

**JANUARY
2015**

VALDOSTA CAMELLIA AND GARDEN CLUB

A Message From Our President Mark Crawford

As I walk through my garden and see all the brown flowers there are signs of more flowers to come since a few buds are showing color after our terrible freeze on January 8th. We were lucky in that it was only 1 night rather the typical 3 nights. If the weather improves next week as predicted maybe we will have some flowers for the ACS convention tour and the garden dedication. I hope that all club members will attend the garden dedication at Christ Episcopal Church on the 29th at 11 AM. If you haven't seen the garden it is beautiful with walking paths and benches in place.

We had a beautiful show in December with great participation from judges in the region with nearly 1000 blooms on display. Unfortunately we had poor attendance after the show opened to the public. Please think about how we can improve our attendance, as it is too much work to put on a show if nobody attends. There are two more shows in the area – the national show in Tallahassee on Jan. 31 and Feb. 1 and then the Quitman show on Feb. 7 and 8.

Mary McRee, Gail Dickert, and Jim Wheeler gave a great report on the photo contest that will be in conjunction with the city contest. This will be discussed at our next meeting.

The primary activities for this month besides enjoying the flowers is grafting season begins the last week of January and most of February in our area. If you have large plants in your garden with poor flowers you can change it to something spectacular by grafting on it. Grafting on large yard plants will speed up the time it takes to get another variety in your collection that will bloom in 2 years. This is also the time to think about pruning that is done after blooming. If your plants lost most of the buds or flowers from the freeze you can prune now. It is best to complete pruning before the growth buds expand. There is a good article on pruning in the current issue of the ACS Camellia Journal.

We have a very special guest speaker for our meeting this month. Miles Beach who is the curator of the camellia collection at Magnolia Plantation and Gardens in Charleston is stopping in Valdosta on his way to the ACS convention in Tallahassee to do our program. Please make every effort to attend this meeting plus we will have great food like we had at our December meeting.

Happy New Year — Mark

PLEASE ATTEND

WORK DAY: Saturday, January 24 from 9:00 - Noon
DEDICATION CEREMONY: Thursday, January 29 at 11 AM

LOCATION: Christ Episcopal Church, 1501 North Patterson St.

Next Club Meeting

**Tuesday
January 27
6:30 PM**

**The Crescent
904 N. Patterson St.
Valdosta, GA**

Upcoming Camellia Shows

**Tallahassee, FL
Jan. 31 & Feb. 1
Doyle Conner Bldg.
3125 Conner Blvd.**

Bloom Entry
Sat., 6:00 - 9:30 a.m.

Open to Public
Sat., 2 - 4 pm
Sun., 1 - 4 pm

**Quitman, GA
Feb. 7 & 8**

**Brooks County
Extension Office
400 E. Courtland Ave.**

Bloom Entry
Sat., 7 - 10 a.m.

Open to Public
Sat., 1 - 5 pm
Sun., 12 - 2 pm

The Camellia Blooms of Fame Awards

By J. D. Thomerson

Hollywood seems to have more award shows than stars in the sky. They have the Academy Awards, Emmy Awards, The People's Choice Awards, Golden Globe Awards, Screen Actors Guild Awards, and even the TV Land Awards. I am probably leaving out many – I don't watch any of these shows. It "irks" me (is that a word) that our society devotes so much love and attention to these so called Hollywood movie stars.



The average hard working "Johnny or Sue" that works long and hard as a school teacher, construction worker, nurse, office worker, police officer, store clerk, restaurant worker, fireman, mechanic, and the list goes on and on do not get lavish award ceremonies every month heaping praise on their every move and action. In fact, the only attention most of these workers get is lots of complaints and fussing from the public when things don't go exactly as planned. Well, that is enough of my preaching about the upside down priorities of our crazy world – what could all of this possibly have to do with camellias.

Well, if Hollywood can give all kinds of awards to its celebrities I think we "camellians" can give awards for the various types of camellia blooms that we love. Yes, I know that the American Camellia Society has several award categories spotlighting certain types of camellias. There are yearly awards for the best miniature, reticulata, hybrid, sasanqua, seedling and sport, and a couple of others and this is great – but, I want to have a little fun and take these camellia awards to another level. Hollywood gives awards for all kinds of crazy categories so I thought it might be fun to do something similar for our camellias. What follows is a Camellia Blooms of Fame Awards Ceremony that we will just have to imagine might be on TV one day.



There is nothing scientific or anything about the winners in my categories – just what popped in my head one day while drinking coffee at McDonalds. Have fun with this and feel free to scratch off a variety I gave an award to if you know of a better choice – there are no right and wrong choices with this awards ceremony.

