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CAMELLIA RUSTICANA (SNOW CAMELLIA)

(See page 8)

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WATERING CAMELIAS

J. Carroll Reiners, Sacramento, California

HOW OFTEN? and WHEN? seem to be the most common questions relative to camellia watering. The simple answer for the frequency of watering would *seem* to be before the soil surface gets dry, and when it is most convenient, whether it be morning, noon, or night. Here there are all sorts of built-in traps, which I would like to explain at length. For instance, I have seen soil surfaces bone dry, in hardpan soils, and 18 inches down the soil would be water-logged. I have seen camellias growing where fertilizer salts have accumulated to a toxic degree and the plant would die were it not sufficiently wet to keep the salts diluted enough for plant tolerance. During certain seasons of the year, it is very important to know when watering should be done relative to the time of day. So, let us start all over, and look at this watering problem more objectively.

We water camellias before the plant gets into trouble or stress so serious it cannot keep its tissues supplied with sufficient water to prevent the growing tips, leaves, and/or flowers from wilting. This condition should never be allowed to occur. The factors which will influence the rate of water loss are the moisture-holding capacity of the soil, air temperature, air humidity, wind velocity, sun exposure, reflected heat, mulching media, and root competition of other plants. In container plants we have one other factor; that is the relationship of the size of the container to the quantity of root system and the total area of leaf surface of the plant. Root-bound container plants will dry out very quickly. The grower of camellias will have to adapt his watering schedule to the above conditions, and it is within his power to take corrective measures on many of the items and so relieve the problem of frequent irrigation.

Briefly, sandy soils can be improved to better hold water by adding organic material to the soil, which would include compost, lawn clippings, peat, ground bark, sawdust, leaf mold, etc. These same materials help to loosen up heavy soil and better drainage follows. Air temperatures

can be controlled by the degree of shade supplied. Lath is the least desirable of shade materials because it provides intermittent hot sun and shade; camellia leaves will burn under this condition. Low lath shelter is a poor choice, high lath not quite so bad. Saran cloth seems to be the newest and finest of the shade materials. High tree shade is excellent.

Air humidity can be controlled by frequency of spray irrigation and moisture released from other vegetative material adjacent to the camellias. Wind, sun, and reflected heat must be controlled in severe climates. Mulching media, whether living or dead organic, will furnish a desirable blanket to better regulate the soil temperature and moisture conditions.

Camellias in an ideal well-drained soil are easiest to manage effectively. Danger of fertilizer burn is minimized because the salts are easily translocated throughout the soil area without being concentrated in the top root areas, as happens in tight, poorly drained soils. Over-leaching from too lengthy watering is a very real danger in very porous soils. Nitrogen leaches very readily, potash leaches only moderately fast; phosphate usually fixes to the soil just where it is placed. A recent experiment on lawns showed that all of the phosphorus in the fertilizer application remained in the top one inch of lawn soil. The other common nutrients leached to various deeper levels.

The water-holding capacity of heavy soil is much higher than in silt or sand and it may not need frequent irrigation. Over-fertilization is a danger in this condition, as is the accumulation of hard materials carried to the soil by "hard water." If the grower resides in an area of heavy soil, he would profit by making an occasional test hole with an auger to determine the actual water condition in the soil. It would be advisable to test to depths of 12 inches, 18 inches and 24 inches below the surface. Frequency and duration of watering should be regulated by these simple experiments which could save grief later on when defoliation, die-back, and eventual death of the camellias

seem unexplainable. In severely heavy soil conditions, you can plant your camellias on top of the ground and mound earth up around the plant; then mulch heavily or plant ground covers over the soil to prevent eroding the earth away from the mound.

Another factor which can "sap" the earth of water are roots from nearby trees. To all appearances the ground may be wet on top, but below your layer of mulched soil the greedy tree roots will have left the camellia root zone bone dry. Under these conditions, water very thoroughly and deeply. Irrigation may be continued for several hours at a time. In extreme problems, an irrigation well, several feet deep, may be bored and filled with gravel so that water goes deeply into the tree root-zone. This sort of well-watering often reduces the tree root competition in the camellia's shallow root zone—making all plants happy. Camellias are very tolerant of root competition, but they must have their share of moisture, particularly on days of stress when temperatures are high and humidity low.

Plants in containers eventually become root-bound. At the very least, it is a daily chore to water such plants sufficiently. Repotting to a larger size container with fresh soil helps to restore the capacity for water storage. Then there comes the time when the grower has repotted his plants into a maximum size container. He can save the situation for quite a long time by removing cores of earth and root; an electric drill with a very long shank bit does the job rather quickly. You then fill the holes with peat manure or other media which have good water holding capacity. In six months these new soil cores will be filled with fresh, white, vigorous camellia roots. One can remove up to six cores from a two-gallon container without wilting the plant. If necessary, you may core the container two times a year, picking new spots each time. The bit for coring should be at least one inch in diameter and the drill sharp enough to cut cleanly.

While we are discussing container-grown camellias, it might be wise to consider a not-so-common trouble, but interesting nevertheless. Playful snails,

pill bugs, etc., create irrigation problems by "excavating" large cavities in the containers at the point of the drainage holes. Proper control can be bought cheaply by being careful at the time of planting or repotting. Put gravel and clay pot fragments around the drain holes. Drainage must be maintained but the cavities described cause "mysterious" rapid drying.

For general watering, there is no definite figure how much water, in inches, should be applied. The variation of conditions is infinite, but we can make a quasi-comparison with lawn seed, which we figure on the following schedule of application in inches per week at these geographical locations: Pacific coastal areas, one inch; inland areas, 1½ inches; Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys, about 2 inches; and desert areas, 2½ inches. It will take about 15 minutes to apply 2 inches of water over a 100 square foot area from a hose running a full stream. If you use a sprinkler system, (and it is recommended) you can check with your dealer for the precipitation rate for your type of sprinkler. The above figures are given for the peak demand months of the year. Conceivably, camellias would need less water than lawns because the exposure to sun usually is quite different.

The time of day for watering is always important. During the blooming period we wish to minimize blossom rot by never wetting the flowers on the plants and water during the early morning, so that by evening the ground conditions will have had a chance to dry a little to lower the humidity slightly and discourage to some extent the incidence of blossom rot.

During the vegetative growth periods (the non-blooming season), overhead irrigation is strongly urged. Water the plants, earth, and allied camellia plantings as they would be in the natural state, *from above*. Clean camellias are apt, like children, to be the most healthy. There is a multitude of adverse hosts on the plants, which number can be reduced by regular foliage washing. Camellias suffer most when the weather is windy, hot and dry, and it is in the middle of these days, when the climate is most severe, that foliage and

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A DISCUSSION OF SEED PARENTS

David L. Feathers, Lafayette, California

As is quite generally known, there are a number of organized efforts being made today by camellia breeders, in this country and elsewhere, directed toward the attainment of at least three prime objectives: yellow color, fragrance and real cold hardiness. The up-to-the-minute thinking seems to be that there is a chance the latter objective may best be reached through development of a deciduous camellia, probably by crossing with a deciduous plant of another genus, such as *Gordonia altamaha*. There is little doubt that a deciduous camellia, if it can be obtained, would be far more cold hardy than anything we have today.

