

Atlantic Coast Camellias

Journal of the Atlantic Coast Camellia Society

Volume 73

May 2024

No. 2



Camellia Japonica 'Ella Joe'

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| ACCS Officers | 3 |
| A Message from Our President by Carol Selph | 4 |
| I've Been Thinking About Possibly Extinct Camellias by J. D. Thomerson | 6 |
| Meet Paul Greenway - Back Yard Camellia Grower by Paul Greenway | 14 |
| Camellias that are Getting Attention - Photo Gallery by J. D. Thomerson | 20 |
| Learn to Speak the Camellian Language by J. D. Thomerson | 22 |
| Tallahassee's Love Affair with Camellias by Brenda Buchan | 25 |
| ACCS State Directors | 31 |

From the Cover

'Ella Joe'

Front cover photo and photo to the right taken by Randolph Maphis

Ella Joe is a clear pink, formal double japonica originated by Dick Hardison of Tallahassee, FL. It is a chance seedling that blooms midseason. Mr. Hardison passed away in 2002, but his dear friend Randolph Maphis registered this variety in 2006, naming it 'Ella Joe,' who was Mr. Hardison's mother. Randolph now owns Mr. Hardison's home and camellia garden.



ATLANTIC COAST CAMELLIA SOCIETY

OFFICERS 2023-2024

PRESIDENT.....Carol Selph
3445 NE Cherry Lake Circle, Pinetta, FL 32350
229-474-2801, carolselphaccs@gmail.com

1st VICE PRESIDENT..... Tommy Alden
3204 Burnett Road, Byron, GA 31008-8308
478-825-1337, tommy@countylinenursery.com

2nd VICE PRESIDENT Bob Black
20155 Longview Drive, Windsor, VA 23487-6737
757-799-9823, RBlack3@outlook.com

TREASURER.....Fred Jones
2056 Dunn Road, Moultrie, GA 31768
229-941-5774, fredcjones@windstream.net

HISTORIAN.....Randolph Maphis
7476 Skipper Lane, Tallahassee, FL 32317
850-528-4795, crmaphis@comcast.net

EDITORJ. D. Thomerson
111 East Alden Ave., Valdosta, GA 31602
229-412-1227, jthomers@valdosta.edu

WEBMASTERRichard Buggeln
1719 Verrazzano Drive, Wilmington, NC 28405-4227
910-509-1792, rcbuggeln@gmail.com

SECRETARY Ms. Marsha Zeagler
2345 Rocky Ford Road, Sylvania, GA 30467
912-531-0060, marshazeagler@aol.com

PAST PRESIDENT.....Fred McKenna
3740 Battlefield Blvd. S., Chesapeake, VA 23322
757-432-0220, fred.mckenna@me.com

Mark Your Calendars for the 2024 ACCS Convention

Sept. 30 - October 1, 2024 (Monday and Tuesday)
Embassy Suites by Hilton Savannah Airport

Registration details will soon be posted on the ACCS Website at:
<http://www.atlanticcoastcamelliasociety.org>

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

by Carol Selph

We have been blessed with the most amazing camellia shows this season in our gardens and at ACS shows! After COVID-19 and major freezes for the past three years, this season has been remarkable. Our reticulatas bloomed later than normal, but during March, the splash of color was unbelievable. Now, all of a sudden, show season is over, and it has turned into maintenance season with major pruning, spraying, and weed control.

Hopefully, by now, everyone has caught up with their ACCS dues. All new dues will be collected again during the months of September/October, which coincides with our annual Convention. Your dues cover the cost of your Journal, the pride of the Atlantic Coast Camellia Society due to J. D. Thomerson's dedication to beauty and perfection. Many of our members join just to receive it.

However, there are many other benefits to being a member of ACCS. I really appreciate Richard Buggeln's dedication to our organization and the American Camellia Society. Richard is the master of our websites, spending numerous hours adding to the information on the sites he created. There is no way we could communicate and inform our members without him. First and foremost, he has collected the largest volume of photographs and organized them in such a way that it is easy to find the photos and information you need. His search program allows one to identify unknown camellias in your garden. Second, he quickly posts the results of every ACS-affiliated camellia show across the United States. He truly needs the help of each show reporter to get him the show results in a timely (2 days) and accurate manner. The show results are found on the ACS website as Richard finally has the help of the ACS staff to assist him. The final results of all of the shows, the bloom rankings, and the member rankings are on the ACCS website. For ACCS members only, there are educational articles on insects and pests that attack your plants. Richard has included many historical items of interest, including historic camellia catalogs, monthly care, propagation, and even a "perfect party" cookbook with over 100 recipes. You will find the website to be extremely user-friendly. One can also see the names of all members, current judges, and their contact information.

Richard Buggeln and Geary Serpas put together a "size" list that includes almost all of the camellias seen at camellia shows. There is a one-time fee of twenty-five dollars for this list, which is a big help at Camellia shows to check to ensure the placement cards have the correct size marked. Richard and Geary update the list adding newly registered camellias or any size changes that may have occurred with no additional charge.



Carol Selph

The number one reason (in my opinion) to join the Atlantic Coast Camellia Society is to get to know the members. And what better way to spend time with the members than at the annual Fall Convention? The dates of the upcoming Convention are September 30 - October 1, 2024. Most members will come on Sunday, September 29. The Convention is at the Embassy Suites at the Savannah Airport exit off of 1-95. If you have never attended, don't miss it this year. There will be a lot of information on the ACCS website as the convention time gets closer. The three speakers have been invited and accepted, and I am already excited. There is downtime at the Convention where one will find groups of people discussing—you guessed it—camellias. You will learn anything you ever wanted to know about what varieties to grow, how to control pests, what fertilizers to use, pruning questions, and more. Everyone is willing to share. In fact, ACCS members want you to enjoy your plants and blooms as much as possible. There is much to learn, and you will be surrounded by the experts. Many of the growers have spent years perfecting their collections and have the best of the best. During the grafting season, just about everyone shares scions, and you, too, can have the 'best' collection. We have a tremendous auction where you can bid on many of these exclusive show-winning plants to give your collection a sudden infusion.

