

THE GULF COAST

# *Camellian*

Spring 2017

Volume 43 No. 2



*Camellia Japonica 'Otome'*

*A Publication of the Gulf Coast Camellia Society*

# The Gulf Coast Camellian

Volume 43 No. 2 Spring 2017

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## From the Cover .....



### *Camellia Japonica ‘Otome’*

This light pink, medium, formal double with in-curving petals originated in Japan c. 1828. It was imported by nurseryman Tusukaso Kiyono of Semmes, Alabama, in 1911. It is erroneously listed in the SCCS Nomenclature Supplement as ‘Otome Pink.’ It was very popular in the Gulf Coast area in the 1950s.

# President's Message

**Caroline Dickson**  
Poplarville, Mississippi



**S**how season is in full swing which brings to mind what is the main purpose for the group who does the work to make the show happen. Are you trying to build membership for the local organization and ACS? Are you trying to attract large collection growers to display cultivars not usually seen around your area? Are you trying to provide an opportunity for earning national points for camellia competition? Are you trying to provide a venue for plant sales of varieties not usually available in your area? In one way or another, answering yes to any of these questions has an educational function.

The recession of 2008 resulted in a reduction of the number of trophies awarded by some local clubs which punished the point collecting growers. The point collectors would be satisfied with ribbons and certificates as the award. Is it time to return to more cultivar winners with only ribbons and certificates? Can you plan more runners-up and court of honor awards for the point collectors which could be more inviting for large and very large reticulata growers?

Are you acknowledging the increase in the number of hybrids with more awards? If your show is before December, are you increasing awards for sasanquas and species which have many new introductions? Have you considered size awards, like distinguishing miniature from small within the categories of sasanqua, species, and hybrids? This

could attract more novices who grow the smaller cultivars and recent plant industry introductions.

The nomenclature book can be confusing to a novice even with the restatement of sizes using the range of from to. Is your show program confusing a novice with use of all six size categories for trophies while stating a bloom should be entered in the smaller size listed when there is a range in size especially for japonicas? Will very large japonica have a sufficient number of entries to have a separate award or should it be stated as large to very large as a single award with a runner-up and court of honor? Do you list a trophy for a size that never has a winning bloom at the time of year your show happens?

If you assign a judge team to sasanquas and species, is each cultivar judged first second and third for points in sweepstakes or only one first place for the trophy table? Is this clearly stated in instructions to the judges? Does sweepstakes omit sasanqua and species for points by stating division one or two to be counted?

Many of these questions are not originally from me. The contention tally sheets from this year's show can be used as a guide to the trophy list for next year's show which completes the cycle of presentation and reevaluation of the camellia show.





# Camellias in Flower Arrangements

## A Beginner's Guide

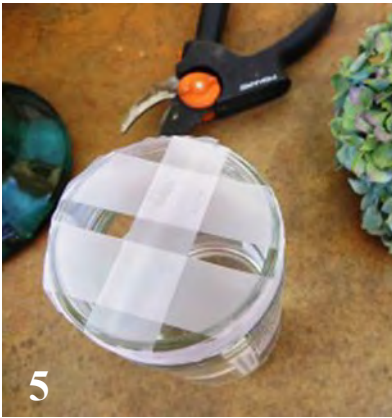
By Ruby G. Campbell

The 2016-17 Camellia Show Season in the Gulf Coast area is nearing an end, but the plants will continue to bloom for another month or two. Why not bring them into the home to enjoy during the rest of the blooming season?

While the placement of blooms in small cups lined up in alphabetical order may be the de rigeur of the day at an official flower show, this arrangement is not the most aesthetically pleasing for the home. That is not to say that a single bloom in a tall vase or floating in a bowl is not pleasing to look at. Quite the contrary. "Betty Sheffield Supreme" in a glass display case (Fig. 1) or a single white camellia in a tall vase or candle holder can be very dramatic, as are three pink camellias in a contrasting blue bowl (Fig. 2), or a dozen of them floating in a large shallow bowl. Incorporate some small floating candles for night time entertaining or add a few vines for artistic effect and immediately the room is transformed into a most attractive area.

Because of the basic simplicity of the camellia, making a camellia arrangement is probably one of the easiest and most gratifying floral designs to make. Most households already have a collection of clear crystal and pressed glass containers (Fig. 3) that are perfect for camellia displays. Simply cut the stems 6 - 12 inches long at angle; fill the containers about halfway with water, and arrange as desired. It is also generally best to remove any leaves that will be beneath





the surface of the water as they will decay and shorten the life of the arrangement. Another “old wife’s tale” that really seems to work is to sprinkle a little bit of salt in the center of each bloom to keep it from turning brown.

Other simple ideas: Buy a box of stemless wineglasses, fill each with cool water and float cut camellias of your favorite variety (Fig. 4). Set a serpentine line of them down the length of a dining room table for an informal dinner. You can also add a few drops of rose oil to the water to softly perfume the room.

If making an arrangement of several blooms in a wide mouthed bowl or vase, use sticky tape to crisscross the mouth of the vase (Fig. 5). Then simply place the camellia stems in the open squares of the tape, add greenery, and – voila – a vase of well-behaved camellias that will stand up just the way they should. Use wide tape if using large flowers in order to support the heads as in this arrangement of light pink blooms of “Debutante” camellias. The contrast of hard metal and fragile blooms is stunning (Fig. 6).

Go on a forage in the backyard and gather various plant materials: different types of greenery like magnolia, cedar, holly, boxwood, pine, along with berries, kumquats, or other unique materials to add depth and texture to the arrangement. (Fig. 7). These are fun to use in tablescapes at holidays. Mix with daffodils in a basket at Easter (Fig. 8), kumquats and berries at Thanksgiving (Fig. 9), and holly and pine at Christmas.

One way to enjoy and protect the camellia arrangement is to place it under glass. For this, use a footed

bowl, a small glass cheese dome, a small floral “frog” or needle holder, the camellias and perhaps a few cypress sprigs or whatever may be available in the landscape. A bit of floral moss will also help to hide the “mechanics” of the arrangement. Attach the camellia stems and sprigs to the frog placed in a small plastic condiment container. Fill the condiment container with water to serve as a bowl. Place the container and plant material in the middle of the footed bowl, and tuck the moss around the perimeter. Using this “bowl within a bowl” method, keeps the floral moss dry so it can be reused in a later arrangement. Then place the cheese dome on top (Figs. 10 & 11).

