

THE GULF COAST

# *Camellian*

Spring 2019

Volume 45 No. 2



*C. japonica* 'Dahlohnega'

*A Publication of the Gulf Coast Camellia Society*

# The Gulf Coast Camellian

Volume 45 No. 2 Spring 2019

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And our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/gulfcoastcamelliasociety](http://www.facebook.com/gulfcoastcamelliasociety)

## From the Cover .....



*C. japonica 'Dahlohnega' small to medium size, canary yellow formal double, mid-season blooming. Originated by Dr. W. F. Homeyer, Macon, GA. The 11 year old seedling of ('Witman's Yellow' x {seedling x ('Elizabeth Boardman' x 'Colonial Dame')}) first bloomed in 1983. Registered 1986.*

*(Photo by kbc)*

# President's Message

**Dennis Hart**

New Orleans, Louisiana



As I write this message in the middle of February, it has been a bountiful camellia season! Whether it was the ample rain we had in the fall or the light freezes we had this winter (we had no freeze in New Orleans), the camellias have been outstanding. My Alba Plena is still flowering after two months and Joy Kendrick, Drama Girl, Grand Slam, Sea Foam, and Royal Velvet have all bloomed profusely. The Kramer's Supreme which I planted several years ago and had not done much in the past produced many large blooms this year.

It has been camellia show time and we have had lots of gorgeous flowers across the Gulf Coast. The shows are the ideal place for club members and the public to enjoy camellias. Thank you to all of the club members who plan, organize, and help out with the shows, to the judges, and to all who bring blooms to the show.

I have attempted to get to club meetings, events, and shows and meet with club members. On Saturday, November 17<sup>th</sup> I went to the Mississippi Gulf Coast Camellia Society show at the Lyman Community Center in Gulfport. Thank you to Ann Miller, President and Steve Manis, Show Chairman for a great start to the season.

On Tuesday evening December 11<sup>th</sup> I attended the Baton Rouge Christmas Party at Susan and Carl Hultgren's

home. It was a festive event and it was nice to meet the club members, many of whom are involved with GCCS.

On Saturday, January 5<sup>th</sup> I traveled with my blooms to the Northshore Camellia Society Show at the Southern Hotel in Covington, Louisiana. This



*Lyman Community Center in Gulfport.*



*The Southern Hotel, Covington, LA*

Mission-style hotel was built in 1907 and restored in 2014. It is a charming location for a camellia show. Hunter Charbonnet, President and Jim Campbell, Show Chairman and all the club members provided an outstanding event.



On Monday evening January 7<sup>th</sup> Eddie Martin, the State Vice President for Louisiana, and I attended the Ozone Camellia Club meeting at Azalea Estates in Slidell. There were approximately 55 people in attendance. Thank you to Bruce Clement, President for inviting Eddie and me to the meeting.

On Monday afternoon January 14<sup>th</sup> I traveled with Jim Campbell, the Secretary of GCCS, and Joe Holmes, the Vice President of GCCS, to the Brookhaven Camellia Society planning meeting for their show on February 2<sup>nd</sup>. There were 25 club members at the meeting. Despite early predictions of ice and snow, Brookhaven had a very successful show with lots of lovely blooms. Thank you to Bill Perkins,

of New Orleans Show. See the article about the show in this publication.

And last but certainly not least, I attended the Baton Rouge Camellia Society Show on Saturday, February 9<sup>th</sup> at the Rural Life Museum in Baton Rouge. The Rural Life Museum is an exhibition of Louisiana history and culture located on the Burden Plantation in Baton Rouge. It is a great location for a show. Thanks to Lynn Vicknair, Show Chairwoman and Joe Holmes, Ann and Mike Ruth and to all the club members who participated in making this a successful event.

Please keep sending your camellia articles to Kenn Campbell. You can send write-ups and photographs about camellias, your club meetings, shows,



*Judges huddle at Baton Rouge Show*

President for organizing this successful event and thanks to Bill for showing us the town of Brookhaven, the site for our GCCS Annual Conference in October.

On Saturday, January 26<sup>th</sup> I participated in the 79<sup>th</sup> Annual Camellia Club

and any special events. Kenn can always use your articles for The Camellian.

Enjoy the rest of this camellia season and remember: Keep learning more about camellias, recruit some new members, and have fun! 🌸

# The Influence of Catherine of Braganza on Tea in England

by Ruby G. Campbell, Baton Rouge, LA



“That Excellent and by all Physicians approved, China Drink, called by the Chineans, Tcha, by other Nations Tay alias Tee, is sold at the Sultaness-head, a Cophee-house in Sweetings Rents by the Royal Exchange, London.”

Thus read the first advertisement for tea which appeared in the British weekly magazine, the *Mercurius Politicus*, in September of 1658. It wasn't until 1657 that the Dutch first brought tea to London.

Although the British love affair with tea has become legendary, its popularity was not immediate. Originally considered a medicine, tea was generally found in apothecaries. However, as the ad indicates, it was also available in coffee-houses, small restaurants where mostly men gathered for conversation.

The fact that trade with Asia was dominated by the Dutch and Portuguese at the time, limited the accessibility of the British East India Company to the source of tea. This resulted in the price of tea being quite high in England for many years. In 1664, a pound of tea cost about £2 sterling. Inasmuch as a footman only earned between £2 and £6 a year, the cost of tea was quite pricey indeed.