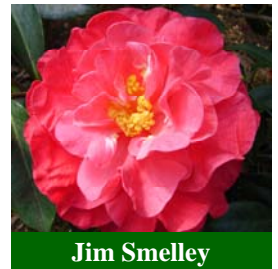
Your host for this awards ceremony is the famous and good looking fan favorite J. D. Thomerson. OK – Here goes.

AWARD CATEGORIES AND NOMINEES

Best Christmas Flower: Yuletide, Christmas Beauty, and Jingle Bells. How do you not go with **Yuletide** for this one especially since there are few other awards for sasanquas.

Best Early Blooming Flower: Early Autumn, Kiku-Toji, and Brooke. These are three of my favorites for sure. But, **Early Autumn** gets my vote.

Best Exciting New Reticulata: Jim Smelley and Elaine. We will have to give co-awards to these. Randolph Maphis says that these two are the best new reticulatas to come out since Frank Houser and Ray Gentry — that is pretty high praise. Both are seedlings of Curtain Call x Pleasant Memories.



Jim Smelley

Best Ginormous Bloom: Halls Pride Var., Curtain Call, and Drama Girl. Halls Pride can give me fits growing but is a gorgeous bloom. Drama Girl is an older japonica variety that can become a ginormous bush as well. Curtain Call is the seed parent for both the Jim Smelley and Elaine blooms so it is very deserving, but my vote goes to **Halls Pride Var.** – the International Camellia Society states that this bloom can get up to 20 cm across and 11 cm deep and even though I don't know the metric system well I can promise you that is big.



Halls Pride Var.

Best Rootstock Camellia: Kanjiro, Hongluzhen, Kumagai Nagoya. The sasanqua Kanjiro has probably held this award status for many years but once everyone gets a chance to use Kumagai Nagoya I think it will win over everyone. I understand the Chinese use Hongluzhen and Mark Crawford

grows this one and it does grow very well but I just can't imagine that anything could be better than **Kumagai Nagoya**.

Favorite Bloom of Old Timers: **Pink Perfection**, **Mathotiana Rubra**, and **Alba Plena**. This award has to go to **Pink Perfection** – seems as though everyone remembers this variety growing in their grandmothers yard and the bloom as well as the old memories are special.

Must Have Award: All camellia junkies need at least one **Ville de Nantes**. It is not the easiest variety to grow or graft but it is just a must have and the more you get involved with camellias the more you will understand why. My friend Hulyn Smith had a gorgeous photo of a Ville de Nantes as his welcome screen on his phone and he would proudly show it off to everyone.



Ville de Nantes



High Fragrance

Best Fragrance: I typically can't smell anything on most so-called fragrant camellias but I can definitely smell the pleasant scent of **High Fragrance**. I am selecting this variety as the winner with no other choices because in addition to the nice fragrance it grows really well (in fact, many growers use it as a rootstock plant) and it has a very nice mid-size bloom.

Best Reticulata: There are only two reticulata varieties that I think are in a class by themselves currently. **Frank Houser** and **Ray Gentry** (and the excellent variegated forms of each.) Both are excellent and will do well in non-greenhouse situations. Both are nice looking bushes (as opposed to most reticulata's) and get far less die back than most reticulata's. Everyone needs several of both of these varieties but as much as I like the darker red of Ray Gentry and the fact that my mentor Hulyn Smith registered it I still have to award **Frank Houser** as the best reticulata – it truly is a special variety.



Frank Houser Var



Night Rider

Hardest to Grow (Non-Reticulata): Well, I could have many candidates for this category – but, perhaps it is more my fault than the camellia's fault. I have just about given up on growing **Edna Bass** (I have killed three so far) but others tell me they have one and that theirs is growing great. I have had similar problems with the variety **Dick Hardison** but others do not.



Black Magic

Perhaps I will try grafting both of these. So, what are my candidates for hardest to grow non-retic variety? Well, **Black Magic** and **Night Rider** come to mind – why are the very dark red/black camellias so hard to grow. Since I don't have either of these two you will have to ask others which is the hardest to grow. I plan to graft Night Rider this year so I may soon find out.