Want to try making arrangements that are a bit more sophisticated? This can be handled best by using a floral foam called Oasis®. However, it must be used correctly or the results may be very disappointing. With proper instructions and a little practice, the use of Oasis® can greatly increase the camellia arranging techniques. The basic “secrets” to using floral foam include (1) properly wetting the foam; (2) fitting the foam to the container; and (3) cutting and inserting the flower stems.

(1) Floral foam is a very light and fragile open-celled material which should be handled very gently when dry to avoid crushing those tiny cells. The cells (which contain air when the foam is dry) are designed to pull water through the foam via capillary action. As water is pulled in, air is pushed out the other side. In wetting the foam, it is



absolutely essential that air is not trapped inside any of the cells.

The best way to wet a foam block is to let it do what comes naturally – let it pull in the water. Just set the dry foam block on the surface of a basin of water with the water at least as deep as the thickness of the block. The foam block will slowly sink as it pulls in water from the bottom and pushes air out through the top. This takes a minute or two so be patient. A clean kitchen sink, first cleaned with soap and water to remove any trace of grease or oil, then half-filled with tap water, works well. Plain tap water works best as flower food will not flow as freely through the foam and will encourage bacterial growth, thus reducing the life of the arrangement.

(2) Once the foam block is wet, it is much heavier and tougher (more resilient to the touch). Now it can be carved to fit the container, using a sharp knife.

In a shallow, open container, the foam is simply set in the middle, and held in place with a snug crisscross of floral adhesive tape. Available at craft stores, it adheres tightly to the dry surface of a container and stays in place even if water is splashed on it later. Do not substitute any other kind of tape.

In a tall container, the foam should be carved to fit snugly, but not so tightly that the foam is difficult to push into the opening of the container. (Don't crush those tiny cells.) The secret here is to put a square peg in a round hole. Cut foam with a square or octagonal profile to fit it

into a round opening. Just turn the container upside-down and press the container opening against the foam block lightly to mark an outline for cutting. The corners may be squeezed a little to ensure a snug fit, but the sides of the block should not be compressed at all. If the foam fits snugly in a container, a crisscross of tape is not required to hold it in place.

The square peg/round hole practice serves another function as well. This kind of fit leaves gaps through which water can be added to the container. If it is not possible to leave a gap, as with a small-

necked container, fill the container with water before the foam is inserted and make sure a neck of foam reaches deeply into the enclosed reservoir.

For a traditional design, the foam usually extends 2 or 3 inches above the rim of the

container, so stems can be placed hanging over the rim. For a secure fit, have at least as much of the foam block inside the container as the amount extending above it.

A really tall container may require some filler material in the bottom so the foam will be positioned high enough. Any clean, sterile material that will not deteriorate in water will do. Try washed sand in a container that needs more weight for stability, or plastic packaging peanuts if the container is already heavy. Do not recycle used (punctured) floral foam as filler. Punctured foam contains plant debris which will pollute the water in the new arrangement. Un-punctured, *used* foam may be reused as filler, however,



*'Yuletide' and 'Shishi Gashira' in Oasis standing sphere. From Miss-Gardener.*

once foam has dried out, it cannot be re-wet, so make sure the used foam is not in an area that will be reached by thirsty plant stems.

(3) When inserting the stems, it is absolutely essential that they are tightly wedged into the foam, to ensure transfer of water from foam cells into plant tissues. A wobbly fit between stem and foam is not only unattractive to the design, but is also deadly to the bloom. Cut all stems cleanly at a sharp angle and they will slice neatly through the foam. Also make all stem cuts under water to avoid intrusion of air into stem cells. (Note: If thorny stems are being added to the arrangement, first trim away the thorns from the bottom 2 or 3 inches of the stem to keep thorns from shredding the floral foam.

Do not pre-punch holes in the foam. If the flower stem is weak or crooked, attach a wooden floral pick (which is also cut at a sharp angle) and comes with a wire attached which should be snugly wrapped around the stem and pick, running the wire down the length of the pick as it is wrapped around, to hold the two together.

One to 1-1/2 inches of stem is usually all that needs to be inserted into the foam for an upright placement. For a more horizontal placement, 2 inches will provide more security. To gauge the length of a stem for cutting, hold the stem in position in front of the arrangement and note where the surface of the foam would hit the stem. Cut the stem one to two inches past that point. If the stem is pushed a little too far into the foam, or if the stem hits an obstruction (like another stem), pull the stem out completely. Re-cut the stem (under water) to expose a fresh surface, then place it in a new, unbroken section of foam. **DO NOT** pull the stem out just a little bit. That will break the seal between stem and foam.

For a stem that will be placed horizontally, position the cut surface on the top side of the stem. As gravity pulls the bloom down, the surface of the foam becomes a pivot point to the stem. This means that as the bloom tries to drop down, the cut end of the stem (inside the foam) will be pushed up (like a seesaw), pressing the cut surface of the stem tightly against the foam.



Want more? Check out Tricia Legg's "Beginner's Guide to Arranging Camellias" a dvd available for purchase, download, or rent at <http://www.theavcafe.com/product/137171>.

All of the above suggestions of floral arrangements with camellias reflect basic western styles. To learn about the basics on ikebana, the Japanese style of floral arrangements, see the *American Camellia Yearbook 2016*, pp. 104-109.







## *From a Gardener's Journal*

**By Lynn Richardson**  
Brookhaven, Mississippi

### The Joy of New Judges

This is being written after our show in Brookhaven and the Baton Rouge show. For us the “season” has ended as we aren’t going to any other shows this season. Our show in Brookhaven was a success, we had 1300 blooms. A lot for a small show after some of the weather we have all had this winter. David and Mary Mizell were our vendors and they sold out of plants. They always have beautiful stock and were kind enough to donate some plants for prizes. Our luncheon, thanks to Patti Perkins, was great. Thanks to Patsy Yates, our break room was great, too. I am quite sure that a lot of people, not just our judges, left a few pounds heavier. Our club is small, but all of our members worked very hard to make it successful. This year we have a new prize chairman and she is terrific, she and her husband are new members but have already made a difference. Thank you again to all of the visiting judges and their flowers and patience.

