Northern California Camellia Society, Inc.

A Non-Profit Organization

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Great Butterfly Wings

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NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CAMELLIA SOCIETY, INC.

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Barlow W. S. Hollingshead (Orinda 2054)
12 La Cintilla Ave., Orinda 2

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Fred E. Heitman, D.D.S. (Orinda 2177)
5833 Patton St., Oakland 18

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Woodford Harrison (LA 4-4671)
910 Oxford St., Berkeley

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Mrs. Barlow Hollingshead (Orinda 2054)
12 La Cintilla Ave., Orinda 2

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ARRANGEMENTS:
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BLOOM DISPLAY:
Donald K. Staples (KE 4-4937)
2811 Morcom Ave., Oakland 2

PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM:
Walter N. Powell (OL 3-1586)
423 - 60th St., Oakland 9

CULTURAL EXPERIMENTATION:
David L. Feathers (Orinda 2171)
1 Camellia Lane, Lafayette 1

HOSTESS:
Mrs. John J. Kampschroer
1115 Wellington St., Oakland 2

LAKESIDE PARK CAMELLIA GARDEN:
O. E. Hopfer (AN 1-5737)
1872 Brentwood Road, Oakland

SECRETARY:
Bruce Harless (LA 5-8218)
1301 Stannage Ave., Berkeley

DIRECTORS:
John Paul Edwards (GL 1-1854)
1347 Trestle Glen Road, Oakland
Gordon W. Richmond, M.D. (Beacon 2-1576)
475 Mount St., Richmond
Walker M. Wells, M.D. (HU 3-0951)
133 Hagar St., Piedmont

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Harold B. Parks (Walnut Creek 6406)
990 Pleasant Hills Rd., Walnut Creek

NOMENCLATURE AND CLASSIFICATION:
Barlow Hollingshead (Orinda 2054)
12 La Cintilla Ave., Orinda

PROGRAM:
Fred E. Heitman, D.D.S. (Orinda 2177)
5833 Patton St., Oakland 18

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:
Wilson Footer, M.D.
2828 Summit St., Oakland 9

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:
John J. Kampschroer
1115 Wellington St., Oakland 2

ANNUAL CAMELLIA SHOW

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:
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The Northern California Camellia Society, Inc. is a non-profit organization of camellia fanciers interested in the culture, propagation, and development of camellias. Meetings are held on the second Monday in each month from October to May inclusive, at 8 p.m., at the Chabot School Auditorium, Oakland. Membership is open to all those with a serious interest in the subject. Annual Dues $5.00. Membership application blanks may be obtained from Bruce Harless, Secretary, 1301 Stannage Ave., Berkeley.

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BOARD RESOLUTION

It is with regret that your Board of Directors announce the retirement of Mrs. H. G. Sanders and Mr. David L. Feathers as Directors.

Mrs. Sanders was the second woman to be elected to the Board, which she served well and enthusiastically. Mrs. Sanders will be remembered vividly for her chairmanship of Flower Arrangements at the 1949 and 1950 Annual Camellia Shows, which she handled with distinction, receiving unprecedented cooperation from garden clubs.

Mr. Feathers is the last to retire of the original Board of Directors. Throughout the history of the society, Mr. Feathers has been one of its pillars: From 1945 to 1947 he was Secretary; 1947-48, Vice President; 1948-49, President; 1945-51, Director. He has also held many important chairmanships: Camellia Show, Program, Awards, Door Prizes, Advertising, Commercial Displays, and others too numerous to recall. Mr. Feathers' retirement from the Board will be keenly felt.

GROWING CAMELLIAS FOR EXHIBITION

By David L. Feathers, Past President

My primary purpose in talking to you about growing camellias for exhibition is to try to persuade members to enter their flowers at future shows.

Several years ago, I was one of the judges at the San Rafael Camellia Show. The man who won the prize for the best-flower-in-the-show, had never exhibited before. If he can do it, you can do it. Winning show ribbons and prizes is one of the things that a lot of you are missing that you should be enjoying.

Personally, I don't intend to exhibit competitively at any future shows. My principal interest now is in growing seedlings. I have about 150 blooming this year, and eventually hope to bring out some that are worth propagating.

If anything I say tonight will help you to win a trophy of any kind, it will be time well spent. I shall give you the methods I use in raising exhibition-type flowers, holding nothing back.

If you were a cattle breeder, you would start with the best breeding stock you could get — with healthy, purebred animals. When choosing a camellia plant, a show-competitor is hard to please. He looks for a plant that is husky, vigorous and healthy. The progeny of camellias being flowers, he is interested in following the same principles the cattleman follows.

Camellia Culture in General

Most of you are familiar with my ideas on camellia culture in general. I wrote the article on "Camellia Culture" for the 1951 Show Program, and gave it a good deal of thought. (Also see "Camellia Culture" by David L. Feathers in N.C.C.S. Bulletin, Vol. 4, No. 3, February 1951.)

The five cardinal principles for general camellia culture are:

(1) Constant moisture;
(2) Perfect drainage;
(3) Acid soil condition;
(4) Some shade and shelter;
(5) Balance of essential growth factors.

Water is needed to bring the plant food to available form; sunlight is needed to develop plant energy from plant food.