Camellia people are goodhearted people. The friendships you make are for life because the members become like family. ACCS members become loyal and giving friends. I have never been so surprised and overwhelmed with love and gratitude as when the most beautiful camellia variety was named for me. There are inadequate words to express the feeling when someone honors you this way. I will forever be thankful that Mr. Jim Smelley from Moss Point, Mississippi, grew out a beautiful, big, frosted 'Lady Pamela' seedling and, with the help of Randolph Maphis, named it 'Carol Selph.' It is a great honor to have talented friends honor me in this way. These friendships were cultivated over the years in ACCS. Thank you, Jim and Randolph, for this gift of love.



Camellia Reticulata 'Carol Selph'

I cannot urge you enough to keep up your Atlantic Coast Camellia Society membership and stay connected to the latest information in the Camellia world. By now, you can see that ACCS is a team of the best camellia professional growers. May God bless each and every one of you.

I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT POSSIBLY EXTINCT CAMELLIAS

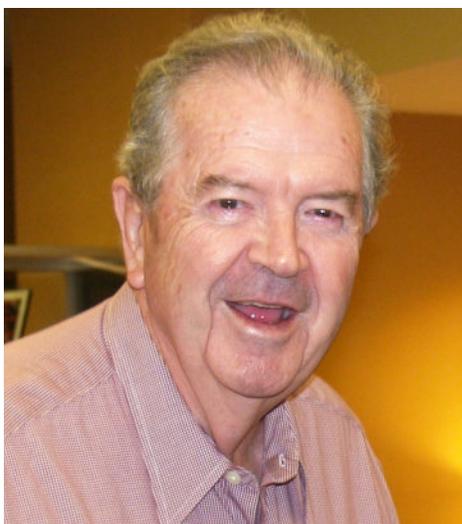
By J. D. Thomerson

There is one camellia reticulata variety that Randolph Maphis and many other camellia growers have spent much effort trying to locate. That variety is 'Pearl Buck' (see photo at right.) Randolph has asked every camellia grower he knows from Florida to California, and they all say they don't have it and don't know any other grower that has it. The reason so many folks want Pearl Buck is an old photo that shows a very large, dark red, heavily frosted reticulata. The frosting is what gets camellia growers excited – but unfortunately, Randolph recently stated that this variety is lost for good -- what a shame.



'Pearl S. Buck'

This lost variety got me thinking about how many other varieties have been lost forever. Florence Crowder has worked tirelessly for many years looking for lost varieties that date back before the 1900s. There is now an entire group of folks that help her called the Great Gardens of America Preservation Alliance, and they have traveled the world in search of old camellia varieties that are nearly extinct. Florence and this group have had great results in preserving many "antique" camellia varieties.



Hulyn Smith

However, 'Pearl Buck' is not really that old as far as camellias are concerned. It was a Frank Pursel seedling cross of Reticulata 'Cornelian' x Reticulata hybrid 'James McCoy' registered in 1991. As many camellia folks know, Frank Pursel lived in Oakland, CA, and registered over 125 reticulata hybrids during his lifetime. What some readers might not know is that Frank Pursel died in the fall of 1986. At this time, he still had hundreds of unnamed reticulata crosses, and many of them had not even bloomed.

Before I proceed further, let me give you some background information. During the 1970's and 1980's Frank Pursel, Ray Gentry, and Hulyn Smith were all diehard camellia

junkies and they called each other nearly every Sunday afternoon to talk all things camellia. Now, back in those days, long-distance phone calls across the country were not cheap. These three guys were close friends, and Frank Pursel would send scions of his most promising seedlings to Ray Gentry and Huly Smith to have them test their growing performance in the Southeastern U.S.

In 1979, Pursel named one of his seedlings in honor of his friend Huly Smith. The variety 'Huly Smith' is a Large, Soft Pink, Reticulata 'Cornelian' x Japonica 'Mrs. D. W. Davis' seedling that is widely known and grown. Also in 1979, Pursel named another seedling 'Janet Smith' for Huly's wife. This variety proved difficult to grow and is seldom seen, although it is still around.

As mentioned earlier, Frank Pursel died in Sept. 1986. Frank's wife, knowing the value of these seedlings, had them all loaded on a semi-trailer and delivered to Ray Gentry in Jackson, MS. Unfortunately, Ray Gentry died one month to the exact day after Frank Pursel passed away. So, now, these valuable seedlings needed another new home. Yes, you guessed it – they were taken to Huly Smith in Valdosta, GA.



'Camellia 'Huly Smith'

'Jean Pursel' registered by Frank Pursel in 1975 for his wife was one of Pursels first registrations. This Cornelian x Mrs. D.W. Davis hybrid was used extensively in his hybridization of future varieties.

While reading the above, did you notice that the variety 'Pearl S. Buck' was registered in 1991? Wait, didn't Pursel die in 1986? Yes, Huly Smith registered 'Pearl S. Buck' in Pursel's name five years after Pursel's death. You see, Huly took on the task of rehabilitating these Pursel seedlings and registering them because he knew that was what Frank Pursel wanted. This was actually a huge task.

As many experienced camellia growers know, reticulata seedlings are very difficult to keep alive on their own roots. These seedlings needed to be grafted and re-grafted in case the original seedling died. All of this work, knowing that many of the seedlings would not be worthy of being named and registered. Huly soon called upon his friend Randolph Maphis in Tallahassee, FL, to help him with this huge project. Randolph tells how Huly would

get scions from the terminal growth when grafting and give Randolph the lower, often blind eyes for him to graft. As we have learned in recent years, grafting the blind eyes of reticulatas tends to take better than the top growth buds. When grafting reticulatas, a large terminal growth bud often begins to grow prematurely before the scion has callused to the rootstock, thus causing graft failure.

So, during the 1990s, Hulyn and Randolph both were growing and evaluating dozens and dozens of old Pursel seedlings. As mentioned earlier, one of the Pursel seedlings was named 'Pearl S. Buck' in honor of Pearl Sydenstricker Buck in 1991. Pearl Buck was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature for her epic portrayal of Chinese peasant life and for the biographies of her parents. She was the first American woman to be awarded both the Pulitzer and Nobel Prizes for literature.