Last March some of us were privileged to conduct a judging school in Slidell. Kay Taylor, otherwise known here as Superwoman, made the arrangements. We had some wonderful students and they were very attentive, asked questions and took notes. We saw them at the shows later and they are great. The future of camellia shows is in good hands with these great young people. I have to really brag on them.

True to my word, I have been taking photos of our plants and their placement.

The ones who are in the “morgue” will be replaced, but will be given more consideration as to the best sites. Some of them were placed where they got too much sun and too many hungry deer. I really do think that if they thought it necessary, the deer would just come up on the porch if they wanted to. I know that I whine a lot about deer, but we can grow these wonderful shrubs even so. Zone 8 is great, we can have flowers in bloom all year. So nice to be able to have flowers from camellias from October through March. Just have to have early, mid and late season plants. When I was a child, my mother, grandmother and aunts always had flowers on the dining table and kitchen table. Since they were all avid gardeners, they were usually successful.

We can also plan to have dining areas in our yards in the spring, fall and winter. Summer’s heat is a bit tricky, but having shaded areas makes it possible in the morning and late afternoons. A porch with a view of flowers is also great. We have a side porch and a front porch that are good for that. My brother-in-law refers to the side porch as the planning porch. When asked what he meant, he said you could sit there and plan for what you are not going to do!

At this point I shall go and plan what not to do for the rest of the day. See you at the shows in the fall.



# Preserving 'Oldies' in a New Garden



By Florence Crowder, Denham Springs, Louisiana

In 2013, then International Camellia Society (ICS) President Patricia Short and her husband, Herb, came to the Burden Botanic Gardens to evaluate its merits of becoming an ICS Garden of Excellence. The application was approved and the facility is among the forty world wide.

At the time of the Shorts' visit a future historic camellia garden was discussed and an "Alba Plena" was planted on the site of a future historic camellia garden. It was fitting for it to become the first as it was among the first to arrive in the United States in 1806.

December 28, 2016, marked the last of three days that 12- 14 members of the Baton Rouge Camellia Society worked diligently and faithfully to plant 100 Camellia japonicas that were registered in the 1800s. We accomplished this during our regular work days in the arboretum at the LSU AgCenter Botanical Garden on Essen Lane in Baton Rouge. The plants are from a collection that I began assembling since 2008 mostly from scions gathered in France.

While attempting to identify the 100+ camellias at our family home in Denham Springs, Louisiana, planted in the late 1940s and early 1950s, my sisters, Jama

Scivicque and Joan Sibley and I could remember a few of their names, but not nearly all. After asking a number of folks to help identify them, taking them to a number of shows, searching the internet, I realized that some of these varieties might be scarce as no one seemed to be able to identify them. I was finally able to identify most, but two I could not

identify were of particular interest to me. 'Duchess de Cazes' and 'Punctata Boutourlin' were finally identified by searching the website, [lov.cam](http://lov.cam) that was in France. I knew that my parents had not been to France, no one seemed to know them, I wondered how and



*Punctata Boutourlin*

where did my parents get them.

The nomenclature reference of the Southern California Camellia Society states only "Guichard – 1908" for both of them. Did Mr. Guichard bring them to the United States? Did someone buy them from Mr. Guichard and send them over? Did someone see them listed in Mr. Guichard's catalog that he had printed in several languages for the Chelsea Flower Show in England and just enter them in our nomenclature books? We don't know. Unfortunately I have found no records to make a determination. What we do know is that, during my research, I found that

Mr. E. A. McIlhenny of Jungle Gardens in Avery Island imported them in the 1930s from France for his gardens and nursery. More than likely that is where my parents got them as we visited those gardens a number of times while we were children.

After finding that information, I wanted to visit Avery Island as I had not been there since I was a child. I was interested in observing the camellias there to see if I could identify any of them. I contacted Jungle Gardens and was referred to the archivist there, Sherman Bernard. We had a number of conversations regarding the possibility of my visit there and to see if I could locate several varieties, to attempt to identify some there as almost all of the identification tags had been lost, and also to collect scions. He gave me no assurance of being able to do this. However, one of Mr. McIlhenny's granddaughters, Leigh Simmons, attended a Baton Rouge Camellia Show, looked me up and asked if I was still interested in visiting Avery Island. I was and I asked Jim Campbell and Joe Holmes to accompany me and we have been there a number of times, achieving our goals of identification and collection. There are a number of plants from those scions that are, or will be planted in the arboretum. I appreciate the willingness of Leigh and Sherman to assist in this effort and we will continue the trips, gaining more information. On one visit to Avery Island, a reporter from the *New York Times* interviewed us and a wonderful article followed.

One problem that made the assembling of those pre-1900 listings in our nomenclature books more difficult, is the fact that so many are being lost. Only 250 of the 460 listed have, supposedly, been located by me or someone else and we do not have access to all of these. One of my objectives is to make the public

aware of the fact that we are searching for these oldies and to assist in collecting them. A number of folks have been so kind to contact me regarding old gardens and we have been successful in securing scions of some we did not have along with others later than 1900 that are becoming scarce.

I found that, in assembling the list on the pre-1900 varieties that most, by far, were from foreign countries and many of those I had not located were from these foreign countries. About this time I was in contact with the curators of two gardens in France who, after stating my plight of searching for the pre-1900s, invited me to visit and collect whatever scions that I could use. I arranged for Bobby Green, American Camellia Society, Magnolia Plantation and the Burden Center in Baton Rouge to receive scions that I would collect to propagate. In July of 2008, my husband, Charles and I were on a plane for France to make this dream come true. If I could not collect these cultivar scions on native soil, those grown in foreign soil may be even better as the plants were from older sources.

The objectives for the trip were:

- Collect as many pre-1900s that I could.
- Distribute them throughout the southeastern US for propagating so they would not all be in the same place in the event of a disaster.
- Make observations and collect data on rooting procedures, soil media, environmental conditions, outcomes and comparisons with those already in the US.
- Share the results and plants with others
- Introduce or register those not listed in our nomenclature books
- Determine if those in France with the same names as ours have all the same characteristics. If there are differences, what are they and how might they be accounted for

- Determine if repeated grafting could cause changes
- Cultivate positive relationships between France and the US through communication and exchanges of information and resources.