Hardest to Grow (Reticulata): Well, in general, all reticulata's are hard to grow (Frank Houser, Ray Gentry, Francie L. and a few others being somewhat the exception.) But, from personal experience as well as talking with other growers I will put these on the list: **Pat Pinkerton**, **Dr. Dan Nathan Supreme**, **Big Apple Var.**, and **Tango** and your choice of a multitude or other reticulata varieties. I actually have a Dr. Dan and a Big Apple that are alive so I am going to choose **Pat Pinkerton**. I think if someone even sneezed near Pat Pinkerton it would get sick and die within hours – but, oh my, if you can grow this one and get it to bloom it is a spectacular dark red beauty and all the others listed are amazing as well. But, I would not suggest any of the above for beginners or perhaps even intermediate's.



Pat Pinkerton

Best Foilaged Bush: **Georgia Fire**
Best Near White Reticulata: **Lady Pamela**
Best Golden Stamens Award: **Maroon and Gold**
Best Formal Double Reticulata: **Valentine's Day**
Best Mass Flowering Reticulata: **Crimson Candles**

Best Seed Setting Japonica: **Edna Campbell**, **Royal Velvet**, **Mrs. D.W. Davis**, all the **Tama** varieties – recently, several Edna Campbell seedlings have been registered (Georgia Fire, Chief Arnold, Deep Purple Dream, and Henry Parrish) so I will give **Edna Campbell** this award.

Best Variegated Japonica: **Terry Gilley Var.**, **Oscar B. Elmer Var.**, **Ville de Nantes**. I don't see it at shows that often but **Oscar B. Elmer Var.** is my choice for this category – but, the others are great as well. However, as Randolph say's, "You Need Oscar B. Elmer." (please note: Ville de Nantes has already won the must have award.)



Oscar B. Elmer Var.

Best Variety to Give Someone as a Present: **Sweetie Pie** and **Happy Birthday**. I guess it depends on to whom you are giving the present and for what occasion but both of these are great camellias and both have great names.

Best Weird/Unusual Flower: I actually think Kumagai Nagoya should win this award but it already won the best roostock award and in my award system a bloom can only win one award. Therefore, **Dragon Fireball** gets my vote for this category and it is weird enough to be deserving.



Dragon Fireball

Best Striped Reticulata: Open/No Award. I have not seen anything to recommend in this category. So, this would be something for future hybridizers to work towards.

Best Ornamental Species: Perhaps we could call this one the camellia that looks least like a camellia. My two candidates are **Camellia Handellii** and **Camellia Yushsienensis**. Both are very unique but **Camellia Handellii** with small blooms all up and down the thin arching branches is so different. Even camellia folks will ask you what type of plant it is.

Best Big-Red Reticulata: Or, perhaps I should call this the Hulyn Smith Award since he loved big-red retic's so much. And, since Frank Houser barely beat out Ray Gentry for the best reticulata award it makes me feel better to award **Ray Gentry** as the best Big-Red Retic Bloom.



Ray Gentry



Bill Goertz Var

Most Noticeable Stamens: **Happy Higo**, **Bill Goertz**, and **Drama Girl**. Take a look at the photo above of **Bill Goertz** – it gets my vote for this category.

Most Shy Bloomer: I have to give this one to the variety named for my friend **Randolph Maphis**. Ask Randolph about this and he can explain and in the process have you laughing as well.

Best Uniquely Edged Petal Bloom: This is probably a category that is too broad. There are camellias that have fimbriated (toothed) edges or picoteed (narrow colored) edges or wide white colored edges. Choices for this category would include varieties such as



Margaret Davis Picotee

such as **Flowerwood** (fimbriated edge), **Tama Beauty** (wide white border), **Margaret Davis Picotee** and **Raspberry Ripple Picotee**. My choice goes to **Margaret**

Davis Picotee but **Raspberry Ripple Picotee** is very special as well.

Repeat Blooming Award: Well, there is really only one choice that we have access to so far and that is **Camellia Azalea** and yes, it does bloom repeatedly off and on all throughout the year. Mark Crawford has a plant of **Camellia Azalea** and it is so unusual to see it blooming in the middle of the summer as well as other times during the year. **Camellia Azalea** was crossed with the Japonica variety **Wendy** and the result was named **Wendzalea** – Mark tells me that **Wendzalea** does not bloom all season but it does bloom twice so that gives us hope that other repeat blooming varieties can be hybridized.

Best Very Large Japonica: **Paul Haskee Var**

Best Irridescent Bloom: **Spring Daze**



Paul Haskee Var



Spring Daze

My Most Wanted Varieties: There are two camellia varieties that I really want and have tried to acquire with no luck. One is named “**Mr. J. D.**” and since my name is J. D. that’s why I want this one. The other is named “**Kute Kate**” pronounced as **Cute Katie** and since my daughter is named **Katie** I really want this one too. There’s a story as to why I can’t get either of these - ask me one day and I will tell you the whole story.