Despite the high cost, the popularity of tea took a giant leap forward when the Portuguese princess, Catherine of Braganza, herself a tea aficionado, married Charles II, King of England, Scotland and Ireland in 1662. Charles had moved to The

Hague at the age of eighteen for safety reasons during the Second English Civil War where tea was readily available in the Dutch capital and where he, too, had grown quite fond of it. Strangely enough, this may have been the only like they had in common, the marriage having been an arranged one and Charles being most licentious.



Princess, Catherine of Braganza, wife of Charles II, King of England, Scotland and Ireland

Generally, the teas which were available in London were of an inferior type and most of the people did not know how to brew tea in order to extract the best flavors. Catherine was to change all that. She sought out the best teas and taught the ladies how to brew tea that was quite pleasant to drink. Served at the royal court, tea quickly became

associated with royalty and the upper class. A cup of high quality, sweetened tea was an unusual treat for most people, but the British gradually began to adopt tea as the beverage of choice at social gatherings, rather than alcohol.

Catherine's influence on Great Britain was not only immediate and domestic, but long lasting and far reaching. Portugal was a wealthy country in the 1660s as evidenced by Catherine's wedding dowry of £500,000, free trade routes to Brazil, the Portuguese East Indies, Tangiers, and Bombay. As a result of this dowry, the British gained a strong foothold in India and the British East India Company was granted a new charter that gave it a complete monopoly over all trade and commerce in China and India.

Despite her social graces and help in maintaining the British economy through trade, Catherine was unpopular in England. Her devotion to her Catholic faith led to absurd charges of treason and plotting to murder the king. Her religion prevented her from being crowned, as Roman Catholics were forbidden to take part in Anglican services. By the time she married Charles she was twenty-three, much too old according to her critics!

Yet, Catherine was a quiet, even-tempered young lady who did not involve herself in politics. Instead, she loved to play cards and shocked the devout Protestants by playing on Sundays. She enjoyed dancing and took great delight in organizing masques, a form of festive courtly entertainment that flourished in 16th- and early 17th-century Europe which had been developed earlier in Italy.

Catherine produced no heirs for the king and had at least three miscarriages. Her critics urged Charles to divorce her and remarry. But to his credit, he firmly dismissed the idea of divorcing Catherine. Of course, he had at least twelve illegitimate offspring which he acknowledged by his various mistresses.

By 1714, a great interest had developed in tea. Thomas Twining opened a tea-house in 1717 next to the coffeehouse on the Strand. This establishment was remarkable for two reasons: he was serving tea and not coffee; and he allowed unchaperoned ladies to purchase tea for them-

selves – a revolutionary idea. Before this innovation, a woman had to send her husband or servant to purchase tea (or anything else) for her, or at least have a



*Thomas Twining,  
founder of Twinings of London  
(1675-1741)*



*Twinings Tea House on the Strand, London  
Estd. 1717*



male accompany her. He advertized his company as “suppliers to the nobility and gentry” and soon named his teahouse, The Golden Lyon.

By 1790, whether at home or in teahouses, pubs, or taverns, tea had become an essential part of life for nearly everyone. It is estimated that ten percent of a laborer’s food budget was spent on tea and sugar. Tea with bread and cheese was the main meal of the day for the poor and the working class.

The teapot, elegant or plain, was an important household fixture by the end of the 18th century. It became the symbol of the British love affair with tea – one that crossed class and geographic lines and united people throughout the country.

“Tea” refers not only to the drink, but to light meals accompanied by tea. Tea served in mid-afternoon with small sandwiches or other savory fare at

a low table is appropriately referred to as “afternoon tea” or “low tea.” An afternoon tea menu is light and focuses on scones and finger sandwiches. Marmalade, lemon curds, and herbed butter may also be included. Historically, afternoon tea was considered to be a ladies' social occasion, and it is more often enjoyed by women than men to this day. And for some unfathomable reason, many tea fans vouch

for the maxim that tea tastes better when steeped and served in bone china.

Outside of the United Kingdom, many people refer to afternoon tea as “high tea.” This is not actually correct in a traditional or historical sense. Traditionally, high tea was a working class meal served on a high table at the end of the workday, shortly after 5 p.m. High tea was a heavy meal of meat dishes such as steak and kidney pie; fish dishes such as pickled salmon; baked

goods such as crumpets; vegetables such as potatoes or onion cakes; and other heavy foods such as baked beans and cheesy casseroles.

Why did the British prefer tea to coffee, unlike the rest of Europe? The British East India Company played a major role. Because it had been basically forced out of the Mediterranean trade by the French and the Dutch, it was difficult for them to get coffee which came primarily from Arabia

and Ethiopia. But the BEIC had a monopoly on the Asian trade and had a steady supply of tea.

But it was also the drink and the etiquette surrounding it that appealed to the British. They loved it because it was exotic; because it was a commodity that belonged to them; because it conveyed an aura of something more than just a cup of hot beverage. And now, it has become



*Afternoon Tea*



*Tea served in Bone China*

ingrained within the culture. Thank you, Queen Catherine.

Inevitably, tea found its way to America, both socially and politically. (Remember the Boston Tea Party.)

As the Dutch had access to most of the tea during the colonial period in America, it is no surprise that Peter Stuyvesant, Dutch governor in the American colonies,



Peter Stuyvesant  
(1612-1672)

brought the first tea to New Amsterdam (later known as New York) in 1647 – ten years before it was introduced to London. The early settlers quickly learned to

love their tea. William Penn wrote, cups filled with tea were “cups that cheer but not inebriate.”