Also, in 1991, while Hulyn and his daughter Mandy were looking at the many camellia blooms in their yard, Mandy told her dad that one particular Large, Red with Frosted Sheen bloom was her favorite. Thus, the variety '**Mandy Smith**' a cross of 'Cornelian' x 'Jean Pursel' was registered in 1991, listing of course, Pursel as the originator. Three years later, a Very Large, Pink, SD (Crimson Robe x Jean Pursel) seedling was registered for one of Hulyn's other daughters, Renee. Renee was already married at the time, so instead of it being named Renee Smith, it was given her married name of '**Renee Land.**' It was not until the year 2000 that Hulyn named a variety for his



Mandy Smith



Renee Land

daughter Lauren, and it was actually one of Hulyn's own Japonica seedlings, not one of the Pursel seedlings. Hulyn's daughter Lauren had married a man with the last name of Tudor – and this is where we get the varieties '**Lauren Tudor**' as well as '**Tudor Baby Var.**' named for Lauren's young daughter.

These were not the only varieties that Hulyn registered for Pursel – here are a few others: Tommy Land (1991), Pearl Terry (1992), Linda Carol (1995), Janet (1995), Pat Pinkerton (1997), Jim Pinkerton (1998), and Miles Beach (2002). As you can see, all of these were registered many years after Frank Pursel died. Thankfully, Hulyn and others saved these varieties and registered them for Pursel, so we can still enjoy them today. Unfortunately, Pearl Buck (1991) appears to have been lost.



Pat Pinkerton

Randolph Maphis has also continued to evaluate and register many of Huly Smith's own seedlings after Huly's death. Randolph has registered 27 of Huly Smith's seedlings since Huly's death. They are Adrienne Wheeler, Ali Hunt, Anne Hightower, Betty Curnow, Beulah Hennly, Bill Fickling, Bryant White, Chuck Ritter, Dominic DiTomasso, Dr. Annette Thomas, Dr. Frank Wilson, Dusty Wellborn, George Lumsden, Grandandy, Huly's Meadowbrook, Jeannie Ruth, Joan Blanchard, Judy Kerr, June Curry, June Tomlinson, Lily Marie Nichols, Lois Jean, Mary Catherine Cape, Mary Maude Sharp, Mary Rhodes, Richard Mims, and Sharilyn Green. Every one of these varieties is still widely available.

As I thought about all the above, I began to think even more. Frank Pursel registered over 125 reticulata hybrid camellias. I know 'Pearl S. Buck' is probably extinct, but I began to wonder how many others. I started to investigate. The Atlantic Coast Camellia Society's wonderful photo gallery allows one to search for all camellias registered by a specific individual. So, I searched for all varieties registered by Frank Pursel. The ACCS photo gallery only shows the Pursel introductions, which have a photo attached, resulting in 59 varieties (all reticulatas.) Of these 59 varieties, I have never seen or heard of anyone having 12 of them, and I really wonder if they might be extinct. These varieties include Col. R. D. Hicks, Fortieth Anniversary, Giorgio's Pride, Ivan Mitchell, James McCoy, Maggie Bush, Margaret Bernhardt, Majorie O'Malley, Mary Stringfellow, Nell Watson, Our Kerry, as well as Pearl S. Buck. Most of these photos were very old photos taken by Bob Marcy.

To continue the story, Huly Smith passed away in March 2011. There were still many Pursel seedlings that had not yet been registered both at Huly's garden and at the home of Randolph Maphis. Many of these seedlings were weak and about dead – but Randolph grafted them onto large rootstocks, hoping to save as many as possible. He did, in fact, save many and registered the following varieties, giving credit to both Pursel and Huly as the originators: Jenny Maphis (2015), Scott Maphis (2015), Jeff White (2016), Dr. Jon Bailey (2017), and Charlotte Jones (2018).



Anne Hightower

I am like Hulyn Smith — I really like Very Large, Red, Reticulata Camellias. Below are two really nice looking Pursel registrations that I fear might be extinct.

Col. R. D. Hicks (left) and Fourtieth Anniversary (right)



Over half of the Pursel registrations do not have photos in the ACCS Photo Gallery. This makes it even more possible that many of these no longer exist. I looked through the 2024 Nomenclature book for Pursel registrations and found 51 other reticulata varieties that I had never heard of anyone still growing. I do not claim to know every camellia ever registered, but I am a total camellia nerd who has read cover-to-cover every ACS Yearbook and most of the ACS Journals. I looked at the past 20 years of the Judges Have Spoken records in the ACS Yearbooks, where all award winners at camellia shows are awarded points, and have not found any of these varieties listed. Due to

space, I am not going to list these additional 51 on my possible extinct list, but I will happily send them to anyone who would like to see the list.

I do not think the possibility of many extinctions applies only to the Pursel reticulata introductions. I began looking in the nomenclature book under reticulata and began alphabetically just for varieties beginning with the letter "A." I found ten varieties that I have never heard of, and I cannot find any information online or anywhere about them — except that they were registered once upon a time. I am not including 10 Australian or New Zealand registrations I had never heard of or any

of the Pursel introductions already mentioned. These retics beginning with "A" varieties include a few registered from places very close to my home. These include Alice Collins (Homeyer, Macon, GA), Ann Day (Sellers, Mobile, AL), and Ann English

I know that just because I have never seen or heard of a certain variety does not mean that it is extinct. But if Randolph Maphis, Konrad Hooper, Tommy Alden, and Gary Shanz (from California) have all never seen or heard of these varieties, then I think there is a good chance that they are extinct.

(Jernigan, Warner Robins, GA). If they were still around, I would think somebody in my area would have the variety or know something about the variety.

To try and wrap up this article, I have a few final thoughts, or perhaps I should say conclusions. I feel strides should be taken to determine what camellia varieties are extinct. I believe that it could be as high as 25% of the listed reticulata varieties in the latest nomenclature book. I am sure there are many that might be extinct in the Japonica and Non-Retic Hybrid categories as well, but I have not dug into those yet. These extinct varieties are taking up space in our nomenclature book and making it harder to locate existing varieties. These varieties were registered and named for people, and I think we should keep a record of them, but perhaps we could include them in a separate book – like the red book for older varieties that are seldom seen anymore. Or, we could list them on the ACS Website under extinct varieties.

I really hope I am wrong, and the majority of the varieties I worry might be lost forever are actually very few. I recall a huge tree falling on a camellia bush in Hulyn Smiths' yard around the year 2010. It killed that camellia, so I helped Hulyn plant a small grafted camellia in that location that was about three feet tall. I looked at the label but had not heard of the variety. Well, less than a year later, Hulyn had passed away. Several close friends of Hulyn's and I maintained the camellia collection for a couple of years until the house and garden were sold. Before the property was sold, Hulyn's family wanted any camellias still in pots to be distributed to his closest friends.

