. But according to the IUCN Red List, a significant percentage of these species are endangered with one species, *Camellia amplexicaulis*, thought to be extinct in the wild. Ex situ conservation, meaning conservation programs and collections done off-site in other institutions such as botanic gardens like ours can be one important tool in protecting and restoring an endangered population. Sadly not all of the species camellias we acquired in the late 1990s and early 2000s survived. But amazingly, we have one individual of *Camellia amplexicaulis* in our collection, and it is beautiful! It has these large emerald green, oblong leaves with deeply engraved veins creating a very interesting texture. The flowers have long and narrow bright pink petals with edges that curve sharply inward towards a robust burst of golden stamens. And interestingly, this is one camellia that can bloom any time of the year. Fortunately, there seems to be a bright future for this species as its popularity in horticulture is growing. You can see ours in the Ancient Forest, but please do so at a distance so we can give it the best chance at survival.

Looking forward here among the camellia collection, we hope to conserve and diversify our collections which will only make it harder to choose our favorites! But I hope you too will find your own favorites as you walk the trails this spring and search within them the greater story behind their remarkable journeys into our own gardens.

Arbutus 'Marina'

A Tree for All Seasons

by **David Bare**,
Director of Horticulture

The best landscape plants are those that are appropriate for the site, require minimal interventions and have four seasons of appeal. Sure, there will always be a place for the ecstatic spring bloom of flowering cherries and the iconic scent of lilacs, but these are not the foundational plants you want to build your garden around. For that, you need four-season plants.

I fell in love with *Arbutus* 'Marina' when I came to Descanso. A pair of these small trees grace the exit gate from the courtyard and there is never a time when I don't find them attractive. As I write this in late November, they are probably at their best. Adorned with panicles of tiny bell-shaped, rosy pink flowers, the drooping clusters are alive with honey bees. Each bee seems to have its own technique for extracting pollen, some hanging upside down and others going full-on face first, dipping their heads in as far as they can go. These bell or urn-shaped flowers reveal that this plant belongs in the Ericaceae family, along with blueberries, and *Pieris* and our well known native manzanitas.

Arbutus 'Marina' is a hybrid tree with a complicated heritage. It is believed to derive from a cross between another hybrid arbutus and *Arbutus unedo* and was introduced by the Saratoga Horticultural Foundation in 1984. Nurseries cultivate it in standard or tree form, training it to an upright trunk or the natural multi-branched shrub form.

Standing between the two trees at the exit among the buzz of all those bees you also get the stereo effect of Anna's hummingbirds squeaking territorial claims from one tree to the next. These jealous guardians seem to find the *Arbutus* a perfect place to hide and feed and are likely to be found there any time of year.