Americans were famous for their creative innovations at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and tea was not exempt from this fascination for making things new, easy, and sometimes a little better. For example, the invention of the first tea bag is attributed to Thomas Sullivan, a broker in New York. As a way of cutting costs, he decided to place single servings of loose tea in hand-sewn silk bags, rather than in small tin canisters as was the custom of the day. Originally intended as samples, the merchants believed these were designed as individual servings for the public. The response from the public was immediate and enthusiastic. People liked the ease and quick clean-up.

Problems of lack of space for the tea to expand limiting its release of flavor, was solved in part by using smaller pieces of

leaves, but in 1952 the Lipton Tea Company developed a four-sided bag that they patented as “Flo-thru.” By the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, 96% of all the tea sold in England was in the form of tea bags. However, purists still scorn the bag and opt for loose tea.



The United States has also been credited with “discovering” iced sweetened tea. Although this drink had been in American homes earlier, Richard Bloechynden, a vendor at the 1904 St. Louis World’s Fair, is credited with its “invention.” However, his sales at the fair did much to popularize the drink.

While the British and the Americans have their own tea drinking cultures, it is the Japanese who have taken their tea ceremony to the highest level. But that is a topic for future issue.

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# “Houston, We Need An Intervention.”

By Bette Hooton, Pensacola, FL



After attending many camellia show weekends and listening to many scintillating conversations and clucking, “Oh dear, oh dear” at many of them, I find that several of our Camellia Giants are in desperate need of some kind of help. Rest assured, no names will be mentioned; however, I will point out an event that happened several years ago in Brookhaven.

Dick and I had picked up a few people to drive out to the Friday night dinner when a story began evolving in the back seat of the car. I told the person telling the tale to skip to the end as we were arriving shortly at our destination. It seems that he thought he had such a magnificent flower that he decided to bring the whole plant and ‘pick’ the bloom seconds before it was put on the table! “Good grief,” I thought, “this guy is crazy!” I had forgotten this story until a few weeks ago.

Then another one popped into my head: at Covington when the temp hit 27° early Saturday morning, and again I overheard someone say that a certain person had gone out to his car around 2AM to warm up his camellias. Don’t know how long he was out there at 2 in the morning with the engine running, but you can bet it was a while.

So during this 2019 season, I kept my ears open for more stories. I did not have to wait very long: at Delgado in NOLA, I did a double take when I saw one of our own taking on the janitorial duties, i.e. pushing a broom, all Saturday morning. Bless his heart. Again, I heard from a dear friend that her camellia nut spouse had driven all the way home to get blooms he had left behind—a 30-minute drive one

way! She’s the one who muttered the word ‘intervention’.

I pause here to think about my own problem camellia grower: my new car does have to sit in the driveway on Thursday nights because his flowers have first dibs on the garage, we own a camellia refrigerator, he will call me outside in my bathrobe to take pictures of a certain flower, and best of all, his only conversation is about the weather and how it will affect his blooms.

A few weeks ago, when we came home from NOLA, I looked into a small refrigerator that we use for water and Body Armor in the garage while he was unpacking the car.

“What are these plastic containers in the water frig?” I asked.

“There are no containers in that frig,” says he, his voice sounding irritated.

“Oh, yes, there are, 3 of them.” I retorted, my voice rising a shade louder.

“Bette, for cryin’ out loud. What are you talking about?” Himself says.

As he walked over, I got out of the way. He had forgotten these camellias, and he did laugh about it and shake his head. No more was said about this.

Intervention? Yes, indeed.



*C. jap. ‘Bette Ann’ 2009 by Richard Hooton, Pensacola, FL*

# Pruning Camellias

By Mark Crawford, Valdosta, GA



To Prune or not to prune that is the question! When I give presentations at camellia clubs, garden clubs and to Master Gardeners pruning camellias is one of the most common questions asked. Unlike so many other landscape shrubs that grow fast, camellias are slow growing. Slow growth in the nursery is one reason camellias are more expensive than most other plants and is the reasons they are not used by landscapers unless the client specifically asks for camellias. Newly planted camellias rarely need any pruning and can go several years with just tip pruning to improve shape.

If you are going to show camellias in competition then you need to trim so plants are open in the middle so flowers can open unobstructed by leaves and branches. Most questions come from people that purchase older homes that have camellias growing to the second floor of the house and in many cases have not been pruned in many years. In this case camellias have very large branches that require a saw or sometimes a chain saw to prune.

Large old camellias are usually full of pine straw or leaves accumulated over several years, have scale on the underside of leaves and covered with algal leafspot on the upper sides of leaves and might have lichens growing along the trunk and branches. These plants need rejuvenation pruning where they are cut down to four feet from the ground and most of the small side limbs and leaves are removed. Why four feet? If you prune higher, most of the re-growth will be in the very top of the remaining limbs and it will look leggy. If you go lower



*12 ' tall camellia after rejuvenation pruning.*



*Large camellia after pruning back to 4' above ground.*



*New buds emerging one month after pruning.*

*Make angled cuts on large limbs so that water does not collect on the surface. Apply wound paint to cuts.*



*Growth after two months.*



*Growth six months after pruning.*

it encourages undesirable growth close to the ground that is more susceptible to scale. When you cut large primary limbs cut at an angle so that water does not sit on the cut surface. Apply a wound paint to cuts two inches and larger. You can prune off all the side limbs and leave a skeleton of the plant or you can leave a few limbs with leaves. In any cases you will be removing 90% of the plant which will stimulate healthy new growth. Soon after pruning you should fertilize your camellia using 10-10-10 or something similar. Within a month you will see green buds growing directly out of the stems and by fall a healthy full camellia with beautiful shiny green leaves. Apply a fungicide to the new growth to prevent dieback on the young tender stems and leaves. You will not have any flowers in the first year following this type of pruning. The following year you can thin out some of the new growth to shape the plants for the best floral presentation.