Around this time, I remembered that small camellia that Hulyn was excited about planting, and I decided that it could easily be dug up and placed in a large pot. I did this and kept the plant for a year or so, until one day, it bloomed. It was a gorgeous bloom, and I looked at the name on the tag again, and it said it was 'Richard Carter' (see photo at right.) I looked up this variety and discovered that it was a Pursel seedling registered in 1976 and was a cross of 'Cornelian' x 'Crimson Robe.' I asked around, and nobody knew anything about this variety, and I knew of no other plant of it anywhere. The plant was still not very large, so I decided to do an approach graft (also known as a fail-safe graft) to make sure there was another plant in case the original one died. The approach graft took, and I was pleased to give this new plant to Randolph Maphis. Since this time, Randolph has grafted several more 'Richard Carter' plants and shared them with other growers. I mention this story because the variety 'Richard Carter' almost became extinct, but luckily, it was saved. Hopefully, there will still be one or two plants of many of these feared extinct varieties that will be found and also saved.



Richard Carter

Another conclusion I draw from all of this is that we need to do a better job finding and preserving not only the really old 100-year-old plus varieties that the Preservation Alliance is working on but also those that have been registered in the past 50 years. Also, when someone registers a new camellia, they should make sure that the new variety will be propagated and distributed to as many camellia growers as possible, not just in their local area but in all camellia-growing areas. This would help prevent future registrations from possibly becoming extinct in the future.

And finally, I have enjoyed growing several hundred camellias from seed and keep growing more each year. I hope if I die before a few of the best of my seedlings are registered and named for family members and close friends, that I will have friends like Hulyn Smith and Randolph Maphis who will dedicate themselves to continue to grow, evaluate, propagate, and eventually register them for me. I have many good camellia friends, so I feel confident that this would happen.

The following are other Pursel and Smith registrations with interesting stories.



'Jenny Maphis'

In 1991, Hulyn gave this Pursel Seedling to Randolph who planted it in his friend Dick Hardison's yard. Fast forward 20 years. While looking around Mr. Hardison's yard, Randolph and I noticed a neglected reticulata labeled "White Pursel Retic." We both thought a minute and said, "A White Retic — we should graft this one." Randolph then remembered planting this plant years earlier. When it bloomed a few years later in Randolph's greenhouse his daughter in law 'Jenny Maphis' saw it and fell in love with it — thus the name.

'Grandandy'

Hulyn Smith is known for loving Very Large, Dark Red, Reticulata flowers. The 'Hulyn Smith' variety that Frank Pursel named for Hulyn back in 1979 is Pink, not Red. After Hulyn passed away his granddaughters wanted to register a big, red, reticulata for their Grandandy. Yes, I spelled this correct. This is what Hulyn's granddaughters called him.

Unfortunately, although really beautiful, this variety is very difficult to grow. Only a few people have it growing and I fear one day it might be lost forever.



'Walter Homeyer'

Walter Homeyer of Macon, GA died in June of 1998. Hulyn Smith had been given and was growing this very large, dark red, reticulata seedling of Homeyer's in his yard. So in 2004, Hulyn registered this seedling for his friend Walter Homeyer — six years after Homeyer's death. Of course, Hulyn listed the originator of the seedling as Walter Homeyer. Randolph Maphis and I both have it and it grows pretty well and has excellent frosting.



'Frank Pursel'

Hulyn Smith registered this camellia for his friend Frank Pursel in Dec. 1987. Since Pursel had died a year earlier, Hulyn asked his wife Jean Pursel for permission. In the registration documents on the ACS Website for Frank Pursel one can read this note: Dear Hulyn, You have my permission to register #2099, naming it Frank Pursel. The parentage is (X-5 x Cornelian.) Unfortunately, it is now believed that this Frank Pursel variety is extinct.



'Charlotte Jones' - A Pursel and Smith Seedling Randolph Registered in 2018

'Miles Beach' - A Pursel Seedling Hulyn Smith Registered for Pursel in 2002

MEET PAUL GREENWAY BACKYARD CAMELLIA GROWER

Article and Photos by Paul Greenway

Before I begin this article on Backyard Camellia Growing, I just want to say that I am not a Tommy Alden, a Bob Black, a Mark Crawford, or a Gene Phillips, but I might be a J. D. Thomerson (see photo on next page.) My wife Corinthia and I moved to our current home in Martinez, Georgia, in 1992, and there were no camellias on the property at that time. Our lot is approximately half an acre, and for the most part, the soil was hard and full of rocks. We also had several areas of the yard with drainage issues — there is a reason my neighborhood is named Springlakes. Today, my personal collection includes nearly 400 camellias planted in the ground and another 150-175 planted in pots scattered around my backyard.

My love of growing camellias was inherited from my grandparents, Dr. Carlton Howard Maryott and Pauline Maryott. They moved to Augusta, GA, in 1914 when my grandfather was hired to be the head of the Biochemistry Department at the Medical College of Georgia, a position he held until his death in 1947. During his early years at the Medical College, Dr. Henry G. Mealing gave him a camellia, and at that point, he was bitten by the camellia bug.



Howard and Pauline Maryott



Paul and Corinthia Greenway

Over the years, my grandparents built a very impressive camellia collection. At one time, there were over 300 different cultivars on their property. My grandfather even built a greenhouse on the back of a detached garage for the sole purpose of raising camellia seedlings. In 1959, my grandmother registered two of his seedlings, 'Katherine Maryott,' named for my aunt, and 'Eleanor Greenway,' named for my mother. My Uncle Arthur Maryott, a research chemist at the National Bureau of Standards, was a major influence in my love for camellias. He was a lifelong camellia enthusiast and a founding member of the Camellia Society of the Potomac Valley. My Uncle Arthur taught me how to graft and



Photos clockwise from top left: Paul Greenway and J. D. Thomerson, Camellia 'Eleanor Greenway,' photo of Mrs. Eleanor Greenway, Paul Greenway and Jim Stutts

air-layer camellias when I was a small boy. In later years, he was the one who encouraged me to join the American Camellia Society.

In addition to family members, Mr. Jim "Jimbo" Stutts of Augusta, Georgia, was extremely influential in stoking my camellia addiction. I met Mr. Stutts in 1992 after he called and offered to give me an 'Eleanor Greenway' camellia to plant at our new house. The day I showed up at Jim's home to pick up the plant, he took me on a tour of his camellia garden, and when I left that day, not only did I have an Eleanor Greenway but also 14 other camellias that he had air-layered.