To date some of these objectives have been accomplished and others will be completed with the passage of time.

Pascal Vieu of the Domaine de Travarez and Jacques Soignon, the Director of Parks in Nantes, met us and assisted in every way possible to gather scions and to accomplish all the requirements of shipping them to the United States, even taking us to the inspection station to secure the Phytosanitary Certificate. It was, indeed,

a successful

venture. However, a number of days after we arrived in the US, the scions had not arrived from the Miami inspection station where they were further inspected and were to be sent on by carrier.

After contact with the station and the carrier we found that

the station incorrectly addressed the package and they sat in the DHL warehouse. Two weeks later they arrived at the New Orleans USDA office very brown. A few, however, were OK and I sent them on to those who agreed to assist with the propagation. Later, I picked up

the ones that had rooted and continued their growth process.

Then, I decided I would love to see the plants in bloom, so we left in February 2010 for France. I contacted USDA to see if they had a better recommendation for me to receive scions. It was suggested that I take them with me to the airport and personally give them to customs for inspection, which I did and the transport time was reduced tremendously. Most of these scions rooted successfully.

The third trip, when my sisters went with me, was for gathering scions but also to visit two functions: one a garden in Belgium that was being evaluated as an International Camellia Society Garden of Excellence and second to the 'baptism' of

a camellia in northern France. This time the entire shipment was rejected due to the coelomycetes fungus. I always write the name of the bloom on the back of a leaf so I asked the inspector to send a picture of the fungus growing on MY scion. He wouldn't do it,

only sent a picture of the fungus from a book. I then asked to send it to our USDA so it could be evaluated there. He wouldn't do that either. Only a short time later two friends from the US went to the same gardens, gathered the scions from the same plants and guess what, they went



*Florence Crowder and her family plant a camellia in the new 1800s garden. L. to r. Mishaux Ramariz, Jama Scivicque, Landon Crowder, Florence, Joan Sibley, and Rachel Crowder*

*Continued on page 26*

## *The Historic Camellia Garden At Burden Museum and Gardens*

The establishment of an historic camellia garden in the Barton Arboretum at the Burden Museum and Gardens in Baton Rouge was adopted as a project of the Baton Rouge Camellia Society (BRCS) in 2015. The idea for the garden was first proposed by Florence Crowder in 2013.

In 2013, then International Camellia Society (ICS) President Patricia Short and her husband, Herb came to the Burden Botanic Gardens to evaluate its merits of becoming an ICS Garden of Excellence. The application was approved and the facility is among the 40 world wide. At the time of the Shorts visit an "Alba Plena" was planted on the site of the future historic camellia garden. It was fitting for it to become the first as it was among the first to arrive in the United States in 1806.

As pointed out in her article, Florence had been traveling in the U.S. and Europe seeking out and collecting historic varieties and propagating them. By 2015 she had more than 100 varieties ready to be planted.

Early in 2015 the BRCS met with Jeff Kehny, Director of the Botanic Gardens at Burden to select a site and work out details for the work. A site in the Barton Arboretum was selected for the new garden. The Burden Botanic Garden applied for and received a grant from the International Camellia Society to defray some of the cost of preparation. A section of the arboretum was cleared of underbrush



*Gerald Phares, Florence Crowder, Patricia Short and Herb Short plant an 'Alba Plena' in the new 1800s garden.*



*C. japonica 'Alba Plena.'*



*Dyer Lafleur, Lynn Vicknair, and Dr. Trent James planting camellias in the new garden.*



*Lynn Vicknair, Joe Holmes, and Dr. Mike Ruth busy planting.*



*Aletha O'Quinn  
mulches the  
newly planted  
camellias.*



*The first camellia to bloom at the new Historic Camellia Garden was Madame Picouline (Belgium 1855) on 12/22/2016*

and a handicap friendly walking path was laid out on paper.

Burden was to install the irrigation system, build the paths, and construct the raised beds with a mixture of silt and organic matter. Work was originally scheduled to be complete by December 2015 so planting could begin in December and January. But work did not proceed as planned and the project was delayed until the Fall of 2016. The site work was completed in December 2016 and we were ready to start planting.

The garden was laid out in 10 sections by country of origin. We devoted three of our workdays to planting the camellias. Under Florence's direction and with a good turnout of BRCS members we got them all planted. We will continue to locate, propagate and plant as we find more historic varieties.

**Following is a list of the camellias planted to date:**

**CHINA**

- Alba Plena
- Albertii
- Cup of Beauty
- Lady Hume's Blush

**ENGLAND**

- Altheaflora
- Beali Rosea
- Colvillii
- Compacta Alba
- Countess of Orkney
- Duchess de Rohan
- Dunlap's Imbricata
- Gordonii
- Lowii
- Marchioness of Salisbury
- Mathotiana Alba
- Mathotiana Rosea
- Rawesiana

BELGIUM

- Coletti
- Comtesse du Hainaut
- De la Reine
- Latifolia
- Madame Picouline
- Marie Morren
- Mathotiana Alba
- Mont Blanc
- Nobilissima
- Prince Eugene Napoleon
- Rubens
- Triumphans

FRANCE

- Auguste Delfosse
- Beaute de Nantes
- Belle Judith
- Comtesse de Nieuport
- Coquette
- Darsii
- De Bugny
- Duc de Bretagne
- Duchesse de Cazes
- Fostine
- Frans van Damme
- Guthriana
- Imperator
- Kenny
- Marguerite Gouillon
- Monsieur Faucillon
- Nannetensis
- Picturata
- Reine de Beantes

UNITED STATES

- Aitonia
- Alba Splendens
- Brooklynia
- C. M. Hovey
- Cardinal Richlieu
- Fantasy
- Mrs. Abby Wilder
- Sarah Frost
- William Penn
- Woodville Red

EUROPE

- American Beauty
- Boutonniere
- Duke of Wellington

- Firebrand
- H. A. Downing
- John Illges
- Mathotiana
- Radiance
- Rosea Plena
- Rosea Superba )

AUSTRALIA

- Iris
- Mariana (Red Waratah)
- Nicetus
- Tabbs



*'Tabbs' Australia 1856*



*'Elisabeth' Italy to Belgium 1861*

ITALY

- Angela Cocchi
- Aspasia
- Bella Lambertii
- Bella Romana
- Carlotta Gtissi
- Comte Boutourlin
- Contessa Lavinia Maggi
- Cruciata
- Dryade
- Eleanor Franchetti
- Elisabeth