This type of pruning works for sasanquas and japonicas but not suitable for reticulatas. Retics like to be trees and severe pruning can injure them. Hybrids like 'Frank Houser' can be moderately pruned where some foliage remains intact.

Smaller plants getting too tall can be topped to the desired height and branches thinned and cross limbs removed to improve air circulation. This will improve disease resistance and flowering.

My experience is that casual gardeners do not respond well to rejuvenation pruning because they think they will kill the plant. My response is to try it with one plant and see what happens. In most cases where I have followed up they have a good experience and then prune their remaining large camellias to a more manageable size.





# New Orleans Camelia Club Show

## New Location, Great Show!

By Dennis Hart, New Orleans, LA

The weather was perfect, sunny and cool, for the 79<sup>th</sup> Annual Show of the Camellia Club of New Orleans on Saturday, January 26<sup>th</sup>. The event was held at a new location – Delgado Community College next to City Park in New Orleans. The new facility had lots of room, large bay windows to see the beautiful day outside, and very accessible parking. There were 1,024 blooms displayed by 30 exhibitors, 148 plants sold, and 11 new members signed up for the club.

John Grimm (President of the Club), Nick Piazza (Show Chairman), Jim Campbell (Program and Judges Chairman), Andy Houdek and Rick Poche (Plant Sales), and Paul Huerkamp (Contention Table) did an excellent job coordinating all of the activities. And thanks to Jeanette Bell for creating the wonderful flower arrangements.

It was great to have participation from other clubs and GCCS members like Debbie Nolan (Northshore) who was an effective sales agent for new memberships. Thanks to the following for attending the show and bringing blooms: Dr. Bruce Clement and his daughter Madeline Brown (Ozone), Hunter and Meg Charbonnet (Northshore), Joe Holmes and Arthur and Eva Hoover (Baton Rouge), Tommy Weeks (Conroe), Gordon Rabalais (Arnaudville), Al and Vicki Baugh (Spanish Fort) and Dick and Bette Hooton (Pensacola).



*The new venue at Delgado Community College*





*The Best White c. jap. 'Charlie Bettes' exhibited by Gordon Rabalais, Arnaudville, LA*



*Tray of five and Best Tray of Three Hybrids c. retic. 'Miss Sally'*



*Best L-VL Non-Retic. Runner-up 'Tom Perkins' and Best M-S Non-Retic. 'Leah Gay'*



*Dick Hooton and Al Baugh*



*John Grimm (left) and Nick Piazza (right) congratulate Bonnie Spratt, winner of the Camellia Club of New Orleans Inaugural Camellia Art Contest for Middle School. Bonnie is in 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Hynes Charter School.*





**The Jim Smelley Display**



Jim Smelley could not exhibit but made his presence known with over 100 blooms that John Grimm gathered from him and displayed at the show –magnificent!

The Sweepstakes – the most blooms earning a blue award – were won by John Grimm (Gold) and Tommy Weeks (Silver).

The Camellia Club of New Orleans also sponsored its inaugural art competition for high school and middle school students. The goal of this art competition is to expose students to the beauty of camellias and expand their knowledge of and appreciation for growing camellias. The winner in the High School group was Donald Soniat of Cohen College Prep and the winner for Middle School was Bonnie Spratt of Hynes Charter School. Bonnie’s grandfather brought blooms with him and entered them in the show. Thanks to New Orleans club member Nicole Tygier for organizing this event.

Also, three student volunteers, Kenny Mayeau, MaryGrace Thibodeaux, and Rayburn Yates, all from Saint Thomas Aquinas High School in Hammond, Louisiana, helped with plant sales, placing blooms, and taking down after the show.

In summary, many thanks to all who participated in this very successful event including everyone who brought blooms, the judges, and all of the New Orleans club members.







# Problems, Problems

by John Mate, Pensacola, FL

**W**hat is the biggest problem camellia gardeners face and what are they willing to do to solve the problem? For many, the problem is simply the need for more space to plant all the camellias they want to plant. Our Pensacola Club's recent trip to Jim Smelley's greenhouses show how this problem can occur. The solution is the hard part and you may have to get creative!

Here are some PCC member's solutions to space problems. (Their names will not be mentioned in order to protect them from questions about their mental state.) D.H. installed 74 steps down the side of a pretty steep cliff to reach new planting ground. R.V. removed a perfectly good tennis court in his backyard. C.H. bought a lot across the

street from her home for more camellias. S.V. asked a neighbor, who lived several doors down, for permission to plant camellias in the woods behind their house.

Then there is J.M., who had plenty of land for camellias but needed filtered light to provide good growing conditions and lessen the number of falling limbs from the trees in the space he chose. J.M. rented a 60ft. bucket truck and hung out the sides with a chainsaw to trim trees for 40 hours last week. Every part of his body aches and he still has to clean the mess up!

I hope you are enjoying the camellia blooms in your own garden and if you'd like to share how you overcame your camellia space problem, come talk to me.