In this connection, there seems to be some tendency among certain strains of the saluenensis hybrids ('Monticello,' for example) to drop their leaves annually to a point of almost complete re-foliation. This hybrid has been reported to be quite cold resistant and it is entirely possible there may be some trait of deciduousness inherent in the saluenensis which certain combinations tend to emphasize. So far, at least, it seems that the species *saluenensis* has shown more promise than any other with respect to the ability to withstand cold. This appears to have been more thoroughly established in Great Britain than in this country.

The success which Mr. Howard Asper and others have enjoyed in the matter of making supposedly impossible interspecific (and even intergeneric) crosses provides sufficient inducement and encouragement to all would-be hybridizers to try anything within the *Theaceae* family which he thinks might yield desirable results. In so doing, it would be wise, however, to take every precaution so as to be certain that the attempt has been successful and is not merely the result of a subsequent and accidental pollination.

While on this general subject, it might be worth mentioning that both the Northern California Camellia Society and the Camellia Society of Sacramento have had for some time advanced study groups and that the former is attempting, through a subcommittee headed by the writer, to de-

velop some sort of guide lines for striving camellia breeders. In the long run we shall endeavor to compile a list of those varieties, species and hybrids known to be the most promising parents and to this end are soliciting all the dependable information we can get, and will make public such data for the use of all interested persons. To the best of our knowledge, this will constitute the first organized attempt to compile information that might be used as a basis of "pedigree" breeding of camellias, in lieu of the more or less haphazard experimenting now being done in the majority of cases.

In this effort, it is recognized that one cannot say categorically what the outcome will be of any particular cross. It is always possible that the most unpromising single may produce a top notch offspring when the right combination is found, as witness the outstanding variety 'Guilio Nuccio' from 'Kingyo Tsubaki' (Fish-tail). However, common sense dictates the use of the most promising parents, particularly the employment of those parents evidencing to the greatest degree the characteristics which are desired in the offspring. For example, we know that 'Lady Vansittart' is a vigorous and compact grower and is quite cold resistant; that 'Elizabeth Boardman' has produced some large seedlings (among them 'Mrs. D. W. Davis') and tends to yield seedlings with large foliage, that *C. cuspidata* breeds fairly true (small white flowers, small leaves), etc. If we have some historical background on prospective parents and use it intelligently in a controlled breeding program, it stands to reason that we are less likely to have so many camellia seedling culls.

While it certainly must be admitted that our main problem today is that we have to deal with plants that are not pure bred but rather largely the result of the most widespread promiscuity, nevertheless we have many camellias possessing exceptionally fine qualities and some that are almost faultless. In view of the many disappointments of the past with widely acclaimed and publicized newcomers,

many of which have had the most fleeting popularity, would it not be a step in the right direction for us to begin eliminating the known possessors of serious faults from our breeding programs, in an effort to upgrade our new productions?

There are two different ways of evaluating a potential seed parent: (1) its ability to set seed freely, and (2) the quality of the seedlings it produces. The first is a comparatively simple matter to determine but, where Nature is most bountiful, it is least selective and use of the quantity producer is best restricted to the most difficult crosses. Furthermore, it would be not only futile but unwise to attempt to classify seed parents according to their value as a source of seed or pollen when hybridizing, or when the careful bringing together of two parents having complementary desirable characters is the object. According to the best information the writer has been able to gather from the practical experience of qualified persons, it is not too important that both camellia seed parents have a glamorous flower. Rather it is what results from *the blending* of the characters of the two parents that is vital. One never knows what is in the background of a particular camellia! Hence we use extensively such material as the insignificant-flowered *C. saluenensis* in hybridization, looking toward its other virtues such as ready compatibility with other species, vigor, earliness and sun tolerance.

It would be quite worthwhile for some organization or group to undertake research into the background of existing camellias, in furtherance of the "pedigree" principle in camellia breeding, for if we know something of the cultivar's predecessors there is at least some chance that we can operate more intelligently in our endeavors to create certain types. It would be most helpful if we even knew what the parents' parents were like! It would seem this task would offer an interesting prospect for some research group. Along these lines, the conscientious breeder of camellias would do well to work largely

with those camellias whose antecedents are best known.

It has often been said that the limit of the japonica's potentialities has now been reached, consequently we must look to the hybrids and other species. This may be largely true insofar as innovation is concerned but the field is still wide open in that there is so much room for improvement of existing japonicas, particularly as to tolerance of weather extremes.

One final suggestion: In our efforts at improvement and innovation, let us always keep before us the important point that what we should strive for is not merely upgrading and changing the flower alone but rather *the camellia as a whole*; consequently our selection of parents should also be motivated by other desirable objectives such as exceptional vigor, good plant form, the seasonal bloom, resistance to weather extremes, etc. When these essentials are kept in mind, the field of possible good parents is narrowed materially and the chance of our adding to the already too lengthy list of what might well be called "glamorous flops" is lessened materially, if we draw upon the proper seed parents.

With the foregoing qualifications and an awareness of the inadequacies of our experience, we present below what is of necessity a very incomplete list and certainly an inconclusive evaluation of certain japonicas classified according to their desirability as seed parents, accompanied by a brief commentary as to each of the selections deemed Best. The writer wishes to acknowledge the helpful assistance rendered by Mr. K. Sawada, Mrs. M. J. Witman, Mr. Harold Paige and others in this regard. A star is given preceding the name for each instance in which there has been a concurring opinion as to the desirability of the cultivar as a seed parent. Where a single star is shown preceded by an "F," this designates those camellias regarded as the most promising seed parents by the writer. The order of listing is solely alphabetical.

BEST

- Countess of Orkney
 F*Dr. Tinsley
 Edith Linton
 ***Elizabeth Boardman
 F*Finlandia (flower)
 F*Frank Gibson
 *Imura
 **Kingyo Tsubaki
 (Fishtail)
 F*Lady Vansittart (plant)
 F*Lindsay Neill
 *Magnolia Queen
 F*Mrs. Bertha A. Harms
 Nina Avery
 Rev. John G. Drayton
 Thelma Dale
 Victory
 Mr. Sawada adds:
 Dr. W. G. Lee
 White Hibiscus
 Leucantha
 Mrs. F. L. Gibson

To comment briefly on those regarded Best:

Countess of Orkney has yielded some rather good doubles, on slow growing plants with good foliage. *Dr. Tinsley* seems to produce consistently outstanding blooms, most of which are tinged pink or marginated, with a white background; foliage is exceptional and growth habit generally compact, in fact, one plant is the most compact ever seen. *Edith Linton*—experience quite limited but one outstanding formal double on a strong plant. *Elizabeth Boardman*—there appears to be some genetic abnormality in this cultivar; unusual vigor, large leaves and its record of offspring to date might well justify a chromosome determination. *Finlandia* has produced some lovely blush-colored seedlings, including formals, but plants tend to be a bit leggy. *Frank Gibson* is a very unusual camellia and another worth cytological study; experience largely based upon hand-pollinated seedlings but these have been quite above average. *Imura* has established itself as the parent of several outstanding camellias, some quite large. *Kingyo Tsubaki* (Fishtail) may also (because of its divided leaf terminal) have some genetic quirk and, besides *Guilio Nuccio*, has yielded some very fine plants. *Lindsay Neill* has been a most pleasant

