

Atlantic Coast Camellias

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Camellia Reticulata 'Fannie Louise Maphis Var.'

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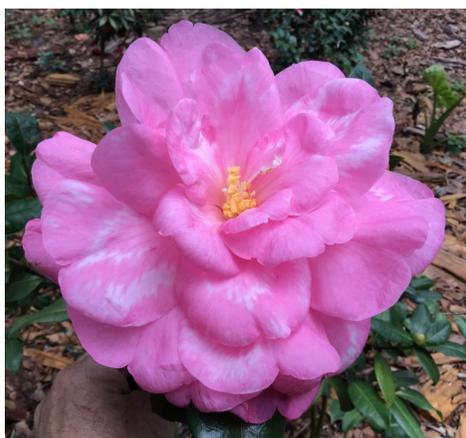
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From the Cover

‘Fannie Louise Maphis Var’

*Front cover photo taken by
J. D. Thomerson*

Fannie Louise Maphis is a Reticulata Hybrid (Suzanne Withers x Delta Dawn) originated and registered by Hulyn Smith in 2008. It is a Very Large, Semidouble to Rose Form Double that blooms Midseason. It is very vigorous in growth and resists dieback that plagues many reticulatas. It was named in honor of Randolph Maphis’s mother.



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The 2025 ACCS Convention will be held on Friday, Oct. 3rd and Saturday, Oct. 4th. It will meet at the Embassy Suites by Hilton, near the Savannah Airport. This is the same venue as last year.

Please Mark your Calendars Now and Plan to Attend.

More Details will be Forthcoming on the ACCS Website

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

by Carol Selph

The end of a camellia season has always been bittersweet for Jerry and me. For instance, no more shows until the fall means not cutting, spraying, storing, making out show cards, driving to a show at 4 a.m., getting organized at the event, and prepping and grooming 150 blooms versus sleeping in, having no more beautiful blooms to share but watching the new flushes grow, and not seeing all of our favorite exhibitors weekly. It means the camellia societies are not meeting versus missing the fellowship with our club members. The tremendous work is not missed; however, the beauty of the blooms and the time spent with friends is definitely missed.

Geary Serpas always proclaimed the big winners at the shows were the exhibitors who worked the hardest. Congratulations to all the camellia growers who consistently won this past season because of all the effort they invested. In the Greenhouse Division, the big winners were Bob and Sandy Black, Howard and Mary Rhodes, Tommy and Brenda Alden, and Mack and Ann McKinnon. In the Unprotected Division, J. D. and Kay Thomerson, Louis and Joanne Raska, Marty and Diane Clark, and Nancibeth Shealy were at the top of the leaderboard. Shows do not just happen without massive amounts of work, so a big thank you to the societies hosting the numerous shows across the Atlantic Coast region. Camellia shows are our best way to get community members interested in growing camellias, which grow our local societies, as well as ACCS and ACS.

By the first of October, we are all missing one another, which is a great time to catch up and gear up for a new season. **The annual ACCS Convention is scheduled for October 3rd and 4th for 2025.** We will again gather at the Embassy Suites by Hilton with the Friday night low country boil at the Mighty Eighth Museum. The convention dates were moved to the weekend this year to better accommodate our members who are still working. Our young members are tomorrow's future leaders, and it is our goal to make it as easy as possible for them to be a big part of our fellowship, sharing fun, learning, and making memories.

Last year, specifically on September 26th, the third eye of a series of hurricanes came directly over our seven-acre camellia garden. It didn't take three hurricanes for us to decide we do not like hurricanes. One would have been sufficient. If you missed the convention two years ago, you missed J. D. Thomerson's best speech ever. It



Carol Selph

started with the statement, “I do not like hurricanes -- The End.” If you missed it, I suggest you have him present it to your club. Jerry and I planted our camellia garden under 35-year-old pines twenty years ago. We had passionately collected over 3500 camellias and had maintained them with constant care. While I was attending the 2024 ACCS Convention, I naively believed that everything was fine and that we had dodged a bullet from Helene. However, upon returning, I kept hearing the horror stories. I must say we were so blessed not to have damage to our home. It is hard to believe that one hurricane could wreak such damage from Keaton Beach, Florida, to Savannah, through South and North Carolina, Tennessee, and Western Kentucky. We definitely count our blessings. However, our camellia garden was all but destroyed. Jerry has sawed more than 100 pines and still has a few more to go. We have both hauled the debris to the ever-growing trash piles.