## Alabama News – Victoria Baugh, State VP- Gulf Coast Camellia Society

CONGRATULATIONS to Alabama Camellia Society for the coordination of an outstanding ACS national show. Bloom count was 1726; exhibitors numbered 87; and at least 1900 attendees were at the show. The location at the Mobile Convention Center waterfront was visually dramatic, and served as a wonderful showcase for Alabama's state flowers.

Over 40 national certified judges were involved in various phases of the show. Judges arrived from England to New York, Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida to Washington, Oregon, and California. Judges from Southeastern states were also represented.

The show was so well organized, and all the dedicated planning was obvious. The caring concerns from this Society of not organizing a previous show, was certainly not an issue. The show definitely went well. The number and efficiency of placement people and clerks was great; people were everywhere helping.

Trophy awards were generous. In addition to national ACS awards, over \$2,500 in cash prizes were awarded. The Tray of Whites and Alabama Registered Varieties were pleasant additions to the competition.

There were extra details unique to this show. Exhibition booths were part of the show. Cities of Semmes and Greenville had displays along with plant societies, botanical gardens, and camellia organizations. The Birmingham Camellia Club had a specific display. A band played for the opening of the show. Lovely young Camellia Maidens in satin-like gowns welcomed visitors to the show.

A hallmark of the show was the number of visitors. Visitor excitement of viewing blooms, asking questions, and increasing interest in camellias, fulfills significant goals of Camellia Societies. Alabama Camellia Society can be proud of this contribution to the camellia world.





*One of several BRCS grafting sessions. Grafters Art Hoover and Joe Holmes busy at work, assisted by label clerks Kay Clark and Alethea O'Quinn and pot carrier Tim Brown, while Ann Ruth and Lynn Vicknair manage the scions.*

# AROUND THE



*Bobby Green welcomes ACS Convention attendees to a tour of his wholesale camellia nursery in Fairhope, AL*

*Don Bergami, former ACS President visits Mobile Botanical Garden Feb. 2019.*





**C. sasanqua 'Alabama Beauty'**  
Tom Dodd Nursery, Semmes, AL



*North shore Camellia Society member Pam Head examines displayed blooms from members' gardens Feb. 23, 2019 during Bayou Gardens Open House.*

# GULF COAST



**C. jap. 'Mississippi Beauty' 1959**  
C. L. Chiles, Hattiesburg, MS



*Tommy Alden and Forrest Latta enjoy mobile botanical garden. The winter garden features camellias. Feb. 2019 ACS Convention.*



# Camellias - a hobby or a passion

By Hunter Charbonnet, Covington, LA  
Northshore Camellia Club, President



Ask any camellia grower how they got interested in camellias and you will find a wide variety of responses. Whether interest was perked by a family member that grew camellias, by friends sharing their camellias flowers with you, by viewing the many varieties displayed at camellia shows, or by simply wanting color in the garden during the bleak days of winter, there is one common theme that resonates with all. Camellias bring beauty and joy to one's life and to those around you. Give a camellia flower to anyone on their worst day and you will still get a smile from them in return. Camellias have been blessed by Mother Nature and their beauty makes it easy for one to get hooked into including them in the garden and landscape.



*C. japonica 'Duchess of Covington' sport of 'Duchess of Sutherland' 1951 Simon Katz, Covington, LA*

Camellias easily become a good gardening hobby as they are easy to grow, they are hardy plants, and with minimum maintenance, they produce a lot of flowers. By definition, a hobby is an activity done

on a regular basis for one's leisure time or pleasure. Hobbies can be activities for fun and relaxation or they are simply an occasion just to occupy one's time. However, when does a hobby become a passion? It is probably best to understand the difference as hobbies are generally understood and accepted but passions sometimes defy logic and common sense.

Here is the difference about passions. Passions are not necessarily relaxing. In many instances, they don't leave you alone. Passions are known to insert themselves whether you have time for them or not. They can soothe you while at the same time they can drive you crazy. And, in some cases, passions can exert a high price from us but one we never seem to mind paying. If you exhibit or experience any of these characteristics or tendencies with your camellias, I suspect your love for camellias is a passion and not just a hobby.

Passions come in many forms and how you use them can positively or negatively influence others around you. As a fellow Passionate Camellian, here are some suggestions as to how to use your passion constructively. All camellia clubs struggle with the challenge of gaining new members. There is no better way to get others involved in any effort, cause, or club than by sharing with them the passion you have. And in regards to camellias, sharing can be done in many ways.

1. Bring a friend or neighbor to your camellia club meeting. It provides them an opportunity to meet new people and to gain some insight about these great flowers.

2. Mentor a new member about growing and propagating camellias.

3. Invite the general public and friends to your camellia show. Help them identify their flowers and invite them to participate as novices in your show. If they own camellias, ask if a club member or two can come visit while their plants are in bloom. Maybe they have a lost variety that you can help identify and save.

4. Ensure members of your club welcome the general public and novices that attend your event, provide education about growing and caring of camellias, share the benefits of club membership both locally, regionally, and nationally, and provide a tour of the camellias on display.

5. Provide a quarterly newsletter to your membership. While *The Camellian* provides great seasonal advice on growing and caring for camellias, personalizing information like this or other important gardening news pertinent to your area is a great way to keep members interested.

6. Camellia meetings are best run with an agenda, an informative program that may or may not include a speaker, and conclude with good fellowship over light food and drink depending on your clubs' wishes. This ought to include a follow up copy of the minutes of each meeting to members. This provides transparency and clarity to meeting discussions.