GOOD

- **Berenice Boddy
 Chiyoda Nishiki
 Elegans
 Emperor of Russia
 Flame
 Flamingo
 Goshoguruma
 Grandiflora Rosea
 H. A. Downing
 Magnoliaeflora
 Pink Star
 Sgt. Barrios
 Shin Shioko
 Tinsie (flower)
 Triphosa
 *Ville de Nantes
 Waterloo
 White Empress
 Wm. Downing
 Mrs. Witman adds:
 Betty Sheffield family

FAIR TO POOR

- Amabilis
 Anita
 Cheerio
 Duchess of Sutherland
 Donckelarii
 Eleanor of Fair Oaks
 Finlandia (plant)
 Geo. W. Towle
 John Illges
 Kimberley
 Lady Devere
 *Lady Vansittart (flower)
 Leona Bolen
 Letitia Schrader
 Mme. de Maintenon
 Princess Murat
 Rosary
 Sarasa
 Simplicity
 T. K. Variegated
 Tinsie (plant)

surprise; not only have its seedlings been early bloomers, the flowers have been large, compound and of a fine shade of red; foliage good and growth rather compact. *Magnolia Queen* (Priscilla Brooks) has given seedlings with rather large blooms of good form and substance, on a strong plant. *Mrs. Bertha A. Harms*, a seedling of *Lotus x Lady Clare*, has a background that is sufficient in itself to recommend it, coming from two very large-flowered parents; in addition, its pale blush blooms are large and very ethereal and its foliage exceptional, although the growth habit leaves something to be desired. *Nina Avery* seems to produce offspring with much the same picotee-type ("sweet pea") flowers as the parent, rather tall and slender growing; would seem to have considerable potential. *Rev. John G. Drayton*, while not a free seeder has produced some symmetrical plants with medium large blooms of a very attractive shade of pink. *Thelma Dale* appears to be a most promising parent; the plants are extremely vigorous and the few flowered have large attractive blooms; foliage particularly outstanding. *Victory* has all the characteristics of a good camellia and the seedlings seem an improvement on the parent; a cross with *Lindsay Neill* might yield something quite outstanding.

CAMELLIA RUSTICANA — THE "SNOW-CAMELLIA" OF JAPAN

E. G. Waterhouse, Gordon, N.S.W., Australia

At altitudes ranging from 3,500 down to 400 feet above sea level whole colonies of snow-camellias are to be found growing on sloping land under deciduous beech trees in the mountain regions to the north of the main island of Honshu and facing the Sea of Japan. Heavy snow drifts come in from the north in December, covering the plants to a depth of up to 8 feet and pressing the bushes to the soil. They remain covered from December till the end of March when the snow melts at the touch of Spring and the camellias burst into flower. Here, then, is a type of camellia which can exist for long months under heavy snow without perishing, which the ordinary *Camellia japonica*, which we know so well, would certainly do. Some botanists claim it is a separate species, the more cautious are content to use the term sub-species.

As you would expect from the long continued weight of snow, the bushes are spreading rather than erect. They extend laterally and some of the lower branches tend to layer themselves in contact with the ground and to send up shoots at intervals so that it is difficult to determine which is the main stem, and most other vegetation beneath the trees is crowded out to such an extent that the picture you see is that of a vast extent of bush consisting of camellias. I found the branches extremely pliable. You could bend them without breaking them, and it was most difficult to pick a few blooms for Paul Jones to photograph. It was almost as if the stalks were made of wire!

All the blooms of these wild camellias that we saw were single, with five narrow, oblong petals. There were occasional slight variations in size. Their colour ranged from red through rose to pink. The outspread blooms reminded us very much of sasanquas. The filaments of the stamens were cadmium yellow and the anthers quite small. The leaves were like japonica leaves but were coarsely serrated and the midrib and veins were translucent. The leaf-stalks (petioles) were quite short and under the magnifying glass were seen to be quite hairy. This hairiness is one of the

characteristics which differentiate the snow-camellia from *Camellia japonica*. Possibly the hairiness on the petioles has developed as a protection against the snow. This wild form of snow camellia then is found growing at high altitudes.

At low levels near the Japan Sea pure *Camellia japonica* flourishes. In between there are areas in which the two meet and mingle. Here cross fertilization takes place and intermediate types are produced. Unfortunately wet weather prevented us from visiting these intermediate areas but we did see various garden forms derived from these crosses. In the lonely village of Higashi Gejo we saw two or three in every farmer's garden. They were in full bloom — a wonderful sight! They seemed far more floriferous than ordinary japonicas. Perhaps this is due to hybrid vigour. Again in remote and secluded villagers' gardens a few miles distant from Kamo we saw a further range of these unnamed garden forms. The flowers and flower-forms closely resembled those of japonica but the petioles had the hairs characteristic of rusticana. All of these plants were a certain age, some quite old.

The question arises what is their origin? One view is that the native variants were collected by the villagers from the forest and transplanted in their farms. The villagers themselves could supply no precise information. Our visit aroused their curiosity, if not their interest. As a Japanese friend said rather quaintly: "The people of this district seem very affectionate to the visitors of camellia."

Professor Hagiya, of Niigata University, who has just published a study of the snow-camellia, claims to have collected 600 unnamed varieties. The importance of the snow-camellia is that its garden forms may provide a range of camellias that could be grown in cold areas where the ordinary *Camellia japonica* would not survive.

Studies on Snow-Camellia (*Camellia rusticana*) I. Jour. Jap. Soc. Hort. Sci., Vol. 30. No. 3, pp. 270-290. 1961.

(reprinted from Australian Camellia Research Society's *Camellia News*, No. 7, Sept., 1962.)

A CHAT WITH HOWARD ASPER ON HYBRIDS

We would be guilty of deception were we not to explain that this isn't actually a verbatim reporting of a conversation held with our good and always interesting friend from Escondido but rather the transposition into a more readable form of the contents from an exchange of letters with him quite recently. Let us put the whole matter into the form of interrogation by an "Inquiring Reporter."

Inquiring Reporter: The first point upon which I should like to have an expression of your opinion is this: Do you feel that it makes any particular difference in the result, when crossing *C. japonica* and *C. reticulata*, which species is used as the seed parent? We have always understood that it did not but our own experience has been that, in the japonica (seed parent) x reticulata (pollen parent) hybrid the foliage (and to a lesser extent, the plants) is very predominantly japonica-like. You have largely made the cross the other way, I understand, (reticulata as the seed parent) but I believe have nevertheless come to the same conclusion, although I know that others contend it is best to cross into (pollinate) the camellia with the higher chromosome number (in this case, reticulata).