My passion and time allotted to growing camellias really kicked into high gear in 2015 when I completely retired from teaching and coaching. I taught high school



history and coached football, track, and occasionally basketball for 39 years at five different high schools. My wife, Corinthia, retired in 2014 after teaching kindergarten for 38 years. We have 2 children — Paul, Jr., age 42, and Margaret, age 38. Whenever we have free time, we like to visit our precious grandchildren — Caroline, age 6, and Carson, age 2. When not spending time with family and friends, I am typically found in my backyard tending to my camellias. (See photos at the top and bottom of this page.)

CAMELLIA SCHEDULE AND CARE

Fertilization, Spraying, and Basic Care: In late March and early April - I will fertilize with Super Rainbow 16-4-8. I also air-layer and prune my camellias if possible. In late July and early August, I fertilize with Holly-tone Organic Fertilizer, and sometimes, I put some blood meal around my red camellias. For my camellias growing in pots, I use Harrell's 21-4-9 slow-release fertilizer. I feel that I have been very fortunate because very seldom do I see scale on my plants. Whenever I do find scale, I simply treat it with Bayer Advanced Tree and Shrub, and it usually takes care of the problem. During the peak of the blooming season, I usually fill one or two yard waste bags with dead blooms each week to control petal blight and fungal diseases.



Grafting: Each year, beginning in late January and finishing around the first week of March, I graft eight to ten camellias on grafting stock that I have planted in the ground. I also graft another 20 to 50 camellias on grafting stock growing in pots.

Air Layering: I start air-layering my camellias in April and will finish in early June. Each year, I normally do 70 to 100 air-layers. I usually begin harvesting my air layers at the end of August and finish by early October. After harvesting the air layers, I plant them in 2 and 3-gallon pots.

GROWING CAMELLIAS FROM CUTTINGS

When J. D. Thomerson asked me to write this article, he said I should make sure I discussed in detail how I root camellia cuttings. Remember, I am not a nursery, so I don't have all the fancy timers, misters, and shade houses. I actually learned the procedure I use for rooting camellia cuttings from Clayton Mathis of Douglas, Georgia.

Each summer, I root around 300 camellia cuttings in two propagation tents that I have made out of PVC Pipe and covered with 6 mil. plastic (see photo below.) The propagation tents are located in an area of my yard that gets filtered sunlight. I begin taking camellia cuttings in the middle of July and continue taking cuttings until the end of August.



My rooting medium is a mix of approximately 40% peat moss and 60% perlite. I have learned over the years that if the mix has too much peat moss, it stays too wet. The cuttings will form a callus, but they produce very few roots. After I prepare my mix, I fill nursery flats with the rooting medium, water them down, and let them drain before I begin sticking my cuttings.

My cuttings are usually 5 to 6 inches in length. I will remove all but the top 2 or 3 leaves and make a slanted cut at the end of the cutting's stem with a sharp razor knife. (My cuttings have whole leaves — I do not cut off half of a leaf.) I like to dip my cuttings in a rooting hormone gel before sticking them in the rooting medium. When I



stick a camellia cutting into a cell of the nursery flat, I also stick a plant label with the name of the camellia and the year the cutting was stuck.

Once a flat is full of cuttings, I mist them and place them in the propagation tent. I mist the cuttings every other day for the first two weeks. After the first two weeks, I will give them a weekly misting. You have to be careful not to overwater because if the rooting medium stays too wet, the roots will not form. I have found this method to be very successful. Last year, only 2 of the over 300 cuttings that were stuck did not root.

Although roots have formed by the end of summer, I prefer to leave my cuttings in the propagation tents over the winter. The tents provide the young cuttings protection from severe winter weather. Usually, around late March or early April, I begin transplanting the rooted cuttings with their labels into one-gallon pots.

I make my own potting mix using bags of Topsoil, Garden Soil, Potting Mix, Mini Pine Bark Nuggets, Sand, and lots of Perlite. It has taken a few years for me to get the right mix for my potted camellias.

Side Note: Once the propagation tents are empty and the camellia cuttings are potted up, I found that I can use the tents to harden off my potted camellia grafts. I can fit around 15 grafted pots in the tent and harden them all off in a little over a week.

Conclusion: I have realized that growing camellias is very similar to my former profession of being an educator and a coach. It takes patience, practice, nurturing, and experimentation. You make mistakes along the way, but in the end, you sit back, watch, and reap the rewards.



Photos on the next page are of the Greenway's yard with granddaughter Caroline in the bottom right photo

Paul busy potting his rooted cuttings



CAMELLIAS THAT ARE GETTING ATTENTION

Photos Taken by Names in Parentheses

The photo gallery that follows shows several new camellia varieties that are getting lots of attention around the southeast. Several have won awards at recent shows, others have just been registered, and others are on the grafting lists of many of the top camellia growers in the ACCS. When making your next “must-have” list, you would be wise to consider adding as many of these as possible.



Drama Girl Tison - (Mike Chelednik)



Carol Ann - (Gary Schanz)



Ella Snoeyenbos - (J. D. Thomerson)



Circus - (Paul Greenway)



Bella Jinhua - (Paul Greenway)



Princess Masako - (Hunter Charbonnet)



Polaris - (Gene Phillips)



Pink Dahlia - (Mike Chelednik)



Yellow and Purple - (Randolph Maphis)



Satsuma-Kurenai - (Michael Ossen)

LEARN TO SPEAK THE CAMELLIAN LANGUAGE

BY J. D. THOMERSON

I remember my first Camellia show road trip back in 2005. Hulyn Smith invited me to go to the Douglas Camellia Show with him. I had just begun growing camellias but was already fully hooked with the addiction. Randolph Maphis met us around 6:30 a.m. at Hulyn's house in Valdosta, GA, and I began to be exposed to a new language I had never heard before. I knew this language had something to do with camellias, but little of anything Hulyn and Randolph were talking about made much sense to me. Randolph said we should get to Douglas at about 7:30 a.m., and that would be plenty of time. He said he already had all his cards filled out. Hulyn said he bet Ritter was already there. They discussed how Ritter had about 12 blooms on the head table last year and twice that many on the contention table.