If a camellia is growing in full sun, you can give it more fertilizer. On the other hand, a plant on the north side of the house cannot assimilate as much fertilizer as a plant growing in the sun. In other words, a plant assimilates energy from plant food according to the amount of sunlight it gets, because light is the power that converts plant food into plant energy. Some people have made the mistake of feeding a plant heavily even though it is growing in the shade.

To get large specimen blooms for exhibition, you need to specialize in a certain way, the important factors being:

(1) Watering;
(2) Fertilizing;
(3) Disbudding;
(4) Five cardinal principles listed above for general culture.

Watering

I strive **to avoid secondary growth** that is so prevalent about the bay area beginning about July 1.

While living in Oakland some years ago, I discoved that secondary growth can be avoided by judicious watering. I had expanded my camellia collection to my mother's garden in San Leandro, about four miles away. It was a chore to go out four miles to water, and then return four miles. Since we expected to move to Contra Costa County, our camellias had been put in cheap, temporary

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The above talk was given at the October 15, 1951 meeting of the Northern California Camellia Society, Inc.

containers. Then the war came along and we couldn't build. The containers became warped and fell apart. Due to the relatively infrequent trips to water the plants and to the poor condition of the containers, the soil was on the dry side; two-thirds of the water would run out immediately without penetrating the root-ball. The leaves would start to wilt. After watering the plants, the fog would come in, and the camellias would look as good as ever. When the blooming season came, the quality of flower seemed as good as usual, atlhough growth was not dense. So far as bloom was concerned, I couldn't see the difference between those and other plants.

In their natural environment, I doubt whether camellias have so much rain in summer as in winter and spring. I believe they have a rest-period during the summer months and do not put on summer growth. This is merely my theory; I have never been in China. But I feel sure that nobody goes around with a hose in summer.

You have heard me say that roses need a rest in summer; perhaps camellias need a rest, too. Putting two-and-two together, I have concluded, after following the practice inadvertently, that **my camellias go on the dry side during the summer and thus avoid undesirable secondary growth which forces buds to drop.**

Fertilizing.

Carrying the thought further, if it applies to water, it also applies to fertilizer. **I give the heaviest fertilization in the spring; no fertilizer in summer and early fall.**

I am merely visualizing the situation in which camellias grow naturally. They get no fish emulsion or RAC; all they get is the decomposition of humus from fallen leaves. And how does that become available as food? It becomes available when it rains. Thus during the dry summer months, little, if any, food would become available.

I am of the opinion that **a camellia is better off if fed fertilizer from November to March rather than from the end of July to November.** If fed in November, there will be food to sustain an output of flowers that are coming shortly.

In essence, my advice to you would be: **Feed heavily as soon as the camellia stops blooming, in preparation for heavy spring growth, diminishing the amount of fertilizer until the first of July; then stop fertilizing altogether. Don't feed the plant again until about the first of November; and don't give a heavy feeding for that would start secondary growth before frost; instead, give only a light feeding to develop flowers.**

Some people maintain you should feed a camellia continuously; but personally, I prefer **to stop feeding the first of July and let August, September and October be months of rest and preparation for winter blooming.**

Disbudding

Another important consideration in developing exhibition blooms is the matter of disbudding. Whatever you are growing—roses, chrysanthemums or camellias—**if you aspire to grow a whopper, you must disbud.**

I don't advocate disbudding to the point where there is but one bloom to a branch three feet long; but I would recommend **disbudding so as to leave enough space between buds for the flower to open fully.** For Elegans, more space is required than for Pink Perfection. **My point is: to produce a flower that is not distorted or misshapen by opening against another flower, in general, leave flower buds about four inches apart, alternately on down side and up side.** Most often the best flowers are hanging face-down, protected from the rain, but are nicely moist on back of petals. Therefore, **leave quite a few buds that hang down.**

(continued on page 5)

BOARD RESOLUTION

A resolution was passed at the final meeting of the 1950-51 panel of the Board of Directors to publicly thank our Past President O. E. Hopfer for his outstanding achievement as Chairman of the Lakeside Park Camellia Garden Planting, which was sponsored by the Northern California Camellia Society, Inc. in cooperation with the Oakland Park Department.

On September 22, 1951, your Board met with Mr. Hopfer and Mr. William Penn Mott, Jr., Superintendent of Parks, and were conducted through the camellia garden.

Your committee found the hundreds of plants, which had been donated, to be in fine condition, except for a few that were getting too much shade or too much sun. A couple of plants showed a yellowing of foliage, and several showed some bleaching. Two indicated slight squirrel damage. But on the whole the Oakland Park Department has done a good job.

When the project was first started there was some neglect of plants before they were transplanted to the ground; but now all the plants that were contributed are in the ground and are well cared for.

There is still some open space that will require additional plants. All who wish to make contributions of camellias may contact Mr. Hopfer for information at 1872 Brentwood Road, Oakland (AN 1-5737).

Permanent labels have been received by the Park Department and will soon be placed on individual camellias, showing the variety and the name of donor.

Mr. Mott infomed our committee that the building of a shelter for more delicate varieties will begin in the spring. Oak trees needing to be trimmed higher or thinned, will also be taken care of.

(continued from page 4)

Period of Unfolding

You will get the biggest flowers from buds that open most slowly. Where a camellia is in a warm place during the blooming season and the buds open rapidly, the bloom is not so large as where it gets less sun and opens more slowly. Blossoms that are on the plant for two or three weeks are bound to grow larger than those that are on only a week or so. If you have a choice, place the plant in a position where it will not be in hottest sun, and let the flowers open slowly, at least some of them. This is often the case on the sheltered side of the plant. Against the house you occasionally find a lollapalousa.