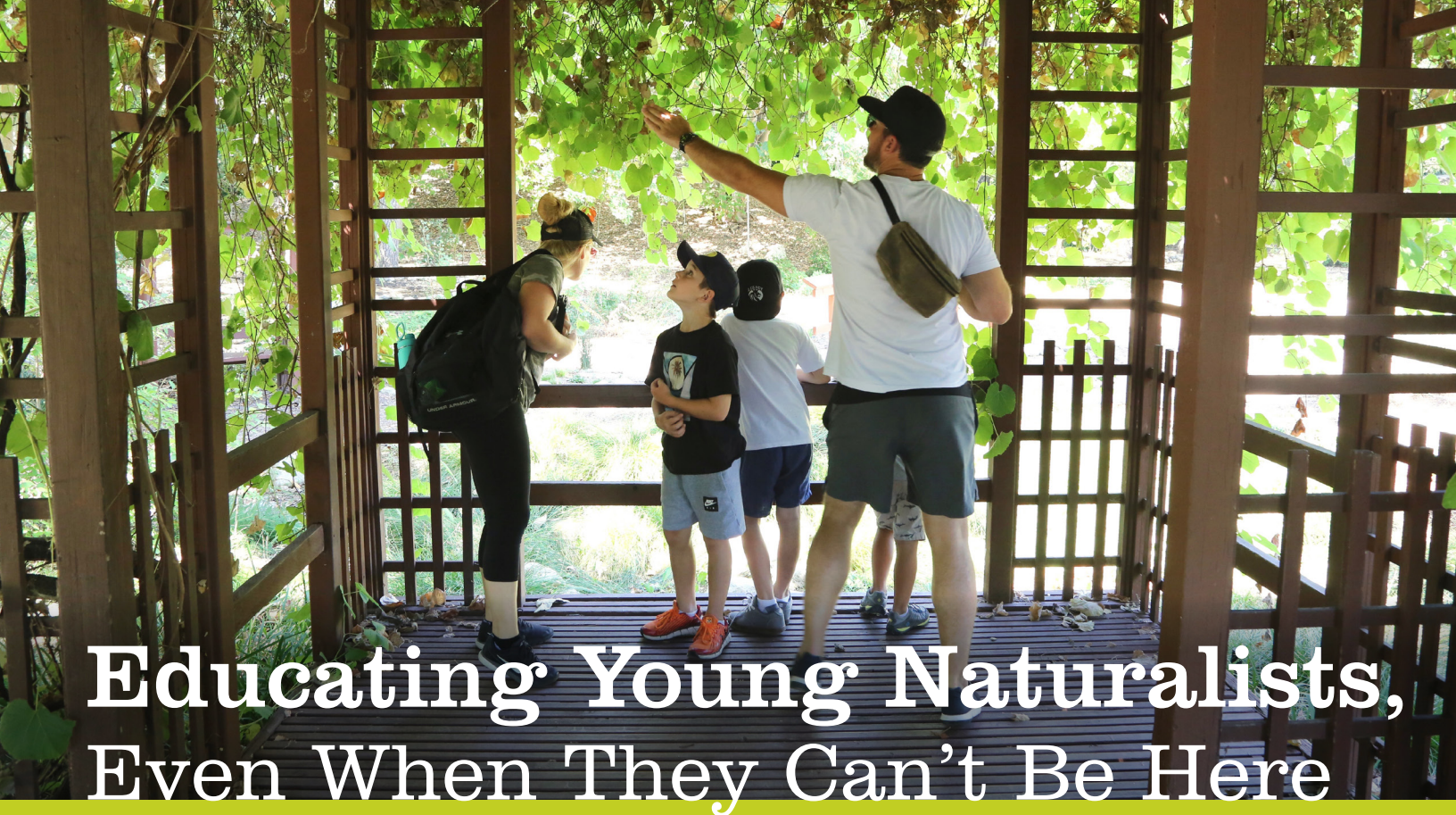
It may just be the perfect spot for them. The evergreen leaves are 4 to 5 inches long and the twiggy interior growth supplies plenty of perches for tiny talons. I've watched them sit and attentively watch the goings-on from the shelter of this leafy canopy, occasionally stretching up for a sip of nectar.

The *Arbutus* takes almost a year to ripen its fruit so that it has the curious habit of bearing fruit and flowers at the same time. This $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch fruit starts out a dull yellow and ages to apricot and finally strawberry red, giving the tree its common name strawberry tree. The fruit is one of the most outstanding ornamental qualities of this tree. It is also edible but not exactly a delicacy. The texture is something akin to dropping a ripe persimmon on a sandy beach, pulpy and gritty at the same time. And the insipid flavor doesn't make it worth the effort. In fact, the specific name of the strawberry tree, *Arbutus unedo*, roughly translates to 'eat only one'. What it lacks in flavor it more than recovers in beauty.

Arbutus "Marina" will grow to 40 feet with a broad dense rounded canopy. The trunk and branch quality are gnarled and muscular. Trunks and branches are mahogany colored with the exfoliating bark revealing cinnamon underneath. The tree is drought tolerant once established but fits well into the home landscape and can bear more frequent watering, unlike its native counterpart madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*).