7. If your club has an executive committee, a lot of planning and direction for your club can be done in advance of club meetings allowing meetings to focus on "substance" rather than debating "details" that should have been worked out in advance by either the Executive Committee or designated committees.

8. Speak to gardens clubs, gardening groups, or events held by other clubs and organizations who want speakers on gardening topics. This is the easiest way to share your passion for camellias and promote your club. If possible, collect participant names and emails offering to send them information about camellias such as your next quarterly newsletter or meeting agenda and/or invitation.

9. Share camellia flowers with friends, people at work, neighbors, schools, senior citizen facilities, restaurants, and garden centers. Doing so provides good opportunity to share your passion, camellia show, and club activities with others.

10. Invite others to visit your website and/or Facebook page. Both can provide great information and pictures of blooms they may have never seen.

Growth of any organization is gained by empowering new and existing members in the execution of a common cause or mission of that organization. Existing members provide perspective and experience but new members provide energy, enthusiasm, and new ideas. Growth cannot occur without embracing the challenges it brings but a successful future is only made possible if members remain focused on what they have in common. In our case, it is our passion for camellias.



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

# Paintings of K Sawada

from Alabama Camellia Society

*A treasure of watercolors were painted by Koskau Sawada in the period 1930 to 1948. As a young camellia nurseryman in his early 40s, Sawada taught himself art before detailed color photography was affordable. This was somewhat a necessity for Sawada, a Japanese immigrant, who had undertaken new groundbreaking work in hybridization. With remarkable skill, he painted detailed images of his own new seedlings as well as stock plants he obtained, many of which were growing in the region, adding his own field notes. --- Alabama Camellia Society*

*At the American Camellia Society Annual Meeting in Mobile in 1973, his son George offered his father's extensive collection of watercolors and notes of more than 300 varieties to our library. They constitute a valuable record of his own introductions and many early importations from Japan and acquisitions from various sources dating back to 1915." - The Camellia Journal, April 1973.*

*Today Sawada's original watercolors are held in the library of the American Camellia Society as one of his enduring legacies. --- Alabama Camellia Society Only a few are shown here.*



**Chandlerii Elegans**  
Stock plant propagated from a plant purchased from Mrs. Holland of Pecan, Miss



A watercolor painting by K. Sawada of the first seedling he commercially introduced, which also was the first camellia ever patented by the U.S. Patent Office. At the time of this painting it was still unnamed, but it later was released as 'K. Sawada.'







**'Crimson Velvetii'** Originated and introduced 1941.  
by Sawada, Overlook Nurseries, Mobile, AL



**'Tricolor (Seibold)'** Stock plant, cutting bought  
from Dan DeBaillon, Lafayette, LA



A watercolor painting by K. Sawada of 'Steiner's Single,'  
which was found in Theodore, Alabama, on property that  
remains in the Steiner family.



**'General Washington'** Stock plant bought from  
Cottage Garden, Queen's Village, NY

# Gift Shop Error: An Interesting E-mail Exchange

Between Caroline Dickson, Poplarville, MS and Forrest Latta, Mobile, AL

**Caroline:** Where oh where is the original Camellia 'Walter D. Bellingrath'?

As a camellia novice in the mid-1990s I visited Bellingrath Gardens on a picture perfect day in early April with the blooming azaleas trimmed low while late blooming massive camellias bloomed as a back drop.

As I left the garden, I encountered the gift shop. There was a sales display case of Boehm porcelain camellias. One was labeled 'Walter D. Bellingrath.' On the bottom the identity is F348 'Bellingrath Camellia, limited edition.'



*'Walter D. Bellingrath' Boehm porcelain on display at ACS headquarters. (Photo Dickson)*

Within a couple of years, I found a similar camellia flower at a now forgotten nursery labeled as 'Walter D. Bellingrath.' It has been planted in the ground in Poplarville. I usually get a couple of hard freezes in January that prevent my bringing blooms to the Mobile show. The mystery plant has a different growth habit from 'Fashionata,' but I noticed blooms were so similar that I made sure to write on each leaf.

My question is was the entire production of "limited edition Bellingrath Camellias" all orange/coral? If not, other forms may have been purchased as the official 'Walter D. Bellingrath.'

**Forrest:** Caroline, join the club!

Right here in our own Mobile Airport, of all places, is an identical Boehm Porcelain just like yours, which you can see in a display by the Mobile Museum of Art for all visitors to see! I took a photo to use sometime. And like you, I also had purchased that same plant, thinking it was



*'Walter D. Bellingrath' Boehm porcelain on display at the Mobile Airport. (Photo Latta)*

WDB, until I showed a bloom to Blanding Drinkard who confirmed it was not. (We think it is actually a variety called 'Faith') After some back-tracking, I traced it to a former Florida nursery. I once asked the owner about it politely, and he was proud that he was the only person selling WDB. He insisted that his plants were from cuttings that he personally had taken in Alabama. He sold those WDBs all over the south. So that is where the mix-up



occurred, in my opinion. Evidently somebody then got their hands on a bloom of the fake WDB and contracted with Boehm to produce it, which is the funny story of how the ‘Walter D. Bellingrath’ Boehm porcelain wound up being the wrong bloom! They should have just asked Blanding!

By the way, a similar mystery exists about ‘Spellbound,’ registered by Malbis Nursery. It was a seedling given as a gift to the great Birmingham grower Gordon Moughon who had used the nursery to distribute some of his new varieties. Someone later said ‘Spellbound’ was the same as ‘Marie Bracey,’ and it is listed in *Nomenclature* as a synonym. But if you look at the registration of ‘Spellbound’ it is a late bloomer (blooming now-Feb.), whereas Marie is early. In my opinion, they are different but similar blooms. Few can tell the difference, but if you are on Facebook you will see some ‘Spellbounds’ just coming into bloom now. There is one across the street from me, I believe. I am still investigating it, but I find it interesting.