Plant Balance

In regard to the matter of plant balance, I have advised San Franciscans to move their camellias from partial shade to open sun. **The smog and fog of San Francisco filter the sunlight.** It is the same as if you protected the plant from the sun by a screen of dark colored cheesecloth. **In San Francisco, when you plant a camellia in partial shade, you are cutting down your chances of getting sizeable blooms. It takes sunlight to develop flower buds.**

In Oakland, my next-door neighbor never grew a camellia until someone gave him a plant. He didn't know where to plant it; perhaps it would be nice to have a camellia in the lawn. After twelve years the plant was 18 feet tall, and the foliage was so heavy you couldn't see through it. To my knowledge, he never fed the plant. He didn't know anything about growing camellias. How could this man get such fine blooms? Accidentally, he had hit upon plant balance. The camellia was grown in a continuous green-growing mulch; the lawn had to be watered; the camellia

grew in open sun where there was a maximum of light; there was food value in the decomposition of grass for fertilizer. Thus, without any attention, without any commercial fertilizer, and without any knowledge of growing camellias, my neighbor produced outstanding flowers.

If you are restricted to a shady location or to a cool situation, reduce the amount of fertilizer and the amount of water.

In the mountains of China where camellias grow naturally, the sunshine is clearer for the atmosphere is free of smog.

Our former president, Mr. O. E. Hopfer, lives high up in the Oakland hills, above the blanket of smog that filters the sunlight shining on the gardens at lower levels; and he grows some outstanding camellias.

Sacramento and Contra Costa Counties grow camellias of enormous size and perfection of form. The greatest number of prize-winning blooms are grown where it is colder in winter and hotter in summer. I never had more exquisite blooms than during the severe winter two years ago.

Fertilizer

Along about the time the flowers are about ready to open, I use fish emulsion or cow manure, about one-fourth the strength of the fertilizer I would use normally. I prefer fertilizer in liquid form because it is immediately available to the plant.

Last year, I experimented with cow manure. I put about a level shovelful into a pail and turn the hose on it; it is hard to break down; then I pour a half-bucketful of the first liquid I take off into another pail and add a half-bucket of water. I turn the hose on the manure in the first bucket three times. The last batch of liquid manure doesn't need to be diluted. I water the plants with this solution about every three weeks.

I don't use well-rotted cow manure; it isn't very potent after it is all leached out. I prefer manure of low color, with a yellowish cast that still has heat in it, rather than black stuff which has lost perhaps a third of its vigor.

With this feeding of liquid cow manure, I find no injury or damage; no inducing of out-of-season growth.

If you give an overdose of fertilizer, you will distort the form of the flower or change some other characteristic. Some petals might take on an iridescent effect. It is better to fertilize moderately and frequently, keeping it on the weak side. With cow manure, I don't think you can injure the plant.

Probably a gallon of dilute cow-manure solution would be right for a 5-gallon container.

Blooming Plant Requires Water

Dr. Hume's book ("Camellias in America" by H. Harold Hume) states that each camellia bloom requires about 80 drops of water. Suppose there are 100 blooms; think of the quantity of water that is taken up by the root-system.

The greatest amount of moisture is required during the blooming season and during the growing period in the spring.

Occasionally you will find a wilting of leaves. The foliage is telling you, "We need some more water."

If there is a protracted dry spell in winter or if the north wind is blowing, I go out and water the camellias. **During the winter months, I don't let the plant get on the dry side, even the slightest.**

QUESTION: When do you start feeding camellias to get better blooms?

ANSWER: I give a feeding the first of November to stimulate bud formation. Actually, I am likely to withhold fetrilizer until the color of the buds begins to show; then I give a feeding in dilute form.

(continued on page 7)

Mr. and Mrs. Ralph S. Peer, Park Hill, Hollywood

(continued from page 6)

That brings up another point: Personally, I prefer **a fertilizer that is heavy in phosphorous and potash, and light in nitrogen.** I try for the ratio 4:8:8; that is, nitrogen:potash: phosphorous.

QUESTION: What is wrong about putting a manure mulch right on the plant?

ANSWER: Nothing is wrong about it. In San Rafael the man who grew the best flower in the show, used nothing but cow manure.

It is impossible to make a categorical statement about fertilizers. I have had excellent results with cow manure, fish emulsion and RAC. I have used all three. You could start out in the spring with a dry fertilizer like RAC. Then use cow manure or fish emulsion the rest of the year. Perhaps the plant gets something from one that it doesn't get from the other. Dr. Gordon Richmond gets fine results with his own compost with cow manure.

QUEST FOR THE GREAT CAMELLIA COUNTRY

By Ralph S. Peer, Los Angeles

The significant thing that Mrs. Peer and I learned about camellias during our travels around the world, trips to England, Mexico, and other far places, is that the great camellia country is not the Orient where they grow naturally nor in Europe where they have been imported and hybridized, but right here in the United States. For a long time, Mrs. Peer and I had talked of visiting China and Japan where camellias grow wild; of picking out fifteen new ones and bringing them home. But much to our amazement, we found that if you are really interested in camellias, you had better stay in the United States; nearly all fine varieties are here and gorgeous new varieties are being created.