Our dear friend, Tommy Martin, brought things back to perspective when he casually said he always thought of me and my love for the beautiful new foliage of camellias as the new growth unfolds in the spring. Camellias look so tired after they spend the winter delighting us with beautiful blooms. Then, suddenly, new flushes bring on fresh growth that reminds us of a great expectation of another camellia season. After six months of work, our garden still looks rough. However, we are grateful for the joy our garden brought us and our many visitors and the many close friendships we have made over our showing experiences. Camellia friends are wonderful.

May God continue to bless each of you.

Carol Selph, ACCS President



Photos of Hurricane Helene’s Destruction of Jerry and Carol Selph’s Camellia Garden in Brooks County, GA

2025 Fall Atlantic Coast Camellia Society Convention

October 3-4 (Friday and Saturday)

Embassy Suites by Hilton Savannah Airport

To Register and see all details visit the ACCS Website at:

<http://www.atlanticcoastcamelliasociety.org>

(Details will be Posted in the Coming Weeks)

	Friday, October 3, 2025
6:30 - 8:30 a.m.	Complimentary Hotel Breakfast for Thursday Night Guests
10:30 a.m. - Noon	ACCS Board Meeting — Hotel Meeting Room
	Lunch on Your Own
1:30 - 4:00 p.m.	Bonaventure Cemetary Tour
1:30 - 3:30 p.m.	Judges' Re-Accreditation (with Jerry & Carol Selph)
5:30 - 8:30 p.m.	Welcome Party 5:30 p.m. — Cash Bar Low Country Boil 6:30 p.m. National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force

	Saturday, October 4, 2025
6:30 - 8:30 a.m.	Breakfast on Your Own/Complimentary Hotel Breakfast
9:00 - 10:00 a.m.	Bloody Marys/Screwdrivers/Coffee Bar (Hotel Meeting Room) Individual Items for Sale
10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	General Meeting Followed by Auction (Hotel Meeting Room)
12:30 - 2:00 p.m.	Lunch on Your Own
2:00 - 3:00 p.m.	Education Program — Speaker: John Davy Topic: "Not Your Grandmother's Camellias"
3:00 - 4:00 p.m.	Education Program — Speaker: J. D. Thomerson Topic: "Successes, Failures, Regrets, and Recommendations from a Backyard Camellia Grower"
5:00 p.m.	Complimentary Drinks & Appetizers (Hotel Lobby)
6:00 - 7:00 p.m.	Refreshments/Open Bar (Hotel Meeting Room)
7:00 - 9:00 p.m.	Dinner & Keynote Speaker: Forrest Latta Topic: "Camellias: An International Language"

RICHARD AND BETTY GAIL BUGGELN'S RARE 'FRANKLIN TREE'

By Betty Gail Buggeln and J. D. Thomerson

Betty Gail Buggeln emailed me (J. D.) the message below and the photos below of their "Franklin Tree"

Richard and I planted our "Franklin Tree" about two years ago. It is very healthy and flowering from late July - August. It is part of the "Theaceae" family which includes our beloved camellia. It is the only indigenous camellia in the United States. Both of us thought that you might want to add a page about this unusual plant in the next Journal. With best wishes, Betty Gail and Richard.

After several Google searches for "Franklin Tree" I found a lot of interesting information about this tree. *Franklinia Altamaha*, also known as the lost Franklin Tree, is America's rarest tree.

This tree was discovered by botanist John and William Bartram near the Altamaha River in Georgia in 1765. They returned at a later time to collect seeds of this tree for propagation and were successful in growing the seeds into trees. John Bartram named the tree in honor of his friend, Ben Franklin, and the Altamaha river.



This tree has not been seen in the wild since 1803 despite many searches – it is now considered extinct in the wild. However, thanks to the Bartram's efforts it can be purchased from specialty nurseries in the southeastern USA. *Franklinia Altamaha* is a member of the Theaceae family making it a relative of camellias. It is also closely related to *Stewartia* and *Gordonia* (loblolly bay). The tree can be somewhat temperamental due to its intolerance to drought and dislike of being transplanted. But, is worth the effort when it shows off its fragrant, white, camellia-like flowers, three inches across, that bloom from July to late summer when few other trees bloom. The bright green foliage turns a vivid orange-red in the fall while some flowers are still in bloom. It typically grows slowly to 20 – 25 feet tall and 15 feet wide and can be trained to a single trunk or allowed to become a multi-trunked shrub. Ideal growing conditions include full sun, with some afternoon shade during the summer, and acidic soil that is moist and well-drained.