You got me going!

**Caroline:** The Boehms did their own personal collection and photography of birds and plant material. I remember how impressive the coral camellias were in the mid-1990s.

A very close family friend, Nathan Boddie, owned Cat Island. He would tell the story of taking Mr. Boehm to the egret rookery on the island. While exploring the other areas, Mr. Boehm "stepped on an alligator" and lost balance landing in the small bayou he had tried to cross. Mr. Boehm was not injured, but a camera was damaged.

The Boehm porcelain does not have the name ‘Walter D. Bellingrath.’ I have another porcelain that is F228 ‘Helen

Boehm’ printed on the bottom that is true to the nomenclature description.

My guess would be that Helen Boehm was drawn to the beauty of the coral camellias. She would have been the one making the decision to select a representative bloom to represent all of Bellingrath, but had the knowledge that there were official names for camellias. She made a selection from unlabeled plants and did not put a specific flower name on the porcelain. There have been multiple rejuvenation plantings at the gardens which makes the date of introduction difficult.

The Bellingrath Garden archives may have the dates of her visits and the purpose of the "Limited Edition" coral bloom that distinguishes it from the named blooms. At least we know that Jerry Conrad also collected and reproduced coral blooming camellias collected at the same site. He is the source of misnamed plants that may have started with his view of the porcelain in the gift shop.

This is the live plant bloom that I bought as ‘Walter Bellingrath.’ It may be from ACS headquarters since I did go to an ACS Convention there and came back with a dozen plants.



**Caroline’s mis-named plant purchased as ‘Walter D. Bellingrath’ which is actually ‘Faith.’ (Photo C. Dickson)**



Courtesy Cliff Bartle/ Longline Nursery  
CAMELLIA JAPONICA • WALTER D. BELLINGRATH  
Plant Patent No. 1350

AMERICAN CAMELLIA YEARBOOK 1957-000063

*‘Walter D. Bellingrath’ in 1957 ACS Yearbook shortly after registration.*



*C. japonica ‘Walter D. Bellingrath’ frpm Bellingrath Gardens website.*

With a 1955 registration date, the original slides submitted have probably been misplaced.

I did find a picture posted by Bellingrath Gardens in an article "Camellias the aristocrat of Bellingrath Gardens" by Tom McGehee in 2016 which appears to match the nomenclature book.

**Forrest:** Yep, you got the imposter. A photo of the real WDB is in the ACS Convention booklet you received last week. It is more red, with an anemone center.

**Forrest:** Here is the actual WDB from Rick Crow’s garden, grafted from the mother plant.



*The real ‘Walter D. Bellingrath.’ (Photo Latta)*

**Caroline:** The plant patent for ‘Walter D. Bellingrath’ from 1955 would have had an expiration date.

The person who collected specimens at Bellingrath gardens was working with unlabeled plants and not necessarily carrying around a nomenclature book. Regional names were still in use. I am a happy consumer with a porcelain flower and a live flower even though I never noticed the plant lacked a few petals compared to the porcelain because camellias just do that. The color of the live plant is consistent with the porcelain.



*C. japonica 'Faith' (photo kbc)*

**Forrest:** Caroline - Glad the mystery is solved. Your pink bloom is indeed listed in Nomenclature. It is called 'Faith.'

Caroline - It's a beautiful Boehm porcelain camellia, whatever you call it!! And in this case, it makes a great story. I think we 'experts' sometimes get too hung up on names, and we miss the beauty of a particular bloom. After getting back to town, I went out to Bellingrath today, just to take it all in. Your messages were the inspiration! Take care, and thanks again for coming last week.

**Caroline:** This all started at the ACS plant auction when Charles asked who has the plant 'Walter Bellingrath.' About 5 people raised their hands only to be told we did NOT have "the real" 'Walter Bellingrath' because we did not get our plant from the original Mobile garden of Mr. Harris. The next plant up for auction was the REAL 'Walter Bellingrath.'

Until that moment, I had no reason to doubt the name of my plant. I had not come to the Mobile Camellia show in recent years due to freeze damage. If I had made the show with the flower, I probably would have been informed of the substitute of the different plant forty years after the original.



*Caroline's Boehm porcelain of the mis-named 'Walter D. Bellingrath.' (Photo Dickson)*



*Mis-named 'Walter D. Bellingrath' Photo on ACCS website by Mark Crawford.*

Forrest had already investigated the two flowers with one name problem that probably originated as an artist's project that he observed in an exhibit with knowledge that the coral flower was being sold by the wrong name. The lack of published current pictures contributed to the problem of identification. The Atlantic Coast Camellia Society web encyclopedia has the coral color flower.





# In the Spring Garden

By Art Landry, Baton Rouge, LA



**S**pring months can be a busy time in the camellia garden. Your work will prepare the plants for the summer and set the stage for enjoying the next blooming season when the fun starts again.

**Watering:** 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 season until their roots become established. Fertilize sparingly the first season, soak well for each watering, and maintain a good mulch. After the first season, they will be more tolerant of dry spells.