Randolph said he was bringing about 50 of the best retic blooms he had ever grown. Hulyn said he began gibbing two months ago for this show. I was totally lost. At this time, I did not know who Ritter was, did not know the difference between a contention table and a head table, nor did I have any idea what retic or gibb meant. I basically kept quiet and listened from the back seat of Randolph's truck.

Later, Randolph and Hulyn began discussing what they would graft that year. Hulyn said he planned to do many high grafts this year and then air-layer them off a year later if they took. They discussed how 'kanjiro' was such a good rootstock because it had a wide cambium layer. Randolph said, "Yea, but I wish it would not sucker so badly." Hulyn said yes, but he was working on getting some variety called 'Kumagai,' which was a japonica that grew like a weed that folks in China were using as a rootstock. Of course, Randolph wanted some plants of it as soon as possible. Hulyn said Mark Crawford would help root them in his mist system. It was fun to listen to all this, even though I did not really understand what they were talking about – they were both so excited and enthusiastic about everything.

Once at the Douglas show, Hulyn introduced me to Clayton Mathis, who was called the "Head Judge." He explained that they used the weighted average scoring system, like I knew what that meant. He thanked people called "clerks" and the "placement crew." Everything was very nice, and Clayton invited all of us to eat lunch with all the other judges. They announced something called "sweepstakes" winners, and everybody clapped.

On the way home, Randolph and Hulyn talked more about grafting. They discussed something called "scions" they wanted to get of many varieties – of course, I had never heard of any of them. They debated whether certain new ones were hybrids or japonicas and asked me to look up the names in a book they called the nomenclature book. They discussed how some grafters covered the graft union with sand, which caused everything to callus faster. Randolph said, "You better use fungicide on the retics," and that "dieback loved the retics" – then they discussed which fungicide might

be the best. I continued to sit in the back seat and listen. It was so odd. I didn't really know what they were talking about, but it was very, very interesting.

A few weeks later, Hulyn called and asked if I wanted to go with him to see Mark Crawford. He wanted to get something called "Hen-Do." I learned that Hen-Do is actually chicken fertilizer. Mark said Jerry Selph used something called "Man-Do" and that it was a lot cheaper than Milorganite. I put two and two together and figured out what "man-do" meant. Hulyn asked Mark if he could get more of that gibb thickened with "Cell-u-Wet," whatever that meant. Soon, the topic returned to grafting again. Hulyn said the terminal buds were beginning to "feather," and we better start using "blind eyes." I remember thinking, did he really say feather and blind eyes?

The next topic of camellia language I was exposed to dealt with bugs. Hulyn said he really hated something called mites and said something about a red spider. Mark showed me something that looked like cotton growing on the underside of a camellia leaf and explained how this was scale. He said the best time to kill them was when they were crawling, and I thought, how can that cottony stuff crawl? Hulyn asked what he should spray for mites and scales, and Mark began discussing the advantages and disadvantages of things called ultra-fine oil and cygon. He said abemectin and kelthane were just for mites and not scale, but you should use oil with them. I quickly tried to jot down some of this information but did not know how to spell anything or have any idea where you would buy the stuff.

As the years passed along, I went on many more trips with Mark, Randolph, and Hulyn. Gradually, I began to understand some of this camellia lingo. After a year or two, I even started to ask questions and make comments that made a little sense to these camellia experts. We all liked discussing various new camellia varieties and how beautiful some were. However, my camellia mentors would still bring up words and topics with which I was not familiar. I understood that some blooms were variegated, but I learned a whole lot about virus infection. Before hanging out with these camellia buddies, I assumed a virus was something bad – not so with camellias.

Oh man, if a bloom had something called "fimbriation," they all got really excited. They sometimes said the bloom was fantastic but that it would "bullnose" or that it "shattered." They would ask questions like "Is that a Homeyer seedling or is it one of Nuccio's." I learned that if Hulyn saw an ugly bloom, he called it a "dog's butt." I was definitely still learning this interesting camellia language with its strange vocabulary.

It took at least five years hanging around Hulyn, Randolph, Mark, and other "camellians," as I learned we were called, to really be fluent in talking and understanding the camellia language. I am still learning much about growing camellias but now understand the language. When Randolph visits my house and says it looks like some of my camellias are "starving," I know what that means and how to remedy the situation with fertilizer – I now even know what "N-P-K" means.

When Mark says to add some extra perlite to my bark and sand mix when growing seedlings in pots, that makes total sense. I now agree with Randolph that raised beds are the way to go when grafting. It now even makes sense when Randolph reminds me that I better "Subdue" any plants I keep in pots for very long.

I not only understand what "wounding a cutting" means, but I know how to do it, as well as how to dip it in hormone to aid in callus and rooting. I am still unsure if it

does any good to graft according to the moon phases, and although I grow many seeds, I still let the bees do all my hybridization. I still have much to learn about hybridizing with hand pollination. And, even though I now know what it means to emasculate a camellia bloom and add male pollen to the pistil of a female flower, I have never actually done this. So, my camellia vocabulary and language are continuing to grow, and there is still much to be learned.

In conclusion, if you don't speak the Camellian language – don't worry; just continue to hang around knowledgeable "Camellians" and listen, ask questions, and learn. It is fun and exciting to learn this new language. As the years go by, instead of being the student, you will begin to be the language teacher to others.

When our family vacations in other countries, I am often embarrassed that in other countries, people know more than one language, and I only know English. Well, now I can say I speak two languages – English and Camellian. If you want to learn more about the Camellian language, continue to read ACS and ACCS Journal articles, attend the ACCS camellia conference, attend all your local area camellia club meetings, and hang around other camellia addicts in your area, and before you know it, you will be speaking the Camellian language fluently.



Distinguished Camellia Growers at the Middle Georgia Camellia Show, Feb. 24, 2024
From Left to Right: Mickey Moore, Miles Beach, and John Newsome.

TALLAHASSEE'S LOVE AFFAIR WITH CAMELLIAS

By Brenda Buchan

Tallahassee, FL, has a long and interesting history with camellias.

In 1811, Robert Gamble is believed to be the first person to bring camellias to Tallahassee. That first camellia was a camellia japonica from a conservatory in Baltimore. The medium red camellia,

later named "Aunt Jetty," was planted at the Camellia Nursery he owned. Aunt Jetty can still be found all over Tallahassee. In the 1920s, this Camellia Nursery, later to become the **Dorothy B. Oven Park & House**, was owned by Robert Gamble's great-grandson, Breckenridge Gamble, and his adopted sons, Ritchie and Bill Rosa.