Fort Matanzas National Monument and Washington Oaks Gardens State Park

By J. D. Thomerson

My daughter Katie recently completed her Occupational Therapy degree from the University of St. Augustine — yes, thank you, Lord. With its historic downtown, beautiful beaches, and wonderful places to eat, Kay and I enjoyed visiting Katie on many occasions during the two years she lived in St. Augustine. On one visit, the three of us ventured about 30 miles south of St. Augustine to visit two highly recommended sites.

The first was the Fort Matanzas National Monument. One of my lifetime goals is to visit every National Park and Monument in the United States. I knew this was a must-do visit, and we were not disappointed. There was a nice boardwalk trail (about 3/4 of a mile) through a forest hammock, where we saw gorgeous views of a canopy of diverse trees, shrubs, and varied animal life. However, the highlight of this park was the 20-minute ferry ride up the river to the **Matanzas National Monument**. The monument preserves a watchtower fort built in 1742 using coquina shells. The watchtower was used to defend the southern approach to the Spanish military settlement of St. Augustine. The ferry dropped visitors off at the site, and for 30 minutes, you could climb the fort and enter several rooms filled with period furnishings. The view from the roof was beautiful.



Fort Mantanzas National Monument

I know this first site does not have anything to do with camellias. But just a few miles further south, at Washington Oaks Gardens State Park, we were impressed with a beautiful, large camellia garden with at least 50 camellias. The camellia garden was just one section of a 20-acre formal garden with remarkable displays of native and non-native plants. Giant oak trees and various tropical palms shaded the well-groomed paths. There were many ponds and water features among the plethora of flowering plants. The camellia garden had good signage and contained many of the most popular camellias grown during the 1950s—1960s. I was so surprised to see the large flowering camellias that I kept telling Kay and Katie to take picture after picture.



Camellia Garden at Washington Oaks Garden State Park

In addition to the formal gardens, Washington Oaks Gardens had a scenic short trail among its 425 acres of Florida's original coastal scenery. One path led to the mouth of a river going out to the ocean. Kay, Katie, and I enjoyed watching several fishermen catch an assortment of fish, but got really excited when we saw a manatee swim by.

The two trips above are just a couple of the many great sites in my area of South Georgia and North Florida where you can enjoy nature. Many, like Washington Oaks Gardens, many feature our beloved camellias. Please send me photos of sites you visit that feature camellias so we can share these places with others.

EVERYTHING I HAVE EVER LEARNED ABOUT THE CAMELLIA HOBBY

By J. D. Thomerson

Don't stone me: but I like Japanese Maples, Citrus, Gingers, and Hydrangeas, as much as I do Camellias. Japanese Maples display a fantastic color display in the Spring and Fall with red, orange, and yellow leaves. Also, they are beautiful year-round with their various growth forms – upright, rounded, weeping, etc. Leaves come in all sizes and shapes with many having lace-leaved dissected foliage. I have a nice collection of about 25 trees consisting of 20 different varieties. I have also enjoyed growing several dozen Japanese maples from seed and many of these seedlings are just as pretty and impressive as named varieties. I really like Japanese maples (see photos of two examples on this page.)



Likewise, I very much enjoy growing citrus trees. I have about 20 citrus trees consisting of 15 different varieties, with several varieties of satsuma, oranges, tangelos, grapefruit, lemons, kumquats, and pomelo. Of course, the number one advantage of growing citrus is eating the great-tasting fruit. These backyard citrus fruits taste much better than the ones you can buy at the grocery store. Kay and I enjoy sharing citrus fruit with neighbors, friends, and relatives. The orange and yellow fruit balls also make a beautiful visual display in the fall and winter months and complement the Japanese maples, camellias, and other fall flowers and foliage. I really like growing citrus trees (see photo at top of next page.)



I could write other explanations of why I like Gingers, Hydrangeas, and several other plants. However, Japanese maples, citrus, and these other plants are not what I would consider hobbies. Yes, I like growing them, but

they are not hobbies. What do the camellia and camellia growers have that other plant groups do not that make them such a great hobby? Let me tell you what makes the camellia unique and why it is a truly wonderful hobby.

The Camellia Hobby Offers Year-Round Things to Do

I will begin with February and gradually list fun camellia activities for the rest of the Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall. A full calendar of camellia activities that makes camellia growing a real hobby. OK, here we go. February is the month that most camellia folks graft camellias. This is probably my favorite camellia activity and I typically enjoy making lists of varieties I want to graft months in advance. This involves locating these wanted varieties and asking camellia friends if I can exchange scions with them. Often, it requires visiting a friend's camellia garden to collect the wanted scions, which allows for getting to know each other better and making new friends. Of course, camellias are still blooming in February, and there are camellia shows to attend.