Mrs. Peer and I first went to England, where we visited Mr. William Campbell, the Curator of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew in the outskirts of London. Since the early 1800's, camellias have been grown in greenhouses at Kew Gardens. The library attached to the Curator's office contains valuable information about the introduction of camellias to the British Isles.

Today, the primary interest of British camellia specialists is to produce hybrids; that is, to cross species: **Camellia saluenensis** with **C. japonica; C. sasanqua** with **C. reticulata;** and so on.

En route to South Africa, we spent two days at Lisbon, Portugal, and visited the Botanical Gardens where there are many fine specimens of well known **C. japonica** varieties. Although camellias do well in the climate of Portugal, they are seldom seen except in gardens of old estates.

In Johannesburg, Union of South Africa, we found only a few examples of camellias. While visiting an estate owned by Mr. Eric Gallo, I felt that there might be an ideal location for camellia plants, and later had several sent to him from the United States. At last reports, the camellias were still alive but had not yet bloomed. Due to the reversal of seasons, it would take a while for the plants to recover and to come to flowering stage.

When our business in Johannesburg was completed, we went on to Durban and Capetown. About forty miles inland from Durban, we visited the Carter Nursery at Pietermaritzburg, which is one of the two firms supplying camellia plants in South Africa. The varieties offered were chiefly those popular in Europe many years ago. Little interest was shown in new varieties. However, after my enthusiastic description of some of the exquisite camellias grown in California, the nursery manager said he would order some from the United States; that there is actually considerable demand for camellias. It would seem that the climate is suitable and that camellias should flourish in the foothills facing the sea.

Capetown, which is famous for its many varieties of wild flowers, had practically no camellias, perhaps because of the hot summers and high winds which prevail part of the year.

From Johannesburg, we went by flying-boat through Central Africa to Luxor on the Nile, and visited tombs, museums and other places of archeological interest.

The day before we were to leave for Pakistan, we were informed by the airline that the plane would have to stop in Iraq for gasoline and we would need visas. At the Iraq legation, we were told it would be necessary to prove we were Christians before they could issue visas; an almost impossible thing to do without baptismal certificates. Finally, however, a note from the United States Embassy resulted in our receiving visas the following morning. To show our grati-

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tude, we had two camellia plants—an Alba Plena and a Gigantea—sent by air express from Los Angeles to the Secretary of the Embassy. A recent letter tells us that these camellias were planted on the shady side of the Embassy and are now doing well.

Continuing our journey over the Persian Gulf to Karachi, the capital of Pakistan, we waited twenty-four hours for another plane to Delhi, the capital of India. In New Delhi, the portions of the city developed by the British are quite beautiful. From Delhi, we drove about eighty miles south to visit the Taj Mahal.

Indian army officers from northern states of India told us that rhododendrons, azaleas and camellias grow in abundance around Darjeeling; but we were unable to visit there since there was no plane service, and to go by bus would consume more time than we had at our disposal.

From Delhi we went on to Calcutta, where we found many new varieties of cosmos; but were told that the climate is not suitable for camellias.

After leaving India we were in the Torrid Zone for four days. At Rangoon, Burma, we visited the world-famous Hindu temple, noted for its 300-foot cone-shaped tower covered with gold-leaf. From there we went on to Sourabaya, Java, arriving the night the Dutch Army started military operations against the Indonesian Republic.

From the Dutch East Indies, we flew over the Timor Sea to Darwin in northern Australia; then started another day's flight to Sydney, the principal business center of Australia. Sydney is something like San Francisco except that the climate is similar to that of Los Angeles.

In Sydney there are three large nurseries growing camellias. Camellias are really popular there; in fact, they are grown in nearly every front yard. They have a number of camellia societies and they put on camellia shows. Australian varieties have names that sound familiar, but when you see them in bloom, they are different from our varieties by the same name.

The story of camellias in Australia was published in a handsome book entitled **Camellia Quest,** by Professor E. G. Waterhouse, retired Professor of Languages. Professor Waterhouse was interested in camellias and he wanted to find out where Australian varieties originated; so he and Mrs. Waterhouse traveled thousands of miles through southern Australia and the North Island of New Zealand collecting information. He hired an artist to make water-colors of many varieties. The results of this research were published in **Camellia Quest.** Since Professor Waterhouse did not anticipate a demand for the book, only 550 copies were printed. Originally, they sold in Sydney for two pounds in Australian money. But now the book has become a collector's item for which there is a world demand. Recently, I was fortunate enough to obtain a copy for Huntington Gardens for thirty pounds.

The Australian story is that in the 1850's a chap named MacArthur was deported from England and went to Australia as a prisoner. He was given a large area in Melbourne where he created a plantation. Becoming lonely for camellias, he arranged to buy thirty camellia plants in England and France. The only means to transport them was by sailing vessel which might take two to four months; so he had to find a ship captain who would be willing to water the plants en route. At long last, the camellias arrived, were planted on the MacArthur plantation and grew up into large trees. Many are still there. There are also many farmhouses in southern Australia where one sees old camellia trees similar to MacArthur's.

As the years went by, camellias became more and more popular. Seeds were planted and new varieties were originated. Mutations were found and were propagated. Nurserymen competed with each other in introducing new varieties.