- Fanny Bolis
- Fra Arnaldo da Brescia
- Giardino Schmitz
- Il Cigno
- Il Giogello
- Il Tramonto
- Imperator
- Italiana
- La Pace
- Luiza Strozzi
- Madame de Strekaloff
- Margherita Coleoni
- Princesse Bacciocchi
- Principessa Clothilde
- Professore Giovanni
- Santarelli
- Ristori
- Roi Leopold
- Roma Risorti
- Sacco



*'Bella Romana' Italy 1863*

JAPAN

- Arejishi
- Candidissima
- Daikagura
- Herme
- Iwane
- Lady Clare
- Lady Vansittart
- Pink Perfection
- Purity
- Shuchuka

ORIENT

- Horkan





*Best in Show, Quitman, GA Show. 'Terrell Weaver Var.' A full 8 inches across.*



*Edible cake art at the Kenner and Quitman, GA Show.*

# AROUND



*Preparation area for the Quitman, GA Show.*



*Charlie Johnson (l.) and Michael Polozola (r.) assist a customer at the plant sale at the Baton Rouge Camellia Show.*





*Howard Rhodes and Richard Hooton doing placement at SE Alabama Camellia Show in February.*



*C. japonica 'Duke of Wellington' Europe to US (Magnolia) 1848 blooming in the new 1800s garden at Burden Museum and Gardens, Baton Rouge.*

# THE REGION



*Mike Ruth mans the Gulf Coast Camellia Society table at the Baton Rouge Camellia Show. Ten new members were enrolled.*

# Pensacola Camellia Show

From Norman Vickers, PCC Publicity Chairman

Photos by Michael Spooneybarger.

## *Photos from the December 2015 Pensacola Camellia Show.*



*Visitors enjoy the prize-winning camellias.*



*Judging the show, from left James Smelley of Moss Point, Ms; Walter Creighton of Semmes, AL, and Roger Vinson of Pensacola Camellia Club*



*Judging the show-- from left Forrest Latta of Mobile, Al Baugh of Spanish Fort, AL and Eva Hoover of Baton Rouge, LA.*



*Judging the show, from left, Randolph Maphis, of Tallahassee, LeAnna Brennan of Pensacola and Walter Creighton of Semmes, AL*



*In the prep room. Note large iceboxes in which camellia blooms are transported.*



*Best Very Large Bloom 'Jim Smelley' exhibited by Col. Richard Hooton.*

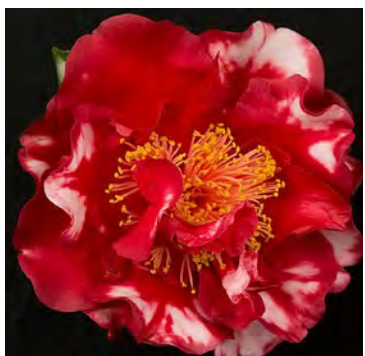
*Photos from the December 2016 Pensacola Camellia Show.*



*Best Unprotected Bloom  
'Linda Carol'  
Exhib. by Hunter  
Charbonnet*



*Best Japonica Very Large  
'Edna Bass'  
Exhib. by  
Roger Vinson*



*Best Japonica Large  
'Pirates Gold'  
Exhib. By Fred & Sandra  
Jones*



*Best Japonica Medium  
'Magic City'  
Exhib by Chuck & Bev  
Ritter*



*Best Japonica Small  
'Tama Vino'  
Exhib. By John Davy*



*Best Retic, L/VL  
'Anticipation'  
Exhib. By Walter & Alice  
Creighton*



*Best Retic. Medium  
'Julia'  
Exhib. By Jerry & Carol  
Selph*



*Best Retic. Small  
'Adorable'  
Exhib. By Howard & Mary  
Rhodes*

# Growing Show Camellias the Easy Way

by Mike Cannon

This year I resolved to give away more of my camellia blooms and not let so many of them go to waste in my camellia garden. When people see my blooms the comment is almost always the same, and goes something like this: "Are these really camellias? They are so big and beautiful. I have seen camellia blooms on bushes around town, but they never looked like these." "They must keep you busy all the time growing them." "You must have a special fertilizer." "You must spray and water them often."

I have to tell them I only work two or three hours a week during the winter taking care of one hundred plants. I do not use any fertilizer because I do not want more growth than I am getting now. I did not water the plants last summer even though I have all the free water that I may want. I have not sprayed my camellias for five years and the leaves are still clean and green with no sign of scale insects. So, if you don't fertilize, you don't have to water and you don't have to spray them, then growing camellias must not be that hard or time consuming. I want to share my method of

growing camellias the easy way, which will produce all the six and seven inch blooms you will ever want.

The first five years that I planted camellias they all died because I followed to the letter the instructions in a pamphlet on how to grow camellias. I dug big holes two feet deep and three feet in diameter. I refilled the holes with a mixture of 1/3 top soil, 1/3 sand and 1/3 humus. I planted the camellias two inches higher than the



*C. japonica 'Sarah Lee Cannon' 1977 Mike Cannon, Covington, LA*

surrounding soil. During the winter all the nice air spaces in this sandy humus soil filled with water and my camellia roots were damaged. As the humus decayed, the plants sunk deeper and deeper. The holes around the plants were filled with pine straw, so they dried before I knew that they

were sinking several inches below ground level. Now that we know how NOT to plant camellias, we will talk about the easy way of planting camellias.

The reason most camellias die is because of "wet feet". If you have a well drained sandy soil that extends down at least four feet, then you may plant the camellia plant the same height as the surrounding soil. If the soil is wet part of

the year or if there is a heavy or clay soil within three feet of the surface that keeps water from draining downward, then you should plant with at least half of the root system higher than the surrounding soil. We also must plant the camellia so that it will stay at the height that we plant it and not sink to a level where it will die later. Assuming that you have a camellia to be transplanted in a pot with a soil depth of nine inches, then scoop out a hole four inches deep and large enough to hold the root system and the soil it is growing in. The top of the root system is now about five inches higher than the surrounding soil. With one large wheelbarrow of sandy topsoil, build a mound five inches high in the center and six inches high on the outside and three feet in diameter around the plant. Pack the soil of the mound by walking on it and shape the outside edge to a 45 degree slope with your foot. (If you don't have sandy topsoil, then mix topsoil with sand to make it.) I do not use humus in the mix because humus decays and goes away, which changes the depth of our camellia.