March begins to wind down the camellia blooming season, but many other activities start. Mid to late March, as the camellias finish blooming, is the best time to prune them. When your camellia collection gets more extensive and more mature, this is a big task – but, for me, an enjoyable one. Right after pruning, I also fertilize and look



This two-year old seedling needs a larger pot.



forward to an abundance of new beautiful leaf growth that will soon begin. It sounds strange, but I often think my camellias look the best at this time – even perhaps more attractive than when they are blooming. I typically spray my camellias in April to ensure bugs don't invade this beautiful new growth. Scale, mites, and aphids are the main culprits, and horticultural oil (Ultra-Fine or All Seasons) is a great deterrent. There are other systemic pesticides that I like to use on occasion as well. These are often quite expensive, but the dosage is often so low that a gallon or even a quart of the product will last for ten years or longer and, in the long run, is a pretty good bargain.

Early Spring is a good time to change the potting mix for camellias you have been growing in pots and transfer young seedlings or rooted cuttings into larger pots. Even though I prefer to plant new camellias in



the Fall and winter, it is still OK to plant them in the ground in early Spring before it gets too hot.

April and early May are also the perfect time to air-layer camellias (see photo at left.) The weather is typically perfect this time of year and air-layering is a very easy and fun way to add camellias to your collection. May is typically a very dry month in Valdosta, and while some may disagree, I enjoy hand-watering my camellias. The weather is usually still very nice, and it is very relaxing for me. This beneficial water will help make many big, nice flower buds in the Fall. I mainly focus on watering young camellias that have been planted only for a year or two.

Beginning around the middle of June and throughout the hot month of July, Mark Crawford and I tour the southeast, gathering camellia cuttings to root. The hot summer is when camellia cuttings make roots the best; even though it's burning hot, I still enjoy this activity. And, of course, I have been enjoying making lists of the varieties I want to root for several months – I enjoy making all kinds of camellia lists. After gathering the cuttings, it is time to wound them, dip them in rooting hormone, stick them in a rooting mix, and either place them in a mist system or a hot house terrarium-type set-up.

To have blooms for the Georgia National Fair Camellia show and the South Carolina Fair show in early and mid-October, it is necessary to begin gibbing some camellia blooms in August. I typically start around August 10, gibbing a few blooms on early blooming varieties, and continue gibbing about every 10 days. Gibbing is another relaxing activity for me, and I like knowing it will force much earlier and larger blooms, typically in six or seven weeks. Around this same time and continuing for a couple of months is when you should disbud many of the excess flower buds on your plants.

September and early October are good times to check those air layers you made back in April/May, and if they are hard like a baseball, go ahead and cut them and pot them up. One of my favorite camellia activities is looking for camellia seeds (see photo at right.) It is like going on an easter egg hunt. There are many different ways to sprout and grow camellia seeds, and they are all easy, so do a Google search or visit the ACS website for detailed options. September is when most local camellia societies begin their club meetings, and this is always a fun time to socialize and learn more about camellias.

October also begins the many camellia shows, and there are shows in various cities through March. Camellia folks enjoy attending, exhibiting blooms, and judging at



these shows. Kay and I used to only go to ones less than two hours away, but we have expanded that to 3 ½ hours and occasionally spend Friday night and attend the Friday night judges' party. The camellia shows are so enjoyable to visit with friends from out of town and see new varieties, which adds to my wish list.

November is a favorite time for me as the weather is cool but not freezing, and it is the perfect time to plant new camellias, rooted cuttings, or seedlings that have grown large enough to plant in the yard. November and December are also good times when folks who graft in raised beds can dig up their grafts and pot them. In the past, groups of 12-plus camellia addicts from all over the southeast met at Gordy's camellia garden in Ocala, FL,



Camellia Show at Masee Lane

to dig up and pot hundreds of grafted camellias – it was such fun. More recently, gatherings like this have taken place at Randolph Maphis's camellia garden in Tallahassee, FL and we have dug up and potted as many as 300 plus grafts. This might seem like a lot of work, and it is, but it's also fun.



Grafted Camellias in J. D.'s Raised Bed

December through February is the prime bloom season for our camellias. Kay and I have begun inviting friends and neighbors to tour our camellia garden during this time. Kay has even started inviting groups such as Valdosta's Learning in

Retirement to tour our camellias and listen to me talk about camellia culture. All of this is so rewarding to us.