Best Small Variegated Japonica: The petals do shatter after blooming but **Tudor Baby Var.** still gets my vote for this one.

Best Medium Reticulata: **Lady Ruth Ritter**, **TitleTown USA**, **Elizabeth B. Hunt**. I like all three of these so much and Hulyn Smith registered all three so I can’t pick one over any of the others.



Title Town USA

Best Tiny Bloom: Since “**Tiny**” and “**Tinsie**” sound so similar how could I not choose the cute little **Tinsie** variety the winner of this category

Best Medium Japonica: **Magic City** or **Dixie Knight Supreme** – you can’t go wrong with either.



Dixie Knight Supreme

Heaviest Bloom: **Georgia National Fair** – if this big, thick, full bloom gets wet I bet it weighs over one pound.



Leslie Ann

Best Sasanqua: Two sasanqua varieties really stand out to me – they are **Star Above Star** and **Leslie Ann**. Like a couple of other awards I can't pick one over the other I like them both so much.

Best Non-Retic Hybrid: **Julia** or **Julie Var.**, – I honestly can't tell the difference between the two.



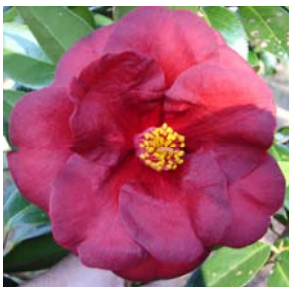
Showtime

Best White Japonica: It is hard to beat **Sea Foam** for ease of growing and a great white formal double bloom but there are many other equally deserving ones.

Best Pink Japonica: How do you pick one out of all the pink japonica's. Well, I will pick **Showtime**.

Best Seed Setting Reticulata: **Suzanne Withers, Curtain Call, Crimson Robe, and Cornelian**. Frank Pursel registered over 140 varieties (mainly reticulata's) and most had either **Crimson Robe** or **Cornelian** as the seed parent. However, you have to keep the plant alive to actually get seeds and I fear this would be a huge issue for me with both **Crimson Robe** and **Cornelian**. Hulyn Smith had great success with **Suzanne Withers** (and I actually have a healthy one growing in my yard) so I have to select this one for best seed setting reticulata. However, the new varieties named **Elaine, Jim Smelley, and Linda Griffin** are all **Curtain Call** seedlings and **Randolph Maphis** said these are in the same category as **Frank Houser** and **Ray Gentry** so that is pretty impressive.

Best Red Japonica: There are lots of great reds but since **Royal Velvet** is my wife Kay's favorite bloom I have to award it this award. It is most deserving for sure.



Royal Velvet

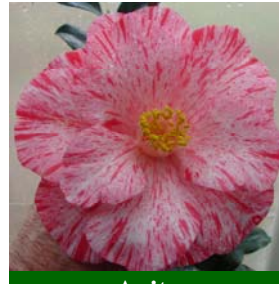


Linda Carol

Best Pink Reticulata: **Linda Carol**

Best Bloom named for a Dog: **Toby, Lassie, and Freckles**. Mark Crawford has a dog named **Freckles** and he is such a happy and friendly dog that I want to give this award to him but I have never actually seen a **Freckles** camellia bloom. So, it comes down to **Toby** and **Lassie**. It is interesting that **Paul Gilley** registered both **Toby** and **Lassie**. **Lassie** was named for the famous **Lassie** on the TV program (I think one of his

daughters got to choose this name) and **Toby** was **Paul Gilley's** dog – ask **Jerry** and **Carol Selph** to tell the story about how and why **Paul Gilley** named a camellia after his dog named **Toby**. My vote goes to **Lassie** – it is a very pretty light red, large, anemone bloom.



Anita

Best Striped/Flecked Japonica: **Anita, Ay Ay Ay, William Paulk, Clown, Mary Edna Curlee, Mabel Bryant** and many others. I really like striped and flecked blooms so this one is hard to decide but I will pick **Anita**.

Best Variegated Reticulata: Oh my, how can I pick one for this category?

Big Apple Var., Terrell Weaver Var., Ray Gentry Var., Dr. Clifford Parks Var., and the list goes on and on. **Randolph Maphis** has all of these and many other very rare ones that are seldom seen – so, you will have to ask him which one he would choose and I am not sure he could pick just one. I do like this photo of **Terrell Weaver Var** so I will pick this one.