If there is one complaint about *Arbutus* 'Marina' it is that all that flowering, fruiting, and exfoliating can lead to a messy landscape. This should be considered when siting this plant. To me, the beauty of this tree warrants a little time behind the rake.





Educating Young Naturalists, Even When They Can't Be Here

by **Emi Yoshimura**, Director of Education

A few years ago, we did a program called “Plant Power” with the tagline, “The plants around you can save your life.” While that might be a bit of an oversimplification, I think the underlying ideas hold: Experiences in nature matter. It is important for us to connect to nature and spend time outdoors.

We are so grateful that Descanso has been able to remain a safe and welcoming place for people to spend time in nature. However, we are aware that some visitors, members, and nature lovers may not be able to visit as easily or as often as they have in the past. Our education team of staff and docents has especially been missing seeing our school groups out in the gardens. In a typical school year, Descanso welcomes over 14,000 students, teachers, and chaperones to the gardens on a variety of field trip programs. Seeing and hearing the students’ excitement as they notice a squirrel or deer, or look closely at a leaf and notice a new color, an unexpected shape, or make a connection to a science concept they’ve been studying, is an integral part of the garden for many of us – a part that may not return for a while.

In the meantime, we are hopeful that Descanso can still offer ways for young learners to continue having

nature experiences. To this end, our education team has worked to find new ways to share nature with students. These have included on-line STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) enrichment classes with LAUSD first and second grades, hands-on nature kits, and new online resources.

STEM enrichment: In fall and winter 2020, Education Program Manager, Nadia Hagan led a weekly enrichment class with a group of 22, first and second graders from around LAUSD. The class was part of a city-wide partnership from Mayor Eric Garcetti’s Task Force on Out-of-School Enrichment Time, with the support of the Broad Foundation, that brought together 26 of Los Angeles’s STEM organizations to offer free STEM courses for LAUSD students this fall. Students spent each week’s Zoom session exploring a different area of the garden, solving nature riddles, and learning about the variety of habitats found at Descanso.

Nature kits: A dedicated team of education volunteers has worked with staff to create hundreds of hands-on nature kits. These self-contained zippered bags contain nature journals, nature “treasure boxes,” pencils, magnifying glasses, and guides that prompt students to look up, look down, listen carefully, and discover the

nature all around them, wherever they might be. Working with partners like My Friends Place, Boys and Girls Club, and Pasadena Unified School District has allowed these nature kits to make their way into the hands of young learners around our neighboring communities.

Online resources: Our dedicated team of education volunteers has helped us develop new online resources for students, teachers, caregivers, and anyone with children in their lives. Given the diversity of needs and learning formats teachers and students are experiencing currently, our online educational resources were developed to provide materials that are flexible, and adaptable for a variety of users during the pandemic and beyond. The expected audience includes teachers, students, families, community partners and anyone who wants to learn more. We hope that learners will mix and match the available materials to meet their needs and enhance their nature learning.

Our online resources include:

- Short videos that explore topics we teach in our school programs, such as habitats and plant adaptations.
- Activity guides to help participants learn from home, their neighborhoods, or here at the gardens.
- Additional materials like suggested books and other ways to learn more about nature.

With all these offerings, we hope that Descanso can continue to support nature experiences for children, whether they're happening at the gardens, at another green space, or on a screen. We invite you to check out our new educational online resources at www.descansogardens.org and visit the Schools and Education page.





It's Springtime

by **Emi Yoshimura**, Director of Education

Every season is beautiful at Descanso, but spring is arguably the most action-packed. As we tell students who visit the gardens at this time of year: Plants and animals are busy in the spring!