We are back to February where we started. However, I now realize I did not even discuss things like reading all the good camellia publications such as the ACS Journals and Yearbooks and, of course, this ACCS Journal. The Atlantic Coast Camellia Society has an outstanding website where you can view thousands of camellia photos and read hundreds of past camellia articles in various archived camellia journals. Then, there are Regional (ACCS and GCCS) and National Camellia Conventions held each year in different locations, which are always very nice. One final camellia hobby that has gained popularity recently is posting camellia photos on social media. Facebook is the site where I see the most camellia activity, but I am sure there are others. There are sites for discussing and sharing photos of camellia seedlings, sites for sharing camellia scions for grafting or rooting with one another, and various other camellia sites.

So, hopefully, after reading all of the above activities, I have convinced you that growing camellias is a twelve-month-a-year hobby. As much as I love Japanese maples and citrus and other plants, they just do not offer the year-round activities and fun as does growing camellias.

The Hobby is as Much About the PEOPLE as Just Growing Camellias

With all the fun activities mentioned above, the camellia hobby's most essential and satisfying activity is the interaction with other camellia addicts. Camellia Folks are



Camellia Friends Gather at Randolph and Marilyn Maphis's Camellia Garden

Just Special and Awesome -- Loving, Kind, Generous, Helpful, Caring (all that Good Stuff.) Unfortunately, we have lost several of these amazing camellia folks. I can't help but think about folks like Hulyn and Janet Smith, Gordy and Miss Lillian, Dinh Swanson, Jerry Conrad, Clayton Mathis, Richard Mims, Buck Mizzell, and many others. These special people can never be replaced, but we need new leaders and mentors if our camellia societies continue to grow and prosper. With this thought in mind, I have a few suggestions for our camellia community.

Suggestions/Recommendations

- **Buy a Membership for a Friend to ACS and/or Regional Society**
- **Seek Out Someone You Can Mentor and Help with Camellias**
- **Write an Article for a Local, Regional, or National Publication**
- **Give a Presentation at Your Local Camellia Club**
- **Accept Leadership Roles at the Local, Regional, and National Levels**
- **Camellias Make Great Gifts. Follow-up with the Recipients. Ask, How Are Your Camellias Doing? Take an Interest.**
- **Invite People to Visit and Tour Your Camellia Garden. Offer Camellia Workshops at Your House**
- **Join More than One Local Camellia Club and Visit Even More**

All the above might not be everything I have ever learned about the camellia hobby, but I hope you agree that it sure is a lot. I will continue to love my Japanese maples, citrus, and other plants, but my gardening and plant hobby is the camellia. If you are not as crazy of a camellia hobbyist as I am, then I encourage you to take an even deeper plunge into the hobby by adding many of the activities that I have discussed in this article. I am convinced you will never regret becoming even more addicted to camellias than you are now.

You Can Always Find New Places to Plant Camellias

- ⌘ **Do You Have Grass? Get Rid of It. Have You Ever Been to a Grass Show?**
- ⌘ **Your Yard is Just Too Small. Plant them in Your Neighbors Yard.**
- ⌘ **Buy a Rental House with a Big Back Yard.**
- ⌘ **Plant them at Your Church or at a Park.**
- ⌘ **If You Think it is Too Cold — Buy or Build a Greenhouse**

Background Information on Your Editor J. D. Thomerson Needed to Understand the 51 Camellia Word Search Story Below

Many readers are probably aware that I was a teacher by profession. I taught in the College of Education at Valdosta State University (VSU) in Valdosta, GA, for 31 years before retiring in 2019 and becoming a full-time camellia grower, among other things. When I was hired in 1988, I was told I would have to obtain a doctoral degree to keep my job teaching Business Education courses. However, to teach full-time, Monday – Friday, at VSU, I had to take all my coursework for the degree on the weekends. Fortunately, the University of Georgia in Athens, GA, had a weekend program in Vocational Education. The classes met Friday evening from 5 – 10 pm and then Saturday morning and afternoon from 8 am – 3 pm. Students attending from out of town spent the night at a nearby Day's Inn. These trips and weekends were repeated every week for two years. I did not enjoy the long trips or all the coursework – but I did enjoy getting to know lots of interesting people: friendly, mean, strange, odd, quirky, funny, and obnoxious are just some of the adjectives I would use to describe these folks. With the background information above, I would like to share what I will call “J. D.'s Adventures and Coursework at UGA.”

“J. D.'s Adventures and Coursework at UGA”

**The Story Below Contains the Names of 51 Camellia Varieties
Try and Find Them All (answer key on page 21)**

Much of this Story is Factual and True, but All Names are Fictional, and Extra Jam was Spread on Some of the Stories

I carpooled to UGA from Valdosta, GA, with a colleague at VSU named Kay Berridge – but everyone called her Lady Kay. We would travel together to Tifton, GA, and then pick up another doctoral student named Lillian Gordy, whom we called Miss Lillian. Also, a man named Frank Houser would join us from Tifton. Frank Houser must have thought he was some Super Star football player when he was younger. He would talk for hours about a touchdown he once scored when his Tama Loch Laurel Middle School Night Riders beat the Dorothy Chester Middle School Silver Waves. But at least this helped pass the four-hour drive from Valdosta to Athens. All three carpool folks gradually became great friends, and I have pleasant memories of our many trips together.