In 1923, Alfred B. Maclay, a New York financier, purchased property in Tallahassee on Thomasville Road. This property was to be his family's winter home, and he immediately began to create an elaborate garden. Breckenridge Gamble and Alfred B. Maclay were friends who lived only two miles apart on Thomasville Road and shared an interest in camellias. Because Gamble owned the Camellia Nursery, he was able to assist Maclay in acquiring many of the camellias that are now in **Maclay Gardens**. The camellias at Maclay Gardens came from many different places, including a camellia nursery in Iberia, Louisiana, Japanese nurserymen living in the Southeast, and from his international travels. Two particular camellias still living in Maclay Gardens are a Lady Maclay and a Lady Hume's Blush, which are more than 100 years old.

This connection between **Dorothy Oven Park** and **Maclay Gardens** is not often known. The two original owners worked on building their gardens at the same time and helped each other acquire camellias. When Gamble's son, Bill Rosa, died, his widow, Dorothy, inherited the Camellia Nursery and home. She later wed William J.

Oven, Jr. Upon her death in 1985, Mr. Oven carried out his wife's wishes and donated the property to the City of Tallahassee for use as a city park and it was named **Dorothy Oven Park**.

The **Tallahassee Camellia Society** is one of the longest-continuously running camellia clubs in the United States. It started as the Men's Camellia Club of Tallahassee on January 7, 1947, and



Dorothy B. Oven State Park Camellia Trail



McClay Garden Trail

was a men-only club. In the 1940s, raising camellias was an expensive hobby, and only wealthy businessmen could afford to purchase the plants. It remained a men-only club until 1985 when the name was changed to reflect the ability of members of any gender to join. However, it was not until 1998 that the Tallahassee Camellia Society elected its first woman president, Mary Maud Sharpe. While today, many ladies are members of the Tallahassee Camellia Society, many men are still members, and it is common to see married couples actively involved.

Tallahassee Camellia Society members not only grow camellia plants but have also registered several new camellia varieties. Tallahasseeans are responsible for registering over 45 new varieties dating back to 1940. While 'Aunt Jetty' is probably the most famous variety registered in Tallahassee, several other varieties include 'Weelaunee' and 'Tallahassee Girl' (and seven others) registered by the Rosa Camellia Nursery in the 1940s. Later, Bob Gramling registered three varieties, including 'Anne Gramling' and 'Kathryn Spooner,' and Dick Hardison registered five varieties, including the award winners 'Dick Hardison' and 'Ella Joe.'

Current Tallahassee Camellia Society member Randolph Maphis has registered ten fine new camellias. He has named several for his Tallahassee friends 'Dr. Mary Burch,'



Aunt Jetty



Dick Hardison

'Dr. Richard Hardison,' 'Sharon Wilson,' 'Esther Lawrence,' and one for his grandson 'Pierce Whiddon.' Randolph's close neighbor Howard Rhodes has registered six new varieties including, 'Adrienne Boueres,' 'Pink Kiss,' and 'Splash.' Steve and Gayle Lawrence (who also live close to Randolph) have registered six varieties, including 'Amanda Ann,' 'Mary Ann Lawrence,' and 'Gayle's Mona.' Steve's mother, Esther Lawrence, registered 'Esther's Tomorrow' in 2013, and Maye Walker registered 'Audrey Claire' in 1990.

The Tallahassee Camellia Society has hosted two Camellia Society National Conventions. The first was in 1965, and the second 50 years later, in 2015. Currently, the Tallahassee Camellia Society holds club meetings at **Goodwood Museum and Gardens** (spotlighted on the next page.) In 2022, they donated 100 plants from the L. H. Paul Fund to begin the **L. H. Paul Camellia Garden at St. Peter's Anglican Cathedral** (also spotlighted on the following pages.)

PUBLIC CAMELLIA GARDENS IN TALLAHASSEE

ALFRED B. MACLAY GARDENS STATE PARK, 3540 Thomasville Road, Tallahassee, FL
www.floridastateparks.org/MaclayGardens (see website for hours and admission rates)

Maclay Gardens State Park is a masterpiece of floral architecture. The gardens feature a picturesque brick walkway, a secret garden, a reflection pool, a walled garden, and hundreds of camellias and azaleas. Peak camellia blooming season is from January 1 through April 30, with the peak in mid-to-late March. The gardens are maintained to look as it did in 1953.



Historic Maclay House

The 28-acre Alfred B. Maclay Gardens State Park was designed by Mr. Alfred B. Maclay, a wealthy New York banker and financier, beginning in 1923. In designing the gardens, Mr. Maclay wanted to demonstrate that native and exotic plants could be used together to create a setting of scenic beauty. The gardens were designed to be in bloom during the winter and early spring, the time of year when the family would be in residence in Florida. When creating the gardens, Mr. Maclay started with the camellias, wanting them to serve as the centerpiece for the garden's design. The park has over 150 different camellia cultivars that begin blooming in late fall and continue to bloom through early spring. There are also over 60 varieties of azaleas, which, along with dogwoods, create quite a show, usually in mid-March. Mr. Maclay worked on the gardens until his death in 1944. In 1953, Mrs. Maclay and her children donated the gardens to the state of Florida to be used as a state park. Mrs. Maclay continued to be actively involved in the day-to-day operations of the gardens until her death in 1973. The family home remains on the property, furnished as it was when the Maclay family resided there, and is also open for tours during the blooming season. Maclay Gardens was added to the American Camellia Trail in 2023.