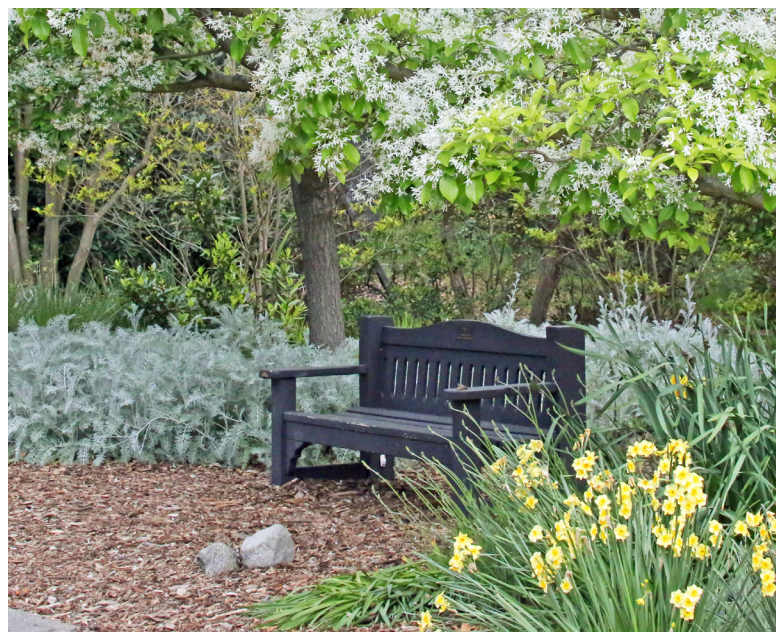
Our spring displays and installations aim to celebrate all this amazing activity (new leaves, flowers blooming, butterflies fluttering, baby ducks waddling), while also encouraging visitors to take a closer look, learn something new, and connect with nature and each other.

Spring is always full of unknowns – When will the tulips, lilacs, and cherry blossoms bloom? Will we get a spring rain? Where will the Canada geese decide to nest? But this year, with 2020 behind us, the yearly anticipation of signs of spring feels especially welcome and hopeful.

In February, Descanso will be celebrating the queen of the winter flowers, the camellia, with a self-guided walk focused on the attractive evergreen shrubs. Prized for their exquisite blooms, camellias are not only beautiful but have a wonderful story to tell. They will be highlighted all month with special installations.

Starting in March it will be all about the blooms. Not only could the cherry blossoms be in full regalia late February/early March, but the more than 30,000 tulip bulbs that are planted each year in the Promenade area will be producing a breathtaking assortment of tulips in all different colors and varieties. The theme for March will also be Birds & Nests. Artists will create special moments that will educate and delight.

We hope you come enjoy spring in the garden with us.



ROOTED

AT DESCANSO



Support Keeps the Gardens Blooming

Like many non-profits, in 2020 we took our fundraising events virtual. Our supporters gathered in their homes this past November for Descanso's first-ever virtual fundraising evening, Rooted. Sponsors enjoyed meals from The Kitchen at Descanso as they settled in to watch the story of the Gardens told by the donors, volunteers and staff that love it. Participants also had a chance to bid on the opportunity to sponsor a bed of tulips or blooms this spring. Viewers of the event raised approximately \$95,000 to support Descanso Gardens. Missed the event? The Rooted video is available to watch at descansogardens.org/rooted or on the Descanso Gardens YouTube page.

A second planned event to celebrate Pete Wyer's sound installation at Descanso, "The Sky Beneath Our Feet," was converted to a virtual event via Zoom. Guests at the Center Circle Associate level had an opportunity to learn more about the composition, then joined Wyer for a live Q&A from his home in London.

In 2021, Center Circle Associates members will be invited to participate in a mix of virtual events and in-person special access opportunities. We can't wait to host in-person gatherings again for our supporters.

Descanso Gardens is operated and managed by the non-profit Descanso Gardens Guild, Inc., in partnership with the County of Los Angeles. The non-profit Guild raises the Gardens' annual operating budget through admissions, memberships, programs, special events, and donations.

Interested in how you can support Descanso with a tax-deductible gift?

Please contact Somer Sherwood-White, Director of Advancement, at ssherwood@descansogardens.org or (818) 952-4389.

Descanso Gardens

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Descanso Gardens continues to be a place of discovery, relaxation and reflection.

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