The Camellia Grove Nursery in the suburbs of Sydney, founded by Prof. Waterhouse but now operated by Mr. James Fisher and son, deals exclusively in camellias. It was through Mr. Fisher that I met Mr. David L. Feathers, then president of the Northern California Camellia Society. Mr. Fisher thought it curious that he had camellia orders from two people in California; he decided to ship the two lots together. When the shipment arrived, Mr. Feathers and I became acquainted and this chance meeting has resulted in a long friendship.

The Hazlewood Nursery, operated by Mr. William G. Hazlewood, also located in a Sydney suburb, is one of the largest in the Southern Hemisphere. Although camellias form only a small percentage of the nursery stock, Mr. Hazlewood has re-discovered many fine old varieties and has developed several important new japonicas.

From Sydney, we went on to New Zealand, one of the few spots where camellias grow wild. Camellias grow well in the southern portion of North Island, around Wellington. We visited Duncan and Davies Nursery at New Plymouth, on the western shore midway between Auckland and Wellington, where the climate is ideal for camellias. Their business is primarily to grow camellias. Some 50,000 camellia plants are shipped to Australia each year. The varieties are mainly Australian, although they have imported a few from China, Japan and the United States.

After finishing our New Zealand tour, we said good-bye to all the nice people we had met and returned to Sydney before starting northward to China and Japan. There we had a talk with Mr. Hazlewood, the leading nurseryman in all of Australia. He asked me to do something for him in China. Sometime previously, he had written to the Chinese government about importing some Chinese camellias. Professor T. Tsai, who lived in Kungming, Yunnan Province, had agreed to send him specimens of four new varieties of **C. reticulata.** Mr. Hazlewood had sent twenty pounds for these reticulatas, but the plants had never arrived. He thought that I might possibly be able to expedite the shipment.

From Sydney we took off by Constellation for Asia, stopping at Darwin for a few hours en route before leaving for Singapore. After two days of sightseeing in Singapore, we went on by Dutch plane to Bangkok, Siam, a most colorful city. There were no camellias there, however; probably because of the heat and high humidity.

From Bangkok, we took an American plane to Hong Kong, where we found a letter waiting from Professor Tsai. I had cabled him from Singapore after looking up time-tables and finding it was a matter of traveling 2,000 miles, and only one plane a week from Hong Kong to Kungming. Professor Tsai said he had twenty different varieties of reticulata and was willing to sell all of them. I was flabbergasted that someone should claim to have twenty varieties of reticulata! Prof. Tsai also reported that he had made shipment to Mr. Hazlewood by way of Calcutta. Later, I learned that these plants had all died in transit due to extreme dryness.

During World War II the Burma Road was constructed, and hundreds of American soldiers were stationed at Kungming or went through there. But no one came back here to tell us these wonderful flowers existed. Nobody had ever heard of these reticulatas. Yet, they have been growing in temple grounds, not only in Kungming but throughout the province of Yunnan, for four hundred years.

Between 1904 and 1932, George Forrest made a number of trips to China in search of new and different plants for English gardens. About 1924, he went all over Yunnan province, making his headquarters at Kungming. He sent back seed of saluenensis and wild reticulata. Single-

flowered plants of these camellia species, started from these seeds, are now growing in England. Forrest accomplished wonderful things, yet he completely overlooked reticulata varieties in Kungming. He even sent back wild reticulata bearing a single white flower. It is reasonable to suppose that the single reticulata in this country came from the original seed sent back to England by Forrest.

With all this in mind, I decided to think it over a while before sending five hundred dollars to a strange person for twenty reticulata varieties.

In Hong Kong, we got in touch with Mr. Ralph Dean, head of the Gardens Department of the Hong Kong government, who offered to take us on a motor trip to visit the wild, wooded section on the south slope of the mountainous island. In Hong Kong itself, we saw only a few camellias growing wild. The species Hongkongensis came from there.

During the war, the Japanese held Hong Kong. The winters are cold and it is necessary to have fires. The Japanese sent men out to cut down trees and shrubs for firewood, so the wild jungle shrubbery had been pretty well chopped out.

On the motor trip with Mr. Dean, the thing that made the most indelible impression was something that I have not yet been able to bring here. In the mountains we saw a great blotch of scarlet **Rhodeleia championii,** a member of the family to which camellias belong. It grows into trees, some 20 feet high. The flowers grow in bunches and hang down, somewhat like rhododendrons. The color reminded us of the luminosity of reticulata; it was so vibrant that it was visible for a couple of miles from the mountainside. I tried to bring back plants, but it seems to be tender. Mr. Feathers tried to help me on that. but all the plants died. Last year, I received some rhodeleia seed, and will experiment with it further. I intend to graft a rhodeleia on a japonica to see whether it is as much like a camellia as it appears to be.

Mr. Dean was formerly with Kew Gardens in London. He knows plants; he is a very able citizen and a very fine person. At the time he was busy drilling the militia. They didn't know when the Chinese might strike. Through him it was possible to bring down reticulatas from Kungming and have him handle the whole thing. If the situation ever clears up in China, we will be able to bring out reticulatas as well as other camellia species.

Proceeding on our trip around the world, we visited Canton but had to get out within twenty-four hours, because the government would sieze all planes. It is a very interesting city, built on two sides of the Yangtze River. There is a large island in the Yangtze, which from time immemorial has contained the Flower Market, as well as many nurseries. From available information, ti appears that Captain Rawes purchased on this island the reticulata variety named for him which is so well distributed in California. Moreover, half a dozen camellia varieties got their start toward England from this particular island.