Howard Asper: I would say that there is no difference which way you go. One thing is quite noticeable—no matter which is used as seed and pollen parent the foliage of the offspring will be like the japonica parent. This brings up two questions: (1) the question whether we should not regard japonica as dominant over reticulata in those genetic characters having to do with foliage determination and (2) the question whether many of our present so-called japonica varieties with out-sized blooms and foliage are not, in fact, naturally occurring hybrids from away back. What do you think?

I. R.: I concur absolutely and have felt for some time that this is something well worth immediate cytological study. I am certain that many of us have in our gardens today natural hybrids involving several different combinations of species, most of which are not recognized as such. In fact, in a climate favorable for seed set it would seem to me that the only other

requisite would be the matter of physical proximity of one species to the other, whether in nature or the garden. Inasmuch as this necessary prerequisite has long been present in many parts of the camellia world, there would seem no good reason to doubt such occurrence. This brings to mind *C. granthamiana* and the rather remarkable situation surrounding this new and somewhat mysterious species—the fact there appears to be but the one plant in the wilds and evidently no seedlings nor hybrids of it occurring naturally, although it sets seed quite readily and has viable pollen. But this is largely a matter of conjecture and we could go on and on about this without result. Of more immediate concern, do you not feel that our chances for something outstanding are much better in the F-2 and succeeding generations than in the first generation of hybrids?

H. A.: I certainly do. It would be remarkable for us to attain the ultimate in the first generation, especially considering how wide so many of these hybrid crosses are from a genetic standpoint.

I. R.: You need not comment on this, but it seems to me that you have had remarkable success with your *C. japonica* 'Coronation' x *C. reticulata* 'Lion Head' cross in the first generation. No doubt you are planning commercial propagation of this fine hybrid and what can you tell us in this regard?

H. A.: It will probably bear my name but the plant will not be patented. We are building up a stock as fast as we can and at the moment it looks as if we will be in position to offer it for sale in the Fall of 1964.

I. R.: How about that other fine seedling from down your way, developed by Dr. Urabec? When will it be released?

H. A.: This has now been officially named 'Tiffany' and the propagators will offer it to the trade this September.

I. R.: You have made a number of very unusual and difficult crosses these last few years. Would you care to talk about the results obtained, both good and disappointing?

H. A.: Why certainly. I hardly know

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THE SOUTHERN SCENE

Mrs. M. J. (Lilette) Witman, Macon, Georgia

Looking over the Southern Camellia shows reports for the season 1962-63 one cannot refrain from wondering whether smaller blooms are returning in favor. It is remarkable to note how many medium-size flowers have been show winners — A **SAWADA'S DREAM** won the top honor (under glass) in Birmingham, Ala., and in Augusta, Ga., **VILLE DE NANTES**, proudly holding more than its own as usual each year, captured the coveted prize (under glass) in Greenville, S.C., Fort Worth, Texas, and in Elizabeth City, N.C., winning also the open class top award in Atlanta, Ga., Charlotte, N.C., Macon, Ga., and Beaumont, Texas. The "**VILLE**" real triumph was however, in Greensboro, N.C., where it was declared best in both indoors and outdoors classes. Another conspicuous winner in the medium-size range camellias was the much admired **BETTY SHEFFIELD SUPREME**. It reigned supreme in the under glass section at Shreveport, La., Jackson, Miss., Memphis, Tenn., Whiteville, N.C., and in the open class at Jacksonville, Fla.

It was indeed gratifying to see the names of three "old-timers" coming back to the fore this season, all grown in the open — a **DONKELARII** in Columbia, S.C., a **FLAME** in Memphis, Tenn. and a **CHARLOTTE BRADFORD** in Whiteville, N.C. Two old favorites also found themselves topping the grown-under-glass class — **ADOLPHE AUDUSSON SPECIAL** in Marshall, Texas, and **ROSEA SUPERBA** in Richmond, Va. In New Orleans a grown in the open **KATHERINE MARYOTT** was the winner. Baltimore, Maryland, went all out for the small dainty charmers: It gave the top honor to a **DR. TINSLEY** in the open class and to **KITTY**, a lovely miniature, under glass. The pride of the Washington, D.C., show was a **BEAU HARP** grown under glass while the "open" class top selection in Jacksonville was a **MRS. HOOPER CONNELL**. A four-inch-wide **FLORENCE STRATTON** of exquisite beauty beat all the plate-size blossoms grown indoors at the Macon, Ga., show, while a **SUSAN STONE** was "**QUEEN** of the day" at Lib-

erty, Texas, and a **TIARA VAR** at Kilgore, Texas, both from the open.

It has been pointed out to us that the majority of these flowers came from the open. This might be another fact to ponder, considering that they are planted side by side in our yards and groves with the newer, larger varieties. Could it be then that the small and medium-size older camellias are the hardiest? In any event it is gratifying to realize that the judges are no longer hypnotized by imposing dimensions. This resurgence of interest in average size camellia blossoms is a good omen at a time when competition among camellia fanciers has become so intense that they seem to have only one goal in mind, that of growing larger and larger flowers, to the extent of using chemicals (gibberillic acid mainly) to accomplish this stunt, and regardless of what increase in size will inevitably take away from the blooms; that is to say, their delicate beauty and charm. Perhaps this is responsible for the fact that judges are giving more attention to the smaller flowers. The reason this writer is inclined to believe that it is indeed a great factor in their change of attitude is because of a noteworthy incident that happened at the last Birmingham, Ala., show. When it was announced that a four-inch **SAWADA'S DREAM** had been crowned "best in the show," a spontaneous thundering applause came from the judges' ranks — an almost unheard of reaction, especially at a Birmingham show where it used to be said that one never entered gleefully a blossom less than seven inches in diameter. It was a thrilling moment as it gave one the feeling that "shackles had been broken" and that a new trend of appraisal had finally begun.

In the South there is a "budding" controversy about what should be done with the *Yearbook*. Some (few we dare hope) would prefer its elimination in favor of an increased number of *Journals*. This writer strongly feels that if this happened it would be a serious blow dealt to the American Camellia Society. We think the *Yearbook* is the greatest contribution to

camellias made by the ACS. It is, we believe, what distinguishes this organization from the other societies in the United States. Its elimination would put it on the same footing with them all. Furthermore, readers are inclined to discard the *Journals*, which generally contain ephemeral material such as reports on members' and societies' activities, but proudly add the *Yearbooks* to their libraries because they contain articles of lasting value and interest which will convey to the future generations the thinking of our times about camellias, the results of fanciers' efforts and the progress made by our scientists in the camellia field. So let all interested members of the ACS drop a note to Aubrey Harris, the ACS president, or to Joe Pyron, its secretary, at Box No. 465, Tifton, Ga. It is important to nip this regrettable suggestion in the bud.