Now, mulch the soil mound with at least three inches of pine-straw or ground leaves. (Do not use whole leaves on the mound because they can act like shingles on a roof and cause the rain water to run off the edge of the mound thus drying out the mound.) The first year fertilize with one handful of 13-13-13 fertilizer. The second year use two handfuls, the third year use three, and the fourth year use four handfuls. Every year add more mulch, which will turn into humus and feed the camellia just as they were fed in the forest in their native land. You will find white camellia roots in the humus on top of the ground in two or three years. After four years, there will be enough humus to feed the plants so you can stop fertilizing. The last three years we have had two very hard

freezes that killed many plants in the area. For some reason I did not have a single plant killed. I had many small limbs that I had gibbed that were killed, which did little more than help prune my plants.

Camellias like to live in the semi-shade of larger trees. Pine trees are the best. Oak trees produce dense shade and deplete the fertility and moisture of the soil. If you do not have trees for shade, that is no problem. Plant a pine tree every thirty feet each way and you will soon have shade because pine trees grow five times as fast as camellias.

I said I do not water my camellias. Well, don't do as I do, but do as I say. The above-ground mounds will dry out and need water the first few years, as the plant gets larger the roots will dry out the soil around the plant and go deeper and deeper in the clay after water. Withhold extra watering until they are in real distress. You can tell this by looking at the leaves. In time, the plants will not depend on you for water.

If your camellias have scale, you will have to spray once or twice a year. Use only one of the oil sprays and nothing else to control scale. If you use the real insect killers, you will kill the good insects as well as the bad. (I do use fire ant killers to control fire ants.) After you have the scale under control, you can stop spraying and thereafter the good insects will control the bad. I have many "daddy-long-legs" on my camellias now that I have stopped spraying. They will go down a leaf and pick off and eat the scale. There is a little black beetle that comes out of the ground and eats holes in young leaves, that I do not have under control. The holes make the leaves look bad, but they do not hurt the plants. I do not know of a way to kill them without killing my good control insects.

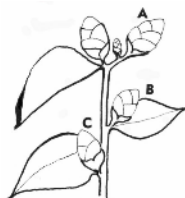
The first three or four years you will

need to prune very little since you want the plants to grow larger. You may cut a limb back here and there to give the plants a better shape. When your plants have reached a good size, then proper pruning becomes one of the important steps in growing large show flowers. Good flowers are grown on limbs that grow six to eight inches the year before. Pruning stimulates the camellia bush to make this six to eight inches of growth. A camellia that has many closely spaced branches and looks like a hedge will grow only one to one and a half inches and have many small flowers. My camellias are planted nine feet apart. I try to prune about the same amount each year; pruning of about fifteen percent of the plant. I prune so the plants are no higher than six feet and so there is room to walk between the plants. This will be enough room to allow sunlight to reach the side branches. I also thin the branches so light and air can reach all branches and there will be room for large flowers to hang with their faces down. If you prune as much as thirty to forty percent of a plant in one year, you will over-stimulate the plant so that it will grow long shoots, but will not set buds or flowers for one to two years. I prune on April 1st every year and expect my best flowers from the plants that I am able to prune ten to fifteen percent.

Disbudding is one of the most important and hardest procedures that we must bring ourselves to do, if we are to grow nice flowers. If we allow the plant to try to flower all its buds, we will have many small flowers, bud drop, deformed flowers and reduced plant growth. My large plants produce an average of four hundred buds a year. I have been removing about three hundred of these leaving one hundred to flower. Next year, I hope to leave only fifty buds.

As soon as I can identify the buds in

the fall, I remove all buds except one at the end of every limb. Later, I remove all buds near the trunk of the bush and about half of the buds on the outside limbs. The strength saved by not flowering these removed buds go into growing larger flowers and increased growth of the plants.



*Disbud for larger flowers. Buds A, B, and C should be removed, leaving only one flower on a shoot*

The first of September each year, I start gibbing my flower buds, two buds per week on my large plants, with gibberellic acid. I do not gib my small plants; on medium size plants, I may gib one bud every other week. This makes the flowers grow larger and the gibbed bud will bloom much sooner than an untreated bud. After a few weeks, I start getting two nice blooms per week on many plants, thus extending the blooming season by several months for most varieties. I have one lovely white that has a blooming season of six months, October through March, with the use of gibberellic acid.

There you have it; the safe and easy way of growing camellias.

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*(Editor's note: Mike grew his camellias in Covington, LA. This article on his "secrets" was first published in the Baton Rouge Camellia Society "Camellia News" in 1987, and repeated in 1995 in the Camellian. It continues to be one of the best articles on growing good camellia flowers and is worth reading again.)*



# In the Spring Garden

By Art Landry, Baton Rouge, LA



Spring is the time of vigorous new growth which rewards us for the care we've given to our plants. Fertilizing can be done now (see article on fertilizing in the Winter 2017 issue of the Camellian.)

Do your final pruning to remove dead or weak limbs. Remove any branch with leaves only at the ends so that the plant will put its energy into vigorous growth. Pruning can be done anytime but is best done in late winter and completed by April in this area.

Maintain a good layer of mulch around the plants throughout the summer to maintain moisture, cool the soil, and help control weeds. Leave the old mulch to rot in place and produce nutrients for the roots; put the new mulch on top of the old. Pine straw is first choice mulch by many in this area since it works so well, lasts most of the year, is readily available and helps control weeds better than many other mulches.

The flower buds start forming on our camellias about May and June. When you can easily tell the flower bud apart from the growth bud, you can begin disbudding the extra flower buds from the japonicas. (The growth bud is pointed and in the center of the stem. The flower buds are round and on the side of the growth bud.) Camellias usually produce about three times the number of buds that the plant can support opening. Help Mother Nature by removing those extra buds, which are unlikely to open anyway. You'll be rewarded with more and bigger blooms during the season. Sasanquas bloom with a profusion of

blooms which last a day or two and then are replaced with new blooms. We don't usually disbud sasanquas.