Shanghai lies far to the north and sometimes has severe blizzards; but curiously enough, they have a celebrated Flower Market there, too. We went on to Shanghai primarily to interview a Mr. Y. Y. Huang, who, we were told by our bankers, was the greatest authority on camellias in all China. On Chinese New Year we succeeded in finding Mr. Huang's home in the outskirts of Shanghai, but he was gravely ill with pneumonia. His daughter could speak no English but we succeeded, through sign language, in telling her we would like to see the camellias. After being served tea and cake, we were escorted to the greenhouse where we found a dozen or more in bloom, and took photographs of three or four that seemed to be unusual. When we returned to the house, we found Mr. Huang's son, who could speak English, but he

could not tell us much about rare camellias in his father's collection.

As we were leaving, Miss Huang met us at the gate and presented us with a blooming plant about 28 inches in height, to indicate the gratitude of the family for our visit. The blooms were similar to those of Imperator. The following day, I bare-rooted the plant and wrapped the roots in wet moss. Eventually, we succeeded in bringing the camellia to Honolulu where it was destroyed by the Plant Quarantine because of a diseased root.

In the 1850's, Robert Fortune had been sent out from England on a horticultural quest. He was particularly interested in finding a yellow camellia. I, too, had become interested in such a quest, for in London Mr. Campbell, head of Kew Gardens, had shown me a colored plate of a yellow camellia made in the 1850's; the center of the flower was filled with petalets which looked yellow. This camellia, although once quite common, had disappeared. We were told that there had once been a small tree of this variety at Kew Gardens. In China, I inquired everywhere we went, and it became quite a joke to us. But in Shanghai, we found something resembling this yellow camellia.

Next, we planned to visit Tokio; but it was impossible to obtain a visa to Japan; everything had to go through the military. I investigated going there as a business man; all kinds of complications arose. However, before leaving the United States, I had been told in Washington, D.C. that the best way is to buy a 7-day tour from the Japanese Tourist Bureau and go Pan American Airways. If you decide to go there for no reason except you like to travel, you are sent on within an hour.

The other ten people of the tour-party did not show up, so we had the exclusive service of the guide and the automobile, and it was possible to gather considerable camellia information that we would not have had otherwise.

We went by automobile through Yokohama and along Tokio Bay; Mt. Fujiyama was visible above the clouds. We then turned into the mountains and lunched at a hotel on the shore of a mountain lake. Fujiyama was mirrored in the water during breaks in the clouds, giving the impression of a Japanese print.

Coming out of the mountains at the mouth of Tokyo Bay, we came to a resort town, Atami, famous for its hot springs. Built into the mountainside, Atami reminded us of villages along the Italian Riviera.

On Oshima, an island in Tokyo Bay, camellias grow wild. The seed is gathered and taken to a big press in Atami, where camellia oil is pressed out. This oil is used by every woman in Japan; they all have slick black hair, treated wtih camellia oil. The average Japanese woman must have two cosmetics: face powder and camellia oil. The growing and collecting of camellia seed for oil purposes has become quite an industry in Japan.

In China, too, there is a similar industry. The Chinese use camellia oil as shortening for cooking purposes as well as a hair pomade.

At the hotel where we spent the night, we saw the first garden camellias: five or six varieties, the most outstanding being Herme. I made note of the proprietor's name and have since sent him a Gigantea, which is now growing in the hotel garden.

Shortly after midnight, we took the train to Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan, about 300 miles southwest of Tokyo. The railroad was narrow-gauge because it went through a mountainous region, but the sleeping car was quite comfortable.

In Kyoto, our guide took us to the old Royal Palace where camellias were growing in protected spots. We were especially interested in a dwarf

variety, about three feet high, said to be about two hundred years old. With permission of the gardener in charge, I took a cutting, which I brought back to California, but it has not developed.

Next, our guide took us to visit Camellia Temple, an old Buddhist temple, where we gazed in awe at the oldest camellia we have ever seen. The tree is definitely 400-and-some-odd-years old. The story is that sometime in the 1500's, a monk traveling from Korea, brought this plant as a good-will offering, as was the custom then. The tree is not very tall, perhaps 25 feet. It is a multiple graft; five varieties on one root stock, and they still persist. We did not see the tree in blossom; but many Americans have, and have written home about it.

At Mrs. Peer's suggestion, we visited Kyoto Botanical Gardens, which were virtually destroyed during World War II in order to grow foodstuffs. There we met the Chief Botanist, Keitaro Asai, who was very friendly and spoke some English. He was apologetic about not having camellia flowers to show us; but he did find several Japanese books containing illustrations of camellias. One book, over 300 years old, contained water-colors of various camellia varieties. Some showed yellow blooms, others orange-colored. Mr. Asai assured us that such varieties formerly existed in Japan but had been lost years ago.

Mr. Asai invited us to have tea and cake; then excused himself for a few minutes and returned with a potted camellia plant for Mrs. Peer. He explained that this was a very rare **Camellia japonica;** that so far as he knew there were but two such plants in existence. The Japanese name means Cherry Camellia. The blooms are small and varicolored, resembling a cherry blossom, but somewhat larger. The foliage has serrations perpendicular to the edge, and some leaves have rounded ends. Fortunately, this plant survived the bare-rooting and fumigation and is now developing a new set of leaves.