Terrell Weaver Var



Walter Homeyer

Best Frosted Reticulata: I saved perhaps the best award for last. I really like the reticulata's that show frosting. There are several and they are all really good - not necessarily easy to grow but really stunning. A few of the best ones are **Mandy Smith, Tony Pinheiro, Lee Roy Smith, Raspberry Glow, Dr. Dan Nathan Supreme, and Walter Homeyer**. I will always remember

seeing my first **Walter Homeyer** bloom in **Hulyn Smith's** greenhouse - and to this day it remains the most incredible camellia bloom I have ever seen.

I know there are many more great varieties that did not win one of my **Camellia Bloom of Fame Awards**. I guess I will need to include them in another article for next year – maybe it could be called “**The Second Annual Camellia Blooms of Fame Awards**.” Even though I was pretty hard on the **Hollywood** movie stars earlier (especially all of the award ceremonies they put on TV) I must admit that I do like a couple of ways that they spotlight their celebrities. I think the **Hollywood Walk of Fame** (the stars in the sidewalk) and the



footprints and handprints in wet cement outside of **Grauman's Chinese Theatre** are pretty cool. Maybe we “**camellians**” could come up with some type of similar idea along the paths and sidewalks at **Massee Lane** – just an idea, yea, I know, a pretty crazy one.

Camellias Registered by the Gordy's

I have been to many fine camellia gardens but the Gordy's Camellia Garden in Ocala, FL is without a doubt the best I have ever seen. There are thousands of huge beautiful camellias as far as the eye can see -- you can actually get lost in the garden if not careful. Whatever variety you are looking for whether a new variety or a great old one you are sure to find it here. In fact, the best growers in the entire southeast come to this garden (with wish list and bags in hand) to collect scions to graft or cuttings to root. For years, Clarence Gordy (known simply as Gordy) and Miss Lillian have graciously shared their garden and plants with all that loved camellias. What fun it is to ride around in the golf carts, look at all the camellias, and listen to the Gordy's tell stories about the various camellia varieties. And, after the camellia tour Miss Lillian fixes everyone a wonderful lunch. Sadly, on April 5, 2013 Gordy passed away but his memory is alive and well in his camellia garden as well as in the lives of the many people he loved.

Gordy and Miss Lillian planted thousands of camellia seeds in their garden. Over the years, they have selected and named many outstanding varieties from their seedling trials. They always wanted their camellia introductions to not only be beautiful flowers but also beautiful bushes -- what they called great "yard plants." Mark Crawford (Loch Laurel Nursery) has all of the Gordy introductions and they are all very nice. Miss Lillian still has many more varieties that will be registered in the coming years.

Below and on the following pages is a photo album booklet that I made for Miss Lillian -- unfortunately, my photos do not do them justice but I wanted to share them with everyone anyway.



Miss Lillian



C. M. Gordy



Early Autumn



Blue Ridge Sunset



Burgundy and Gold



Happy Times



Marie Crawford



Snow Swirl



Autumn Twilight



Big Daddy



Emberglow



Pink Parasol



Capricci



Evensong



Monday's Child



Alcyone Ostberg



Gordy's Pretty Lady



Magic Touch



Desert Sunset



Falling Star



Orchid Mist



Laura Claire



Laura Gordy



Richard Gordy



Stephen Gordy



Allison Faith



Dawn Lynn



Allie Gordy



Avis Love



Nightfall



Enchanted Evening



Rosemarie Ostberg



Scarlet Ribbons



Happy Talk



Lily Grace



Paula Dean



Darlene Grace



Imagination



William Paulk
Lavender



Pink Chiffon



Camellia Addicts Enjoying the Gordy's Camellia Garden
Gordy & Miss Lillian are pictured 4th and 5th from the left

Join the Valdosta Camellia & Garden Club Today

- ❖ Informative meetings – Camellias and much more!
- ❖ Share your gardening ideas and expertise with other members
- ❖ Group events

**Meetings are held the 4th Tuesday of the month from September through March.
Most meetings are held in Valdosta at the Crescent.
Call Mark Crawford at 229-460-5922 for more information.**

- \$10.00 Individual member
- \$15.00 Joint membership

Name:

Address:

City, State, Zip Code:

Telephone:

Email:

Gardening Interests:

Mail to:

Sandra Seago
Treasurer, Valdosta Camellia & Garden Club
1802 N. Oak St..
Valdosta, GA 31602

We look forward to seeing you at the upcoming meetings!

(please come as our Guest and you can decide if you want to join later)

Normal Meeting Time: 6:30 PM

Crescent Garden Center, 904 North Patterson St., Valdosta, GA

NOTE: Call Mark Crawford at 229-460-5922 for confirmation of meeting location and time if you are coming for the first time or are uncertain.