Water your camellias during dry periods. Established plants are more tolerant to dry spells especially if they are well mulched. Give them a good soaking each week without rain. Newly planted camellias need careful watering during their first summer until their roots become established. Fertilize these plants sparingly the first season. Soak well for each watering and maintain a good mulch cover. After the first season, they will be more tolerant of dry spells.

March and April are good times to spray to control scale and other pests. Dormant Oil or "Ultrafine Oil" worn fine for scale and are non-toxic. "Triple-Action" containing neem oil can be used to control scale, mites and other pests at the same time.

Check your new grafts weekly for growth. When the new leaves show signs of growing, cut the bottom of the cup nearly all way around, leaving a hinge on one side. Then the wire can be slipped under the flap, continuing to hold the cup until the leaves are fully formed. When the leaves start to touch the flap, snap off the flap and discard. Let the graft grow right through the cup until the leaves are fully formed. Then the cup can be removed or left in place to protect them from squirrels and other varmints if desired. The grafts need regular watering once new growth starts.



.....*A Poem* by Michele T. Fry, Baton Rouge, LA

*I grew up in Slidell in the 50s and 60s, living out in the country. There were eight camellia bushes on the two acres we bought, so I grew up playing under them and helping Mom pick and arrange flowers in low crystal bowls all over the house, and at the plantations we visited. She belonged to the Camellia Club and helped put on the annual shows, and I was in Camellia Court when I was a high school senior.*

*When I bought my own two acres in Baton Rouge forty-three years ago, it had one camellia bush on it with three different varieties. It still blooms every winter and I still continue the tradition. So camellias have a dear place in my heart. It was a thrill to visit the local show.*

*Lady Of the Camellias*

(for my Mom on her 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday © 1995 January)

One doesn't swoon for camellias. Their scent, if at all, is scant.  
Not like the rose or gardenia, both queens of ol' fact'ry delight.  
Jocundity isn't their fashion, nor daintiness their main appeal.  
Their colors are rarely so vibrant in hue as the tulip's pure captured sunlight.

But royal blood flows through the veins of camellias.  
Their satiny circular symmetry seems to enhance,  
as all emblems of class do, each space that they grace  
with a matronly, courtly, mannerly touch of romance.

Quietly tending its buds through the year,  
each bush builds a leather-leaved stage for its debutantes' winter debut.  
On cue, maidens in tu-tu, Degas-like "flowerinas"  
pirouette 'cross the stage, awe the world, fall away . . . and renew.

Unable to stay "on their points" very long,  
(so buxom, so heavy, so laden with pollen are they),  
spent flowers fall off in profusion. A circle  
of dancers surrounds every sumptuous "on bush" display.

Indoors, arrang'ed in bowls floating upward, some trumpet the presence of  
bold, lusty, yellow-clad stamens – danseurs,  
whose opulent reign o're the scene fills our tables with wonderfully sensuous glow,  
reminding us all, when the world's at its bleakest,  
that winter, apparently sleeping, is actually pulsing with life's undertow.



Growers world over compete for blue ribbons,  
arranging luxurious blooms in elaborate ways  
to dazzle admiring viewers. From stripes to tipped edges  
to passionate doubles, to those which adhere to the stems,  
they've hybridized species whose show in a vase is  
beyond any question – pure elegance!

While the yearly title of “Queen of Camellias”  
is reserved for a singular princess,  
and ladies-in-waiting, beribboned and honored,  
help judges to fill up their senses,  
yet there's something about the most humble camellia  
which no man can withdraw or bestow.

Whether grown in the wild or gracing plantations,  
they quiet the core of the heart. Since a child, I have felt it was so.

A center of calm in the human maelstrom,  
each Lady exemplifies how we might all just more  
gracefully make our brief show on life's stage,  
play our part, take our bows . . . and let go.  
Thus I'd dub every one: “Best Of Show”.



# GCCS Annual Meeting Raffle

This beautiful framed camellia photograph by David Humphreys will be the raffle item at the Gulf Coast Camellia Society annual meeting in Baton Rouge, October 2017.



**David Carlyle Humphreys** has been a professional artist/photographer for 38 years. His fine art work has been collected by corporate and private collectors in the United States and abroad. His work has appeared in many national publications. Along with numerous other awards, he is the recipient of the PDN/Nikon Award, and the Communication Arts Award of Excellence, and was inducted into the Baton Rouge High Alumni Hall of Fame in 2013. He has studied fine art printing with Graham Nash and Nash Editions and applied photography with Douglas Kirkland at Apple Market Center in New York. David has been represented by Griffith Menard Gallery, Cason Gallery, and Mario Villa Gallery. Ann Connelly Fine Art presently represents him.

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## *Preserving 'Oldies' in a New Garden.....Continued from page 12*

through inspection loud and clear. I found that this fungus is all around us, even in the sheetrock in our homes and it was not on the list of those not allowed into the US. What do you think is my opinion of some of the inspectors. Doesn't really matter as they have the upper hand and there is no reconsideration.

All in all, the scions from the pre-1900 cultivars in France and in the US have made for a nice collection that, after growing a bit, will be an asset of which to

be proud and will contribute to the beauty of the LSU AgCenter Botanic Garden. Each year we will plant a few more as they have grown sufficiently. I am so thankful that these now have a permanent home and I hope this planting will give us all a better appreciation of the 'oldies.'

I have dedicated this collection to the memory of my parents, J. L. and Ethel "Nook" Scivicque and to quote my dad, 'Don't forget the Old Ones.'



# Camellia Quiz

Name these japonicas that were the top winners in ACS shows for 2015-2016.  
Answers on page 29.