From Kyoto we drove to the nearby village of Nara, where many old camellia trees grow in the temple grounds. We stopped to have luncheon at a Japanese hotel. The proprietor showed us a camellia tree about 15 feet in height and described the enormous white blooms, reminding us of the variety known as Lotus in California, but the foliage was not the same. I was permitted to take several cuttings; one of these was later grafted successfully.

From Army officers we learned that gardens in and around Nagasaki contained many varieties of camellias. But Nagasaki had been hit by an atomic bomb during the war and was in a restricted area.

Next to the last day, our guide took us on an automobile trip to Nikko, about a hundred miles north of Tokyo. We had been told that the best-informed camellia specialist in Japan was a Mr. J. Minagawa, whose nursery was located in the Saitama district north of Tokyo, the locality from which the Yokohama Nursery Company obtains its supply of camellias. By making a detour of some twenty miles, it would be possible to visit the Minagawa nursery enroute to Nikko. This short detour took five hours over very rough roads that in places were almost impassable. At last we came to a bridge which appeared to be unsafe for an automobile. But before turning back our guide made inquiries and learned that Mr. Minagawa lived just on the other side of the stream.

Mr. Minagawa was pleased, well aware of the difficulty of travel, and insisted upon our having tea and sweet cakes. Our host told us that the nursery was founded by his father about 1870; that it had supplied practically all the camellias exported by the Yokohama Nursery Company. No doubt, this is the place where many

American varieties originated. We were shown a catalog printed in Japanese some fifteen years before, containing a series of water-colors illustrating his thirty principal varieties. Among these we found twelve varieties entirely new to us. Mr. Minagawa also had three varieties, developed from seedlings, which he considered to be of great importance. In the catalog there were also three Wabisuke reticulatas—red, white and lavender - pink, medium - sized bell-shaped singles.

We made arrangements with Mr. Minagawa to return the following day to pick up two each of some twenty different varieties. On our way back from visiting the temple at Nikko, we stopped in a village and purchased a wicker basket, somewhat like a laundry hamper, 40 inches high and 20 inches in diameter. Some thirty-five camellia plants were packed in the hamper. We took color photographs of the Minegawa family, as well as his collection of camellia pictures, and started back to Tokyo.

When we had first arrived in Tokyo we had tried to contact a Mr. K. Wada, who is internationally known for his camellia hybridizing. Just before leaving for Nikko, we learned his address—the Hakoneya Nursery, Numazu—and sent him a telegram. He met us when we returned to our hotel. Numazu is located along the coast south of Tokyo, directly opposite the island of Oshima. During an air attack, the nursery was destroyed by bombs. At the time, Mr. Wada was in the Japanese army, stationed at Formosa. When he returned home after the war, he found nothing but burned-over land. However, his camellias, though burned to the ground, had started growing new shoots. Fortunately, he had saved all of his rare varieties.

Mr. Wada brought with him blooms from a new hybrid, a cross between **Camellia japonica** and **C. haematodes.** The latter is a rare Chinese species with tubular red flowers. I photographed the hybrid blooms which resembled Daitarin except that the central cluster of petaloids is red, contrasting with the lighter shade of the outer petals. At Mr. Wada's request, I have filed an application for a plant-patent covering this unusual hybrid.

Later, Mr. Wada shipped me by air freight fourteen specimens of various rare varieties, including the new hybrid; but the fumigating process used by our Plant Quarantine killed some of the younger plants.

Before leaving by Pan - American plane for Honolulu, Mrs. Peer and Mr. Wada worked for several hours washing soil from the roots and removing leaves with scale from the plants brought from the Minagawa Nursery as well as the Cherry Camellia given to us in Kyoto, preparing them for shipment along with our luggage, which later resulted in a considerable extra charge.

Our plane left Tokyo shortly after 1 a.m. on January 10 and we arrived in Honolulu at 6 a.m. on January 10, having crossed the international date line which made it possible for us to live the same day twice.

In Honloulu, the lot of camellias were taken over by the Plant Quarantine for inspection. They found five different kinds of scale and two unknown diseases of the roots. Slides were prepared from the diseased tissue and flown to Washington, D.C., for identification. A telegraphic reply stated that the diseases were dangerous. Thus, the two plants, including the Chinese variety we had brought from Shanghai, were destroyed. The other plants were fumigated and sent by air express to Los Angeles. If a camellia plant is bare-rooted and left for six hours, damage is done. These plants had been enroute four days and laid in Honolulu five days, while the quarantine authorities disposed of two plants. About a dozen of the remaining plants did not survive.

After returning to Hollywood a chap from the State Quarantine called and asked that the shipment be isolated in a field at least a half-mile from any other camellia. Finally, I thought of a way of protecting my other camellias by putting a wire cage over the new lot. That satisfied the Plant Quarantine representative; but the wire cage absorbed so much heat and sunlight that most of the plants died. I think I saved two out of the lot.

In Honolulu we had found another letter from Prof. Tsai, describing the twenty reticulatas, stating color, size, flower-form. I sent him a check for $500, requesting that he ship them by air express directly to Hollywood. They were diverted to San Francisco and went through Plant Quarantine, reaching me just as I was leaving for a trip to Mexico. I turned them over to a Hollywood nursery to be cared for; when I returned from Mexico, they were in bad condition.