On our trips to UGA, just outside of Athens, there were many fruit stands. We always stopped, and I bought a big apple – usually a red one, but occasionally, I would buy a sour green type apple they called a 'Bella Jinhua.' The fruit stands also sold a candy apple, but I didn't like them. Lady Kay liked to buy flower bouquets from these stands; they were adorable and really something beautiful.

Even though I live in Georgia and attended UGA, I am not a Georgia Bulldog fan. I grew up in Knoxville, TN, and have always been a huge Tennessee Volunteer fan. Well,

the UGA fans really gave me a hard time about this. Folks in Athens love football and those in the know were impressed that I lived in Valdosta, known as TitleTown USA, for its many football championships.

When we finally arrived on the UGA campus and got to our first class, I was so tired that I would often daydream. The classes were also boring, so I would use my imagination to try and pass the time. Some of my dreams were so vivid that they were almost like optical illusions. I saw island sunsets with beautiful crashing waves that left pretty white seafoam on the beaches. I never told anyone about these dreams – I kept them all a deep secret. We typically did not get to the hotel and bed Friday night until after midnight, and we had to get up at dawn's early light to be back in class at 8 am Saturday.

Many of the professors at UGA were very good – but not all of them. There were a few that were quite "high" on themselves. We said they lived in their own "ivory tower." My VSU students would sometimes call me Mr. J. D. instead of Mr. or Dr. Thomerson – and, as long as they were polite, this did not bother me at all. This was not true for Dr. Clifford Parks at UGA – you had better call him Dr. Parks, or you would be severely scolded. Dr. Clifford Parks was from the Magic City of Mathotiana, and the culture there was different from that in Georgia. He would say very strange things, constantly referring to his wife Tiffany as "sweetie pie." He would even tell people when he and his sweetie pie had whoopee together. This always made the students at first blush and then get really disgusted.

Another odd professor at UGA was a lady we called "Alice in the Palace" because she, too, thought she was a bit better than everyone else. Her real name was Mary Alice Cox, but some called her mean names like "red devil" because, for one thing, she was mean, and secondly, she had black red hair. Her husband, who also taught at UGA, called her "Lady in Red" for some reason – I guess the red hair. He was also very strange. He was a member of a social club called the Black Knight Brothers. We heard rumors that this club practiced black magic, but that might have been just some people's imagination running wild. The club had a symbol that identified them, and it was a red-colored fircone-shaped object. I had no desire to learn more about it, but I did wonder if it represented the underground Shikibu cult that supposedly met in the area.

There were many happy times during my coursework at UGA, and not all the professors were weird. There were some excellent teachers like Professor Charles S. Sargent and his wife, Lady Clare. He was so nice to his wife that he called her his dreamboat. Before teaching his classes, he always said, "OK, it's Show Time." He dressed colorfully, sometimes in yellow and purple, and told students they needed to study with "Irrational Exuberance."

Well, this ends my "Adventures and Coursework at UGA" story.

I hope you were able to find ALL 51 Camellia Variety Names in the Story. If not, the answer key is on page 21.

The Chesapeake Arboretum

Virginia's "Other" American Camellia Trail Garden

By Fred McKenna

When folks think about camellias in Virginia, they usually think of the Hofheimer Camellia Garden located within the Norfolk Botanical Gardens. Indeed, this garden is a camellia treasure and is well-known to many ACCS members. Just recently, Norfolk Botanical Garden was voted #3 in Newsweek's 2025 Reader's Choice Awards for Best Botanical Garden in the U.S. This places NBG with other top national gardens such as the U.S. Botanical Garden, Atlanta Botanical Garden, and the New York Botanical Garden.

Within the Norfolk Botanical Garden, more than 1700 camellia plants are located throughout its grounds, and approximately 750 camellias are found together within the Hofheimer Camellia Garden. This camellia garden was established in 1992 as a joint project of the Norfolk Botanical Garden and the Virginia Camellia Society. It is named in memory of Alan J. and Aline F. Hofheimer, founding members of the Virginia Camellia Society. The Hofheimer Camellia Garden includes 500 different types of *Camellia japonica*, 40 different types of *Camellia sasanqua*, and more than 180 other species and hybrids. And, of course, it is listed as an American Camellia Trail Garden. If you have not seen this garden in bloom, you are truly missing something.