#1  
VL \_\_\_\_\_



#2  
S \_\_\_\_\_



#3  
VL \_\_\_\_\_



#4  
Min \_\_\_\_\_



#5  
L \_\_\_\_\_



#6  
M \_\_\_\_\_

# *Camellia Websites*

## **American Camellia Society**

[www.americancamellias.org](http://www.americancamellias.org)

## **Atlantic Coast Camellia Society**

[www.atlanticcoastcamelliasociety.org](http://www.atlanticcoastcamelliasociety.org)

## **Baton Rouge Camellia Society**

[www.facebook.com/brcamellias](http://www.facebook.com/brcamellias)

## **Birmingham Camellia Society**

[www.birminghamcamellias.com](http://www.birminghamcamellias.com)

## **Brookhaven Camellia Society**

[www.homerrichardson.com/camellia](http://www.homerrichardson.com/camellia)

## **Camellia Society of North Florida**

[www.atlanticcoastcamelliasociety.com/Camellia\\_Society\\_North\\_Fla.html](http://www.atlanticcoastcamelliasociety.com/Camellia_Society_North_Fla.html)

## **Coushatta Camellia Society, Conroe, TX**

[www.coushattacamelliasociety.org](http://www.coushattacamelliasociety.org)

## **Fort Walton Beach Camellia Society**

[www.facebook.com/FWBCamelliaSociety](http://www.facebook.com/FWBCamelliaSociety)

## **Gainesville (Florida) Camellia Society**

[www.atlanticcoastcamelliasociety.org/Gainesville%20CS.html](http://www.atlanticcoastcamelliasociety.org/Gainesville%20CS.html)

## **Gulf Coast Camellia Society**

[www.gulfcoastcamellias.org](http://www.gulfcoastcamellias.org)

## **Mississippi Gulf Coast Camellia Society**

[www.facebook.com/Mississippi\\_Gulf\\_Coast\\_Camellia\\_Society](http://www.facebook.com/Mississippi_Gulf_Coast_Camellia_Society)

## **Mobile Camellia Society**

[www.mobilecamellia.org](http://www.mobilecamellia.org)

## **Northshore Camellia Society**

[www.northshorecamelliasociety.org](http://www.northshorecamelliasociety.org)

## **Pensacola Camellia Club**

[www.pensacolacamelliaclub.com](http://www.pensacolacamelliaclub.com)

## **Valdosta Camellia Society**

[www.atlanticcoastcamelliasociety.org/assets/pdf/Valdosta%20Newsletters%20-%202013-2014.pdf](http://www.atlanticcoastcamelliasociety.org/assets/pdf/Valdosta%20Newsletters%20-%202013-2014.pdf) (Awe heck - just google it)

# Editor's Notes

By Kenn Campbell, Baton Rouge, LA  
kennbc@cox.net



What a winter that was! You never knew what to expect. We had a warm week in January ending with highs of 80° F. Then two days later, two nights of 22 °. The camellias couldn't take that sudden change and all flowers and swelling buds were killed. It took more than two weeks for them to catch up and start blooming again. And then the quality was poor. Then again in February another warm spell with temperatures of 83° F, but thankfully no freeze following this one. All of this was accompanied by more than usual scattered tornadoes, Hopefully we will have a normal Spring.



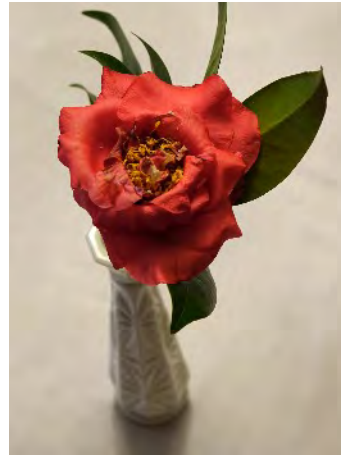
*Fig. 1*  
*First Day*

Ruby ran across an old wives tale somewhere that said if you sprinkle salt in a camellia blossom it would keep it from getting brown spots. Naturally she had to try it. She picked a bloom with a long stem and put it in a vase of water on the kitchen counter and sprinkled a little salt down in the blossom (**Fig 1**). After five days (**Fig 2**) it still looked fine. And by the eighth day (**Fig. 3**) the flower had wilted and the stamen were brown, but still no sign of petal blight on the petals. I personally think it was just a coincidence, but next year we will conduct more extensive experiments.

*Fig. 2*  
*Fifth*  
*Day*



*Fig. 3*  
*Eighth*  
*Day*



## *Camellia Quiz Answers*

1. 'Edna Bass Var.' 192 Homeyer, Macon, GA
2. 'Man Size' 1961 Hody Wilson, Hammond, LA
3. 'Show Time' 1989 Nuccio's, CA
4. 'Fircone Var.' 1950 Rhodellia Nursery, West Linn, OR
5. 'Melissa Ann' 1995 Dr. L. Audioun, Biloxi, MS
6. 'Lady Laura' 1972 T. E. Lundy, Pensacola, FL

# Gulf Coast Camellia Society

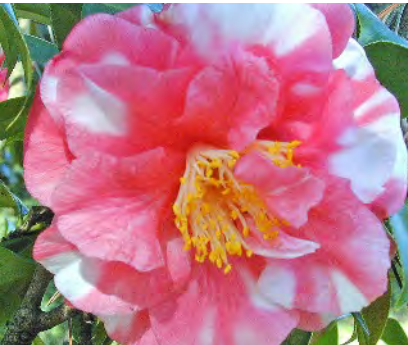
## Invitation to Join



*C. japonica* "Clower White" 1948, by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Clower, Gulfport, MS



*C. japonica* "Jerry Wilson" 1965, by Hody Wilson, Hammond, LA



*C. japonica* "Beauty of Holland" 1938, by Overlook Nursery, Crichton, AL



*C. japonica* "Edna Campbell" 1954, by Mr. and Mrs. P. H. Brock, Tallahassee, FL

The Gulf Coast Camellia Society was organized in 1962 for the purpose of extending appreciation and enjoyment of camellias. The Society strives to provide information to its members about all aspects of the care and culture of camellia plants as well as the exhibiting and showing of camellia blooms. The Society also serves as a forum for members to share and exchange information and experiences with other members.

Annual dues for membership in the Gulf Coast Camellia Society are \$10.00 for individuals and \$12.00 for couples. Membership runs from October through September each year. Life Membership is available at \$200 for individual and \$240 for couples. Included with membership are four issues of *The Gulf Coast Camellian* which contains articles on all aspects of camellia culture as well as serving as an exchange of news and information between and for members. *The Camellian* also contains reports of the Society's operations, minutes of meetings, financial reports, show news, and other subjects of interest to our members.

To join, send your name, address, phone number, and e-mail address, along with your payment to *Gulf Coast Camellia Society, in care of Michael Ruth, 726 High Plains Ave., Baton Rouge, LA 70810*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

# *The Gulf Coast Camellia Society*

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*Debutante camellias in a tiered centerpiece for a Spring tablescape.*