In the South it is still debated whether artificially stimulated (gibbed) blossoms should compete in a separate class. These flowers have already become a source of great confusion in shows where judges are more perplexed than ever when it comes to awarding blue ribbons fairly. It would seem honest and equitable to us that chemically treated camellias be put in a class of their own—fair to the growers who do not believe in such a practice or do not have the necessary time or skill for it, fair to the public who would not be fooled into believing that such abnormally large blooms can be grown by ordinary means either in the

garden or in the greenhouse, fair also to the nurseryman whose honesty would not be questioned and who would not be accused, as they have been already in some cases, of misrepresenting the shrubs they sell. This problem becomes particularly serious and baffling when it comes to judging the seedling class: A seedling, it seems, should be an unadulterated gift of Nature, and if it has been tempered with in any way it should be declared unfit for competition. Then take the case of hybrids—in one of the shows attended by this writer a small, queer looking blossom, really deformed, having all the earmarks of an unsuccessful "gibbed" flower won the hybrid class. The reason given by the judges was that it was "different." Indeed it was . . . ! Camellias do not grow normally that way! However, I quite understood the hesitation and consternation of the judges, for the other hybrids entered in competition had no distinctive characteristics. So the "misshapen" one won. This is what we will have to face unless this kind of flower is displayed in a separate class.

Will there be more Fall shows in the South as logically there should be? Everyone has been asking this question. Judging by the preliminary list of shows for the coming season that appeared recently in the *Journal* it seems that people have already forgotten our new winter temperatures or that they simply refuse to be realistic.

LOS ANGELES CAMELLIA SOCIETY ANNUAL SUMMER POT LUCK DINNER

The Annual Pot Luck Dinner was held at the home of Judge and Mrs. Bayard Rhone, 94 Fremont Place, Los Angeles, on Sunday, July 21, 1963. At four o'clock guests began to arrive with their favorite Casserole, Vegetable or Salad dish.

At five o'clock a long table was filled with all the goodies and the fun began.

Forty-nine guests sat around tables in the yard—visiting, renewing old and making new acquaintances.

We were honored to have members

from the Los Angeles Council in attendance: Mr. Ed Metcalf, President, Messrs. Wilkins Garner, Al Gunn, Tom Hughes, Alton B. Parker and guest, Doug Thompson, and C. W. Pitkin.

Alton B. Parker described the Camellia Plants, in his unique and entertaining way, from Pat Novak's excellent selection furnished by Nuccio's Nursery.

Guests were given an opportunity to win one to take home. Mr. C. W. Pitkin was the prize winner.

(As reported by Judge Bayard Rhone.)

NEW PLANT FOODS FOR THE LAZY GARDENER

J. Carroll Reiners

Most of us are eager to try something new, particularly if it will reduce the amount of work involved in some project. The fertilizer industry is actively and quite competitively looking for easy-to-apply and longer-lasting elemental fertilizers. Perhaps you may be interested in a few of these that have appeared during the past year or two.

I remember a moving picture of about 30 years ago which was based upon possibilities of the year 2,000 A.D. The hero's meals consisted of tablets which contained a full course dinner from soup through dessert. Today we have just this sort of thing designed for plants. Plant tablets have been made for many years past, but in this new idea the nutrients are released slowly.

Urea-formaldehyde has been formulated in slow-release nitrogen by itself or in combination with the other basic elements in various percentages to fit specific needs. These tablets are patterned to provide a scientifically balanced, low toxicity plant food of long-lasting characteristics in an accurately measured amount. The tablet is placed on the container soil, and it properly feeds the plant for four to six months. These pellets are also available for plants growing in the ground.

One of the slow-release products in this category is called *Nitroform*, and contains 38 percent nitrogen. Other formulations known as *Agriform Blue Chip* contain the following percentages of nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus: 29-29-0, 24-24-8, and 21-8-8. The last named would be desirable for most camellia areas.

The Sacramento Camellia Forum recently completed a two-year test of *Nitroform* on Camellias. Forty plants were used in this experiment, using varied applications from one teaspoon to four teaspoons per application for one gallon container plants. The plant measurements after two years of checking against other fertilizers were favorable. Several plants, as expected, died from the four-teaspoon applications. The average growth with the use of this material was equal to or better than that for untreated checks. The advantage of this fertilizer lies in its slow re-

lease of nitrogen and hence less leaching and less frequent applications of fertilizer.

Coated Fertilizers. This form of delivery of nutrient to the plant is so new that it may not be on the market, but it soon will be because it is the ultimate in ease of application, plus the slow-release factor. Individual granules of inorganic elements with a resinous, polymeric coating with moist soil or water gradually dissolving through the membranes and diffusing into the surrounding soil particles. The coatings are designed for the length of the growing season. In the case of nursery stock camellias, the coatings are meant to release the elements over a period lasting from four to more than six months.

Metal Ammonium Phosphates. This fertilizer is a compounded product of ammonium, phosphate, and metal ion designed for slow nitrogen release. The percentages of nitrogen run in the approximate amounts of seven to eight, to 35 or 40 per cent phosphorus, or proportions of one to five. This would be dangerous to use over a sustained period but would seem to have a distinct advantage as an initial application at the time of planting. The duration of elemental release is determined by the size of the particles. Pellets the size of golf balls may last over two years where the nutrients are needed in planting larger trees. Duration for container stock would be for the growing season. The rate of release of this product is accelerated in very wet soil and decreased in dry soil. Increase of acidity and, to a minor extent, increase of temperature influences the acceleration of the release rate.

To summarize, we can say that these new additions to the pelleted fertilizers all have certain advantages due to the controlled availability of nitrogen. Nearly all compounds of ammonium or nitrate are highly soluble and are immediately available to plants and equally subject to leaching beyond the reach of the roots of the plants. The Urea-form and coated fertilizers offer a safe and longer-lasting nutrient release. The costs are higher but the work involved is less.

COLOR OBJECTIVES

Mrs. Herbert J. (Irene) Teachout, Orinda, California

Recently I gave a party — a very special party. It was planned to surprise a distant relative who did not know that for years I had been studying and working with flower arrangements. Generous friends helped me out with plant material for my camellias are no help during the hot summer months. Lush *Bells-of-Ireland* formed an exquisite background for sprays of velvety white *phaleanopsis* orchids. *Vandas*, *cymbidiums*, *cattleyas* — all made the task of designing arrangements pure joy. Then at the last minute a friend arrived with a huge bucket of roses — pink *Queen Elizabeths*, rosy *Charlotte Armstrongs* and deep rose-red *Chrysler Imperials*. They defied arranging in any form of elaborate design in the limited time allowed. They were so beautiful as they fell, in my haste, into a large crystal clear bowl that I decided to leave them just as they were. Why bother with design? The color was the beauty that one beheld! And the soft beige-pink on the wall against which I placed them made a perfect background for the glowing color of the roses.

When my guests arrived, the carefully designed orchid arrangements were enthusiastically admired and discussed in detail, but the first exclamations of delight were for the brilliant splash of pure color made by the mass of roses in my entrance hall. Later on, answering questions of some of my friends who feel inadequate to work with flowers because of lack of study and formal training, it brought to mind the long winters of working with glorious camellia colors. And the thought grew that the party discussion of color might prove helpful in a small way to camellia friends who know all about how to grow them, but who sometimes say, worriedly: "But now that I have them, what am I going to *do* with them?"

When I plan an arrangement of any kind, I think first of what new colors might be put together. Every color alone is beautiful. It is when one puts two or more colors together that the result is either good or bad. In other words, colors can help or hurt each other. This is why

we have color schemes worked out for us to guide us in color harmonies.