**Mulching:** If you've maintained a good layer of mulch of chopped oak leaves around your plant all year, then just add another layer on top to dress it up; and allow for breaking down of the organic matter through the summer. A layer of pine straw helps keep the mulch in place and looks nice. If you've mulched in this way for a couple years or more, and you've pruned as described above, the plant will require very little, if any, supplemental fertilizer. The decaying organic matter in the mulch usually provides enough nutrients and trace elements to a plant that has been pruned of 15% of its foliage and kept well mulched.

**Pruning:** Established camellias like to be pruned and March is usually the best time to do your pruning, after most of the blooms are finished and before the new growth takes off. Prune all weak or

spindly limbs and those with only a few leaves on the end. Take enough limbs out to give air to the inside of the plant and prune to size and shape desired. Take about 10-15% of the foliage off those plants that have reached the size you want. You will be rewarded with renewed vigor and stimulated growth along with better blooms in the coming blooming season.

**Fertilizing:** Those plants not yet large enough to prune back extensively will benefit from a simple fertilizer program of a small application now and another light feeding in summer. You can use a commercial Camellia fertilizer (or "Nursery Special" or "Growers Supreme" with time release nitrogen and containing trace elements) or make your own by mixing two parts cottonseed meal with one part of a balanced fertilizer (like "8-8-8"). Some of our members also like to add a small amount of Epsom salts (magnesium sulfate) to the mix (1 part to 25 parts mix) to help release trace elements locked in the soil. Use a cup or so of your mix to each plant.

**Dieback:** Dieback can be a problem all year long in our area, but the greatest exposure to the infection seems to be in the spring when the old leaves fall off or limbs are pruned or otherwise damaged. Prune away all infected limbs down below the canker or wound on the limb or trunk and treat with Captan and benomyl. Pruning paint is optional. Dry benomyl added to water-soluble pruning paint seems to work well when painted on the treated area. Sterilize your pruning tools often using fungicide or chlorine bleach solution to

keep them clean while you do the pruning. Be sure to collect and dispose of all prunings.

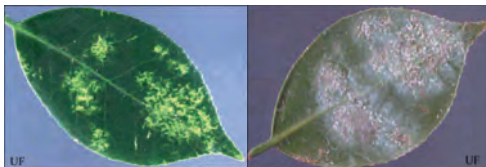
**Grafts:** Check your new grafts regularly for new growth. When the new leaves show signs of growing, cut the bottom of the foam cup nearly all way around, leaving a hinge on one side. Then the wire can be slipped under the flap, continue to hold the cup in place and let you observe the growth as it nears the top. (If using plastic juice bottle cloches, unscrew cap to allow new growth to harden.) When the leaves start to touch the flap, snap the flap off and discard. Let the graft grow right through the cup until the leaves are fully formed. The cups can be left in place for a year, on plants grafted in the ground, to protect from varmints like squirrels

**Containers:** If you have limited space for gardening, consider growing some camellias in containers. Camellias will do very well in containers and require only periodic repotting to maintain a vigorous plant. They grow slowly, can be pruned to control their size, and require less care than most other container plants. Almost any container or planter can be used, depending on the desires of the owner. Pots can be placed on roller dollies for ease in moving around on patios or decks.

Avoid keeping containers in direct sun all day long, because of the heating effect on the pot, soil and roots. Use a good soil mix containing composted pine bark and sandy loam topsoil. Adding perlite to the mix will help hold moisture between waterings. Water twice a week without rain and possibly more often in the hot dry summer periods. Fertilize container plants with a tablespoon or so of a “Nursery Special” type each month from March to about August. The monthly feeding is necessary since nutrients are washed out every time

the pot is watered. With proper choice of early, mid and late blooming varieties, you can enjoy blooms throughout the season from October through March each year.

**Spraying:** March and April are the best months to spray your camellias to control tea scale and spider mites. Tea scale is evident by yellow spots on the leaves and the white covering on the underside of the leaves. The scale itself is a small brown insect attached to the leaf under the white stuff.



*An infestation of tea scale, Fiorinia theae Green.  
Credit: University of Florida*



*The bronzing of the midrib of the camellia leaf is a sure sign of spider mite damage.*

Use any oil emulsion type product (ultrafine oil, dormant oil spray, etc.) and spray under the leaves to suffocate the scale or mites. A few drops of Dawn or similar liquid detergent help the spray to stick to the leaves. Spray again in a week or 10 days, since you will not be able to get them all in the first pass. After you've done this and got most of the plant scale-free, you can follow-up spray with Neem Oil, which acts as a long term preventive. It is absorbed by the plant and makes the plant unpalatable to insects and they starve to death.



# Camellia Quiz

Name these Top Show Winners of 2016-2017. Answers on page 30.



#1

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#2

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#3

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#4

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#5

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#6

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# *Camellia Websites*

## **Alabama Camellia Society**

<https://alabamacamelliasociety.org>

## **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**

<https://www.facebook.com/Brookhaven-Camellia-Society-1478370252464352/>

## **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.gulfcoastcamelliasociety.org](http://www.gulfcoastcamelliasociety.org)

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

## **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)

## *Camellia Quiz Answers*

1. 'Black Lace' retic. 1968, L. W. Ruffin, MS
2. 'Frank Houser' retic. 1989, Homeyer, GA
3. 'Lady Laura' jap. 1972 Lundy, FL
4. 'Lauren Tudor' jap. 1999, H. Smith, GA
5. 'Holy Pure' retic. 2007, John Wang, CA
6. 'Melissa Ann' jap. 1995, Audioun, MS

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*C. japonica* 'Silver Triumph' 1973 Nuccio's