Picturesque Scenery and Paths at Maclay Gardens

DOROTHY B. OVEN PARK, 3205 Thomasville Road, Tallahassee, FL
www.talgov.com/parks/centers-oven (It is free to tour the grounds)

Once part of the 1824 land grant of the Marquis de Lafayette – just like Goodwood to its east – it passed into the hands of Breckenridge Gamble (1874 – 1955). Gamble’s passion was camellias. In 1829, his great-grandfather, Colonel Robert Gamble, brought a camellia japonica to Florida from a Japanese trading vessel. In 1919, the camellia was moved from the Colonel’s home to Killearn Plantation, Alfred Maclay’s newly acquired home to the city’s north. In the 1930s, Breckenridge Gamble, along with Ritchie and Bill Rosa, founded the Rosa Camellia Nursery of Tallahassee on this site. Mr. Gamble became good friends with Alfred Maclay and worked his connections throughout the South to feed Mr. Maclay’s desire to fill Killearn Gardens with camellias. In turn, Mr. Maclay designed the house at Oven Park in the middle of the gardens. The manor sits atop a hill shaded by grand live oaks, with the gardens flowing downhill in every direction. After passing through several owners, the property was donated by Mr. Will J. Oven, Jr. in 1985 to the City of Tallahassee through the Tallahassee Friends of Our Parks Foundation, Inc., in an unprecedented gesture of civic



Dorothy B. Oven State Park Camellia Trail

generosity, with the stipulation that it be developed as a city park, retaining the integrity of the area. The present-day park and manor house is part of Tallahassee’s Parks and Recreation Department, which won the Gold Medal Award from the National Parks Association in 2004. Dorothy B. Oven Park features six acres of lush gardens with azaleas, camellias, palms, and other local flora, as well as a classic manor-style home. The park’s camellias are noted as some of the finest in the area. During the holiday season, they are covered with more than 250,000 twinkling lights, displays, and holiday music to the enjoyment of many kids and adults.

GOODWOOD MUSEUM AND GARDENS, 1600 Miccosukee Road, Tallahassee, FL,
(Open 9 am to 5 pm, and it is free to tour the grounds. House Tour admission is \$12)
www.goodwoodmuseum.org

In 1825, the United States granted the Marquis De Lafayette an approximately 36 square mile area in what was then called “Middle Florida” for his help during the American Revolution. Lafayette never visited this land, and over the years, it was sold



Goodwood Plantation Museum and Gardens

primarily to ambitious planters migrating from Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia. In 1834, the Crooms family of North Carolina, wealthy tobacco planters, purchased 2,400 acres of Lafayette's original land grant. The Crooms began creating a vast cotton and corn plantation. In 1911, Mrs. Alexander Tiers, a wealthy widow, purchased the property and undertook an expansive renovation of the estate. Significantly, she transformed Goodwood Plantation from a landscape of labor to a landscape of leisure, and the appearance of the property today is largely the result of her efforts.

By 1948, the property was owned by Margaret Hodges, and after her death, her husband, Thomas M. Hood, began the restoration of Goodwood. Mr. Hood wanted the property to become a museum and green space that would serve the Tallahassee community. Goodwood's mission is based on that vision, where it is now a space for education, community, and historic preservation. Goodwood Museum & Gardens is home to some of the oldest Pink Perfection camellias in Tallahassee, as well as many other older camellia varieties. It is located in the heart of Tallahassee.

While roses and daffodils are what Goodwood Museum & Gardens are known for, camellias figure prominently throughout the garden's 21 acres of green space. It is not known exactly how many camellias are planted on Goodwood's historic grounds, but many varieties can be found while walking around the house and through Goodwood's nature trails and paved walkways. The first camellias to greet visitors are two large, aged trees that flank the walkway to the visitor center. From there, more camellias can be spotted near the Sunken Garden, along the nature trail beyond the West Garden, and tucked into Goodwood's forest space. Of great interest is a particular Pink Perfection that stands at the corner of Goodwood's main house; standing tall with outstretched branches, camellia experts have claimed that this may be the oldest living variety of Pink Perfection in the City of Tallahassee.

**L.H. PAUL CAMELLIA GARDEN AT
ST. PETER'S ANGLICAN CATHEDRAL**

4784 Thomasville Road
Tallahassee, FL (Open to the public.)



St. Peter's Anglican Cathedral, Tallahassee, FL

In 2022, the Tallahassee Camellia Society donated 100 plants from the L. H. Paul Fund to begin the L. H. Paul Camellia Garden at St. Peter's Anglican Cathedral on Thomasville Road. Mr. L. H. Paul was a World War II veteran who won 5 bronze star medals. He was a camellia lover and member of the Tallahassee Camellia Society for over 25 years. Upon his death, he donated 140,000 dollars to the Tallahassee Camellia Society. The 100 camellias were planted in seven circles, seven feet apart, with a pine straw path meandering through the garden. Individual name markers on 18 -inch metal stakes are at each camellia, and a future plaque designating it as the L.H. Paul Camellia Garden at St Peter's Anglican Cathedral will be installed. Future plans include adding picnic areas with concrete tables and seats and the placement of benches inside the Camellia Circles for private meditations. The Cathedral parishioners intend to add at least 100 more camellias within the next few years, along with seasonal flowers and trees that will add more beauty throughout the year.

CAMELLIAS REGISTERED FROM TALLAHASSEE, FL

A quick search using the ACCS Photo Gallery searching tool shows 49 camellia varieties that originated in Tallahassee, FL. There are certainly others not included due to a lack of photos. Last names such as Rhodes, Maphis, Lawrence, Hardison, Gramling, and Rosa Camellia Nursery have registered most of the varieties — but a total of fourteen different people from Tallahassee have registered at least one variety.



**Mary Skappel Evans (by Steve and
Gayle Lawrence)**



Adrienne Boueres (by Howard Rhodes)

ACCS STATE DIRECTORS

| State | Name | Term |
|----------------|----------------|-----------|
| Florida | Jerry Selph | 2022-2024 |
| Florida | Howard Rhodes | 2022-2024 |
| Georgia | Gene Phillips | 2023-2025 |
| Georgia | Sandra Jones | 2023-2025 |
| Louisiana | Jim Campbell | 2022-2024 |
| Maryland | Richard Mohr | 2023-2025 |
| North Carolina | John Fields | 2023-2025 |
| North Carolina | Cathy Kubeny | 2023-2025 |
| South Carolina | Paul Cloessner | 2022-2024 |
| South Carolina | Philip Thomas | 2022-2024 |
| Virginia | Toni McKenna | 2022-2024 |
| At Large | Vacant | 2022-2024 |

Join NOW! — The Atlantic Coast Camellia Society

A membership entitles you to a journal published in January, May, and September and full access to ACCS Website. To join, send your check and membership info below to:

**ACCS, Fred C. Jones
2056 Dunn Road
Moultrie, GA 31768**

Yearly Membership (Single or Double): \$25.00 Lifetime Membership: \$500

Note: The Information below can be printed on a separate sheet of paper instead of tearing out of the Journal.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone # (include Area Code): _____

E-Mail: _____



Camellia Japonica 'Bessie Battle'
Grown and Photographed by J. D. Thomerson