Within a short twenty-five-minute drive of the Norfolk Botanical Gardens is another American Camellia Trail Garden, Virginia's "other" Camellia Trail Garden named Camellia Cove. Camellia Cove is a part of the Chesapeake Arboretum, which is



Part of the Camellia Cove Camellia Garden at the Chesapeake Arboretum

in the Great Bridge section of Chesapeake, Virginia. The Chesapeake Arboretum is a 51-acre "Nature's Classroom" that promotes horticultural and environmental awareness through displays, education, and research.

The Chesapeake Arboretum had a very humble beginning. A public service announcement in the local newspaper in 1987 stated that "A meeting will be held for anyone interested in trees, 7 PM Thursday at the Horticulture classroom at the Chesapeake VOTECH Center on Cedar Rd." Fifteen people showed up, and they talked about trees. They agreed to meet again and talk about the development of an arboretum. From these early meetings, the seeds were sown to establish the Chesapeake Arboretum with Dr. Sam Selden as President. Land was donated by the Whitehurst and Halls family, which lay between two neighborhoods with the idea of providing a quiet place for nature in the midst of suburbia.

By the fall of 2000, Phil Johnson, one of the 15 founding fathers of the Chesapeake Arboretum, was approached by a gentleman who said, "Do you have any camellias in the Arboretum?" The gentleman introduced himself as Rick "Fritz" Morsink, more formally known as Dr. Frederick Morsink. Fritz's wife had recently passed, and he was selling his house and property. Part of this process was to look for a location to donate and transplant some of his camellias. Fritz had about 140+ plants; all were well-pruned to 3-4 feet in height and were proportionally shaped. Fritz stated that if the Chesapeake Arboretum wanted them, he would dig them up and relocate them. The Chesapeake Arboretum Board approved the effort to relocate the camellias, and that winter, Fritz transplanted over 100 camellias.

As the years went by, many more camellias were added to Camellia Cove and throughout the trails and gardens of the Chesapeake Arboretum. However, the small volunteer staff at the Chesapeake Arboretum struggled to keep up with the entire expanse of property. It was during the 2014 - 2017 timeframe that it became obvious that the Chesapeake Arboretum was outgrowing the bandwidth available from a small set of volunteers. Despite the best efforts, the Chesapeake Arboretum became overgrown and Camellia Cove was no exception.

By the spring of 2018, the Chesapeake Arboretum was turned over to the City of Chesapeake Parks and Recreation Department, and positive change immediately started to occur. One of the positive actions was that the Virginia Camellia Society joined forces with the City of Chesapeake Arboretum staff to revitalize Camellia Cove, which by now had fallen victim to overgrowth and a significant loss of original camellia plantings. The Virginia Camellia Society approved a motion to adopt Camellia Cove to



Camellia Cove was named an American Camellia Trail Garden in 2020 by ACS

honor and remember Dr. Morsink and expand the opportunity for more exposure of camellias to the public. A key partner in this revitalization effort was the volunteers from the Chesapeake Master Gardener group. From 2018 through 2020, Camellia Cove was slowly cleared, with paths mulched and the camellias properly pruned and tagged. It is estimated that roughly 97 camellias were saved from the original outlay of close to 150 camellias when the Cove was founded. Work even continued in earnest during the COVID-19 epidemic. Virginia Camellia Society member Dale Shelley was key to coordinating the restoration and growth of Camellia Cove with significant help from Phil Peek and Mike Andruczyk.

Now, the Virginia Camellia Society is committed to the upkeep of Camellia Cove, expanding the trail system throughout the area and adding additional plants. In 2020-2021, Bob Black donated 20 different camellias, all in 15-gallon containers, greatly accelerating the number of mature plants in the Cove. At present, we have 195 camellias, with additions being planned.

At the 2020 American Camellia Society Convention, the Virginia Camellia Society and the Chesapeake Arboretum were very proud to have Camellia Cove recognized as an America Camellia Trail Garden, making it the second (or as some would say, "the other") such garden in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Looking back, one big takeaway from this effort is an important message that we could all use in our recruitment efforts: that camellia societies do much more than have beautiful camellia shows. They can be a powerful force in preserving gardens and safeguarding the camellia legacy for future generations.