In a recent magazine article I read some brief statements by leading American color authorities about the wonder and value of color. There were some conflicting ideas but all recognized the two basic types of color schemes: #1, the RELATED color scheme (including both #1-a, the MONOCHROMATIC and #1-b, the ANALOGOUS color schemes) and #2, the COMPLEMENTARY or CONTRASTING color scheme. They wrote on the assumption that just about everybody knows that the three primary colors are red, blue and yellow, from which come the secondary colors, green, orange and violet which, with their flanking combinations, make up the standard 12-color wheel. (You don't have a color wheel? Go to any paint shop and they will be glad to show or give you one.)

From this simple background it is very easy to understand that the monochromatic scheme (1-a) is based on a single color, using various tints, shades and tones of that single color to produce a serene, easily achieved effect; the analogous (1-b) uses colors that lie side by side on the color wheel (e.g., red violet, red and red-orange; or blue-green; green and yellow-green); the complementary or contrasting schemes (#2) use colors opposite each other on the color wheel and produce the most stimulating and exciting effects.

Even with this small amount of basic information, you can begin to have confidence in your work and not be troubled with the often frightening problem of what to do about color. The fact is that most people do depend upon their own good taste in using color. Since most people have good taste in varying degrees, there is nothing wrong with this, except that they may be limited in what they are willing to try or experiment with. I remember years ago when one of my teachers startled her class by expressing her conviction that most people have good taste and that studying encourages them to utilize this inherent taste to the

best possible advantage. Most of us did not agree with her then but I can see now that she was right. How often have you heard people say: "I can tell when something is good, and I like it, even though I cannot do it myself?" My husband can go to a flower show before it is judged, look at the arrangements and pick out the really good work there. He is not at all artistic in a creative sense but he is, like most people, aware of and appreciative of beautiful and artistic effects achieved by others.

Now let us consider the subject of color in working with camellias. The primary color is red, with all its tints (light values), shades (dark values) and intensities. Anyone can select from a large camellia garden a blush pink (pink, remember, is a dilution of red), then a light pink, a medium pink, a deeper pink, a rose-red and a red. Here you have a perfect example in camellias of color scheme 1-a—the related, monochromatic color harmony. What a lovely bouquet you can have with this simple arrangement, using *one* color in its light to dark values.

How about the red and white variegated camellias and what can be done with these unusual flowers? Certainly they are dramatic and gay. I often use these two colors for teen-age parties. Think how they will sparkle on a red cloth, using white dishes? Or, if you have no red and white variegated variety just when you need it, red and white camellias can be placed together in a container, producing the same delightful effect.

White holds a unique place in the world of color for it does not even appear on a color wheel. It is really neutral and so can be used effectively with all other colors. Since white stands out so conspicuously when used with any other color, it is best to plan to use it as a focal point and let it predominate, rather than ruin visual balance.

White camellias with yellow stamens are a delight to use for here we have another color introduced: yellow, that lends itself naturally and effectively to the major emphasis on white. This combination of white with yellow is much in demand and when we finally achieve a truly yellow camellia there will be a whole new field

of color magic to explore.

Since camellias so far are available in only one of the three primary colors (red only—no blues or yellows) it becomes necessary to use other flowers with them to widen the range of color combinations. I usually prefer the related or analogous color schemes (1-a or 1-b) to the contrasting (#2) combinations.

More new color combinations should be tried when using camellias with other plant material in our arrangements. This is the area that will eventually expand our horizons. Much has been done in design but color still has unlimited possibilities. This is not an easy thing to write about. It is much more helpful to look carefully at demonstrations with real blooms which illustrate vividly what I am trying to put into words. This is one reason why most well managed camellia societies plan at least one program each season devoted exclusively to answering the plaintive question: "Now that I have them, what shall I *do* with them?", by scheduling demonstrations of flower arrangements using camellias. Well recognized authorities, or their highly trained pupils, doing the work before your eyes, can show you with plant material what they are trying to explain in words. And the crowds that make the flower arrangement sections the best attended at any camellia show, testify to the eagerness of the general public to learn. Comments by judges on entry cards, explaining the reasons for awards or failure to win awards, may not be appreciated by the exhibitor but are excellent instruction for the uninformed.

Another point to remember when working with camellias is that color in camellias is variable. I can remember picking the variety *Marjorie Magnificent* one year and working to the yellow that appeared in its pink. When I picked the same variety in my garden a year later, there was no trace of yellow. It looked like any other pink flower there. Weather has much to do with the color of these flowers. After a severe winter some seem to become more intense in color. Soils do affect camellia color conspicuously. I remember hearing Dave Feathers comment on the fact that the red camellia varieties

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Millions of words have been written about flowers and their qualities and characteristics. but no way of measuring beauty has ever been devised. We can use only general (and mostly vague) terms when describing the effect of a flower on one's emotions. Even the business of describing colors is difficult because we have to use words and color words are notoriously slippery and hard to pin down. Various color charts have been invented, but in the end their colors have to be translated into words and somehow a great many of these words are, unfortunately, meaningless to the average flower enthusiast. As for the color words in common use, they are subject to individual interpretation and can be accepted only in a general sense. However, these difficulties are minor compared to the joys a gardener experiences in producing flowers.

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It is amazing what a different character variegation brings to a flower. *Reg Ragland Variegated*, for example, is not at all the same thing as the solid color flower of the same name. Not that one is more (or less) valuable than the other; each has its own value. For example: a red *Reg Ragland* produces a most effective decorative effect against a white stucco wall, whereas the variegated form is much less so. When seen together on a show table, the liveliness and sparkle of the variegated form puts the red form at a disadvantage. Each must be seen in its own best environment.

Once in a while, usually in September, there will come a sudden, fierce blast of heat which literally burns camellia leaves to a crisp in an hour or so. This doesn't happen every year, but when it does, it means that there is no moisture or vapor in the air to obstruct or ameliorate the direct rays of the sun. The term "sun-tolerance" is misleading when this occurs, for the killing of leaves is simply the result of the sudden, intense application of heat without the usual protection of air moisture. If, when this heat comes, the plants are in need of water (that is, the leaves do not have their normal supply of water stored in the cells) their destruction is all but certain. The moral is, be generous with water in September.

Sometimes in the Spring when camellia plants are loaded with flowers, or perhaps new growth, a hot spell will come, the leaves will wilt and the flowers become limp, but there is no burning. In this case, it is merely an indication that the plant's water distribution system is overloaded for the moment and cannot supply water fast enough to overcome the evaporation in the young leaves and flowers. In September the heat is more intense and direct and all the leaves (which are now fully mature) on top of the plant may be killed.

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It will soon be time for disbudding camellias and the importance of this practice cannot be overstated. The usual reason given for disbudding is that it produces larger flowers. This is, of course,

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WHAT OF THE SASANQUA?

The work which the writer has done in connection with Camellia Rating the past few years has tended to produce an extreme consciousness as to the value of what might be called a "whole camellia" as opposed to one which might be described as a "special purpose" or "limited value" camellia. In case it may not be perfectly clear what is meant by a "whole camellia" it is one which serves all the purposes well for which a camellia may be used as an attractive evergreen, a flowering plant and a source of valuable cut flowers. Insofar as the species are concerned, only the japonica possesses such qualifications. It is going to require inter-specific breeding in order to convert the sasanqua and the reticulata to the status of all-purpose camellias.