I began talking about my camellia experiences. After such a talk before the Southern California Camellia Society in Pasadena, Mr. Manchester Boddy came to see me. He was the owner of Rancho del Descanso in La Canada, California. They had been corresponding with Prof. Tsai and had imported some reticulatas the year before, which had been kept a deep secret. Their purpose, however, was solely to make these reticulatas available to the public. We struck a bargain. I would turn over to them the reticulatas I had left and later they would give me one complete set of whatever was saved. That is the situation today. None have been distributed yet.

Dr. Walter E. Lammerts of Descanso Distributors, Inc. reported on their first shipment of reticulatas in the 1950 Year Book of the American Camellia Society (see "Quest for Reticulatas" in Northern California Camellia Society Bulletin, Vol. 4, No. 1, October, 1950). They had imported some eighteen reticulatas in pots with earth around them, at a cost of some eight-hundred - odd - dollars for air freight. Mr. Boddy was anxious to put the project over. A year or so later, they decided to let me come in on it. I got in touch with Ralph Dean in Hong Kong. He contacted the botanist at Sun Yat Sen; asked that he go to Kungming to get all these varieties of reticulata and bring them back to Hong Kong. He returned with some 75 to 80 plants on the last plane that brought freight. Mr. Dean kept the plants in Hong Kong, distributed scions and later on plants.

A complete set was sent to Mr. Hazelwood in Australia; he paid for them, but I engineered it. One set went to the Royal Horticultural Society in London. Another set was provided Huntington Gardens, in San Marino, California. There were other specimens left which happened to be the varieties which had failed Dr. Lammerts; these were turned over to Manchester Boddy.

There has been considerable talk about these reticulatas. Many of them have bloomed at Rancho del Descanso. They are just what they are represented to be. Most blossoms are quite large, 6 to 8 inches in diameter, and the color has a luminous quality. Fifteen of the varieties will be ready for market about January 1952 and are being offered by Descanso Distributors, Inc., La Canada, California. Three additional varieties will be ready a year after that. I have no financial interest in the project whatsoever: Manchester Boddy spent thousands of dollars; I spent $600 or $700. Descanso Distributors, La Canada, California, are offering all fifteen varieties for $750. That is the wholesale price. I don't get any commission.

Recently, I sold a set of these reticulatas in a peculiar fashion. After the freeze in the Deep South, three gentlemen from South Carolina, who were hungry for the sight of camellia flowers, took a private plane to California to see camellias in bloom. I

developed the idea that they could buy a $750 set of reticulatas between them and distribute scions. Likewise, a group of you camellia lovers could form a club, buy a set and distribute scions.

Reticulatas cannot be grown successfully on their own roots. they must be grafted. When properly grafted, they develop as easily as the well-known reticulata Captain Rawes, which many of you have in your collections.

One important thing to note about these reticulata varieties is that they don't all bloom at the same time. Some come into flower in December and some go into March.

Reticulata is really the important new blood in camellia hybridizing in the United States. Dr. Lammerts has successfully crossed **c. reticulata** with **c. japonica.** Out of that will surely come some new varieties.

The most important thing that came out of this trip around the world was the reticulatas. I took a gambler's chance, giving a stranger $500; maybe I'd get something and maybe I wouldn't.

Last spring we returned to England to be there while camellias were in blossom. We attended the Camellia and Magnolia Conference in London, and visited the old estates in Cornwall on the southwestern tip of England, where many plants of saluenensis are grown outdoors.

J. C. Williams is a saluenensis hybrid, a cross between **C. saluenensis** and **C. japonica.** It is hardy, floriferous and easy to hybridize. The flowers have about eight petals, four inches in diameter, deep pink in bud, opening to a crown of yellow anthers. This hybrid is named for the late Mr. J. C. Williams, who owned Caerhays Castle. Some years ago Mr. Williams replaced the plantings with camellias and magnolias. Saluenensis and wild reticulata have grown into trees fifteen and twenty feet high.

A recent letter from Mr. George H. Johnstone, who lives at Trewithin in Cornwall, states that the whole place has been taken over by saluenensis. If so, these will accidentally hybridize and new varieties will be created.

C. saluenensis has been successfully crossed with **C. japonica** varieties Donckelari and Adolphe Audusson. We are planning to see these when they are in blossom a couple of years from now.

While in Great Britain, I talked to Lord Aberconway, for many years head of the Royal Horticultural Society. He told me that everything had been done to get enough camellia fanciers together to form a camellia society; but it was impossible because they live so far apart.

American camellia lovers owe a debt of gratitude to the British for there wouldn't be any old camellia trees in the United States except they were brought to Great Britain first and grown in greenhouses, then imported here.

In conclusion, I should like to leave you with the thought that if you are interested in camellias, don't travel around the world to see them. The most exquisite varieties are grown right here. We have created a demand for these flower aristocrats. The finest foreign varieties have been imported and outstanding new varieties are being created in increasing numbers. In time, the world may look to the United States of America as the actual home of camellias—the great camellia country.

COVER FLOWER

Camellia reticulata GREAT BUTTERFLY WINGS. Crimson to rose madder. Remarkably large flowers. Due to the folding and crinkling and wavy arrangement of its large, thick petals, the form resembles a huge exotic butterfly.