By far the greatest weakness of the sasanqua is its shortness of flower life on the plant and inadequacies as a cut flower. It is, of course, just about useless for corsage purposes. On the other hand, the sasanqua possesses some splendid attributes. Perhaps its greatest merit is its earliness, as it is the harbinger of the camellia season. It is also excellent as a garden shrub because of its mass blooming and the long, pendulous growth of some varieties results in a most gratifying esthetic effect because of the graceful form of the branch clothed with color when in bloom.

On the artistic side there is the oriental character and the beautiful color contrast in those flowers which have the rather typical bright pink and rose margination on a white base. Notable too, is the spicy perfume one gets from a large plant blooming in the sun, which sasanquas seem to tolerate much better than japonicas, perhaps due to their much smaller leaves. Another of the more practical virtues is the ability of the sasanqua to thrive in poorer and more alkaline soils. The spreading growth habit of some varieties makes sasanquas far more suitable than japonicas for ground-cover purposes,

while there are many with a rather open habit and thus quite amenable to espaliering.

Contrary to fairly general belief, the sasanqua species is not as cold hardy as the japonica. Dr. Francis De Vos, Assistant Director of the U. S. National Arboretum in Washington, D. C., told the writer some time ago that both *C. sasanqua* and *C. rusticana* had proven to be less cold resistant than the japonica in his climate. This has been the experience in Great Britain, over a period of several years.

While the quality of the sasanqua has been improved over the years similarly to but in lesser degree than the japonica, the fact remains that it will almost surely continue to be a "limited purpose" camellia until such time as proper combinations may be worked out with other species, which will impart the necessary duration of flower life on the bush and after cutting. The writer knows of no authenticated crosses between *C. sasanqua* and *C. japonica*, although there is a great deal of presumptive evidence that it has been accomplished by way of a putative hybrid produced by Mr. Walter G. Hazlewood of Epping, New South Wales. This is a sasanqua-like camellia reported to be a hybrid with *C. japonica* 'Hassaku.' The flower and petal form and texture seem to be slightly different from sasanquas generally but if this is actually a hybrid it must be regarded only as an intermediate step because the principal fault has not been overcome. It may be that the quick-shattering characteristic is so inherent and so dominant in the sasanqua as to require many generations of hybrids to breed it out if, in fact, it may be eliminated at all. That prospect and the lack of real cold resistance somewhat beclouds the usage of the sasanqua in a hybridizing program, for any concerted effort at camellia improvement should hold greater cold resistance to be one of the primary objectives.

—D. L. F.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

A letter from Glenn Hiatt, Secretary of the Camellia Research Advisory Committee, informs that a vigorous camellia hybridizing program by Drs. Albert Longley and Clifford Parks is now well under way. Over 5,000 crosses have been made with the objectives of developing yellow pigmentation in the flowers, extending the range of cold resistance and in connection with further research designed to open the way to flower fragrance. The first group of seedlings is developing rapidly under controlled conditions and the blooming of the first plants is now impatiently awaited by all.

Mr. Frank Griffin, Sr., Editor and Publisher of *The Camellian*, has recently issued a circular letter to all concerned advising that publication is to be discontinued immediately. According to the announcement, everything incident to the publication of every issue over the past 14 years has been done by Mr. Griffin personally, without assistance, and he feels that he has now reached the stage of life where the undertaking has become too strenuous to continue. Mr. Griffin further advises that he will devote a year to compiling a new book to be titled "Camellian" and that the value of any uncompleted subscription may be applied toward the purchase price of the limited edition, or will be refunded upon request. We wish Frank Griffin well with his new book and shall miss his at times controversial but always colorful publication.

It is California's loss and Mississippi's gain that one of our most outstanding and successful camellia hobbyists and exhibitors, Clifton W. Lattin of Oakland, past President and long-time important figure in the affairs of the Northern California Camellia Society, and his good wife,

Louise, left here in June for Lauderdale, Miss., where Clif will have charge of the installation of a camellia and azalea garden on a large estate. We wish these good friends well in their new undertaking, which must have been a challenge that could not be resisted. In expressing the hope that the Lattins will return to this area eventually (if not sooner) we merely express the feelings of their many friends in this state.

Another couple quite active in this Society's affairs over the past several years who recently left for distant parts is the William B. Parkers, formerly of Orinda, who left a few months ago for Bridgeville, Delaware, where they have purchased 24 beautiful acres of land surrounded by a pine forest and are now engaged in setting up the "Orinda Camellia Nursery." The Parkers hope that any friends, old and new, interested in camellias will look them up when in their area. Knowing them to be really dedicated camellia people we feel sure of their success and wish the Parkers well in this new venture.

Speaking of folks moving, we are informed that Dr. and Mrs. Cecil Eshelman, formerly of Sherman Oaks, have purchased 17 acres about a mile distant from the Howard Aspers in the Escondido, California, area and are now or will be shortly moving their entire collection of camellias to their new location. With two such enthusiasts as Cecil and Howard next door neighbors practically, and unlimited space in which to ramble with their camellia activities, the Escondido area promises to become something of a Mecca for the camellia fan visiting the Los Angeles area.

If you are interested in *reticulatas*, your choice of these exotic camellias is about to be widened appreciably. This species seems to seed far more freely than was anticipated and thousands of new seedlings will have reached the blooming stage before another season has passed. To a somewhat lesser degree, the same is true of hybrids having *reticulata* blood. There is thus real hope for better plants and a wide range of flower colors and forms.

COLOR OBJECTIVES (Cont. from Page 14)

of New Zealand and Australia are generally more vivid than our own because of the larger percentage of iron in the soil, while the heavy rainfall in New Zealand may also be a factor affecting the color of the blooms in that area.

The variety *C. M. Wilson* is a light pink camellia with enough blue in it to give it a delicate lavender cast. This flower is best used by itself or with other lavender hues. Our new hybrids have these lovely soft lavender hues and I did enjoy working with this color last season. The exquisite hybrid, *Monticello*, was an especial joy to work with in one arrangement. (*The judges liked it, too. It won a blue ribbon*—Ed.)

When we work with these lovely hues in flower arrangements, it is most important that we provide them with a satisfying background. "House Beautiful" for March, 1962, page 133, suggests: "Here again it is wise to turn to nature for the answer. For nature never makes a mistake—colorwise. And Japan, the culture that has achieved the greatest heights of beauty in man-made things, has studied nature and applied her principles more assiduously than any other civilization." The lovely muted grays, greens and browns are always safe and this is what nature uses for the great expanses. Brilliant colors are usually provided in small amounts, comparatively, as accents and highlights in our landscapes. This principle is very important in selecting beautiful and harmonious backgrounds for your colorful camellia arrangements, which become the accents in your home decoration scheme.

It is equally important to remember, too, that vases and containers are part of

the background and are subject to the same general principles. The container should never compete with the flowers (nor the plant) for attention. If it is so highly ornamental and beautiful that you want people to notice it, use it by itself as an object of art. In color and texture it should subtly add to the beauty of the color harmony of the plant material—not detract from it.

This past year I have been interested in trying to find and use camellias that come in tones and hues not usually found in the average garden and not often seen in the arrangement sections of our shows. The so-called "black camellia" is *Kuro Tsubaki*. It is black-red in color, small in size and not very distinctive in form, but it is being used by some camellia hybridizers who are working for dark red flowers, larger in size and more beautiful in form. What a thrill it will be if some successful hybridizer eventually produces a large, new velvety black-red single camellia, with an abundance of golden yellow stamens.* I have a name ready for this new camellia. It should be called "Rembrandt Red" for the great Old Master used this magnificent color in abundance in his paintings. It may never be awarded "Best in Show" by the usual panel of masculine camellia show judges, but a panel of arrangement judges, whether men or women, would see that it received the honors due it.

Here is a real challenge to the growing number of camellia hybridizers—to produce the lovely new camellia colors that color-conscious arrangers are waiting for.

**Lady in Red* might fill the bill.—Ed.

NEW INFORMATION FROM UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA EXTENSION

The University of California Agricultural Extension Service, Berkeley, California, has published an excellent leaflet, #151, titled "Diseases of Camellias." You should have it.

CAMELLIA CHLOROSIS

J. Carroll Reiners, Sacramento, California

This past winter here in Sacramento apparently played tricks with some of the soil elements which are so necessary to Camellia culture. At any rate, nearly every camellia fancier of the area has reported unusual chlorosis on occasional plants. Usual corrective measures did not seem to remedy the problem, at least during this unusually cool late spring and early summer.

I discussed this with a local soil chemist who is actively engaged in the mysterious world of intricate relationships of plants and the soil elements. He explained that sulphate sulphur is subject to considerable leaching during winters of excessive rains such as we experienced. This leaching is particularly excessive because we go to extra trouble to plant our camellias in well-drained soil. The lower spring and early summer temperatures seem to have slowed up the conversion of our additives to correct the loss of sul-

phate sulphur in these soils. Apparently, the use of soil sulphur in its elemental form will create a lasting condition, whereas the more soluble forms such as gypsum and ferrous sulphate are more subject to rapid leaching.

It is suggested that you consider the following additives: apply gypsum, which is neutral, if your soil is already quite acid; if it calls for additional acid, then use ferrous sulphate. Ammonium sulphate usually supplies enough sulphur for the average soil. Try iron chelate if you are not deterred by the high cost of this product. There is a new product just recently available, called "Iron Sulphur," which, when put into the soil and subjected to air, water, and bacteria, releases iron, zinc, copper and manganese in sulphate forms. This is economical as one pound will be sufficient for one to two hundred square feet of area. The Iron Sulphur is an acidifying agent.

A CHAT WITH HOWARD ASPER (Cont. from Page 9)

where to start but, to end on a happy note will begin with the disappointments. Out of 12 hybrids produced from crosses of *C. reticulata* 'Buddha' x *C. grantbhamiana* I got absolutely nothing worthwhile and the same result from crosses of 'Buddha' with several japonicas. However, *grantha-miana* has very viable pollen and can be used in almost any camellia cross, I would judge.

The attempt to approach a yellow flower by crossing *C. pitardii* with *Tutcheria spectabilis* proved to be very disappointing. The two hybrid seedlings obtained bore very sorry-looking pink flowers, with no indication of yellow pigment. I used the small-leaved *pitardii*, which has an apple-blossom-like tiny flower. Some contend this is a form of *saluenensis*—whatever it is, it is a very good seeder and was the only camellia I was able to get to take *Tutcheria* pollen. I have been unable to get the large-leaved *Pitardii* to set hand-pollinated seed, although it bears seed of its own accord.

On the more pleasant side, I have, as

you know, had very good results from the 'Lion Head' x 'Coronation' cross and have several good hybrids from crosses of 'Crimson Robe' with japonicas. In the straight *reticulatas*, 'Chang's Temple' x 'Moutancha' has yielded some very fine results and I plan to introduce several of these shortly. Crosses of *sasanquas* 'Narumigata' and 'Kasumi-no-Sode' with *reticulata* 'Lion Head' have been very rewarding and I consider the blooms quite outstanding. Incidentally, 'Narumigata' sets seed very well. While I have never known 'Purple Gown' to bear seed, its pollen is excellent and seems to transmit a very fine shade of red to its seedlings. That is about all I have to report at the moment.

I. R.: I should say that this is extremely interesting and generous information. Knowing that you have for years maintained a continuing program of hybridization, we shall await with great anticipation report of the results from the many seedlings which will bloom for the first time this coming season. Many thanks.

—D. L. F.

WATERING CAMELLIAS (Cont. from Page 4)

soil should be watered. Leaf burn and leaf wilt take place at the time of day when the plant's root system is hard-pressed to supply the leaves with moisture fast enough to maintain the loss by leaf transpiration; this is the time for water application to maintain the cell balance of turgidity. Leaves do not burn because water has been applied in mid-day sun. This often-seen statement has taken on the color of an old wives' tale, and is just as persistent. Water and humidity on the leaf will *prevent* burn. Plants in stress can absorb water through the leaf area faster than from the root zone *to* the leaf. These are proven facts.

We will summarize by saying that everyone has different watering problems. Many of the difficulties can be simplified by applied analysis and reference to some of our solutions. It is advisable to deep-water once or twice a week to keep the root zone properly moist. Also, during very hot weather, water frequently — at very short intervals. Do all you can to promote garden humidity at the most judicious time, since camellias are forest plants and they like a lush, humid atmosphere as well as a moist root zone; the closer you approach this environmental condition, the better your results.

NEWS & VIEWS (Cont. from Page 15)

true, and this alone makes the practice worthwhile. But there are other values. If a camellia plant is allowed to develop too many blooms in any given year, the next year's blooms will be affected; they will tend to be poorer in quality and fewer in number, and in extreme cases will be non-existent.

A discussion of the aesthetic values and effects of individual camellia blooms can be endless and tiring, but one thing is now clear: the contemporary art boom in this country indicates a trend toward the simple rather than the complex. There have been several nostalgic returns to the fussy complexities of Victorian days (of which "Art Nouveau" was a phase in the two decades preceding World War I) but today's trend is toward simplicity — fewer lines and fewer details. Diebenkorn, Bis-

choff, and Park, of the San Francisco group, while classified as figurative painters, have reduced their figures to a few simple brush strokes; in New York, Rothko, Franz Kline, and others have reduced their artistic expression to a few strokes or simple masses, while Albers, of Yale, has his complete "say" with three or four simple squares of colors. Abstraction, the dominant trend for two decades, itself is a huge simplification of life (so much so that it is usually a big puzzle).

This trend was bound to show up in the matter of flower preferences, and in camellias has resulted in a marked upgrading of the simple types. It shouldn't have been too much of a surprise, therefore, that, out of a hundred-odd seedling entries at this year's Sacramento show, a smallish single took first prize.

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