Camellia Cove is located at 624 Oak Grove Rd., Chesapeake, VA 23320



Camellia Cove Visual Diagram & Listing of Camellias Planted in the Garden

Camellia Spotlight

Camellia Japonica 'Ghenty, J.' (Notice the Size of this Nine Inch Bloom
Photographed by Jay Ellis of Keystone Heights, FL)

Ghenty, J. was registered in 1989 by O. L. Jacobson of Jacksonville, FL. The bloom is a Rose Form Double with twisted and curled petals. Often the blooms will look pure white but was registered as a White to Blush White bloom which it also sometimes reveals. It was registered as a Large, but when gibbed it can obtain very large proportions as shown in the bloom shown below.



Answer Key (51 Camellia Varieties in Story on pages 16-17): Kay Berridge, Lady Kay, Lillian Gordy, Miss Lillian, Frank Houser, Super Star, Touchdown, Tama Loch Laurel, Night Rider, Dorothy Chester, Silver Waves, Pleasant Memories, Big Apple, Bella Jinhua, Candy Apple, Adorable, Something Beautiful, Volunteer, TitleTown USA, Daydream, Imagination, Optical Illusion, Island Sunset, Seafoam, Deep Secret, Midnight, Dawn's Early Light, Ivory Tower, Mr. J. D., Dr. Clifford Parks, Magic City, Mathotiana, Tiffany, Sweetie Pie, Whoopee, First Blush, Alice in the Palace, Mary Alice Cox, Red Devil, Lady in Red, Black Knight, Black Magic, Fircone, Desire, Shikibu, Professor Charles S. Sargent, Lady Clare, Dreamboat, Show Time, Yellow and Purple, and Irrational Exuberance

How to Root Camellia Cuttings

By Bob Black
Windsor, Virginia



Bob Black Collecting Cuttings

Propagating camellias from cuttings has advantages over other methods of obtaining new plants. Seed-grown camellias are one common method, but offspring from a cultivar grown from seeds are not genetically identical and may take several years to produce flower buds and flowers. Grafting is another method of propagating camellias, but it requires a skilled hand to be successful, and aftercare can be a challenge. Air layering camellias is an easy propagation technique, but obtaining a significant quantity of plants is rather time-consuming. In comparison, cutting propagation is a quick and easy way to obtain genetically identical (clonal cultivars) and doesn't require the skill level of grafting. In addition, most cultivars grown from cuttings will bloom within the first year or two.

The Setup:

There are several setup options for rooting cuttings. The goal is to create an environment that will maintain turgid, healthy cuttings until roots develop. A small enclosure, such as a cold frame or even an old Styrofoam cooler, could be modified to create a high-humidity chamber that will prevent the cuttings from desiccating before roots are formed. This article describes propagating camellias utilizing a raised bench equipped with an intermittent mist system to provide an ideal environment for producing healthy new-rooted cuttings. This setup requires a little more investment in equipment but rewards the propagator with a reliable environment to maintain cuttings in excellent condition and consistently obtain nice quality rooted cuttings.



The structure consists of a 4 x 9 foot raised wire bench with a 15-inch high perimeter to prevent wind desiccation, a mist controller, an electric solenoid valve, misting nozzles, and connecting piping (see photos at the bottom of the previous page.) The bench should also be in the shade or provide a shade structure above the bench.

Substrate and Trays (see photo below):

The ideal propagation substrate will be well drained yet hold adequate moisture for growing the cuttings on after they are rooted. There are numerous substrate formulations that will perform well for rooting and growing camellia cuttings. Many propagators stick cuttings in a one-to-one ratio of sphagnum peat moss and perlite. I use a custom blend of aged loblolly pine bark (20 parts), coarse horticultural perlite (8



parts,) and sphagnum peat moss (1 part.) It is amended with a low rate of 12-7-18 controlled release fertilizer (approximately one cup per average 6 cubic foot wheelbarrow) and dolomitic lime (two cups dolomitic lime per average six cubic foot wheelbarrow — assuming water chemistry is average.) A low-density premixed bagged substrate containing pine bark, perlite, and peat moss with pH adjusted within the ideal range of 6.0 - 6.5 will work as well.

There are several tray and cell count possibilities. I like the space for the cuttings using 18-cell trays with 3-inch by 3-inch-deep cells for japonicas and other large-leafed cultivars. I do not cut the foliage to reduce the leaf surface area as it is unnecessary, as this could become an entry point for disease organisms. Thirty-two cell trays work well for sasanquas, which do not need as much space. The deeper cells for both the 18s and 32s help prevent the bottoms of the cuttings from staying wet and rotting during the mist application phase of production.

Collecting and Preparing:

Semi-hardwood cuttings from current season growth of approximately six inches are collected (preferably in the cooler hours of the morning) in early July from plants that are well-hydrated, disease-free and exhibit good fertility. They are watered and



stored in plastic bags with a name tag indicating cultivar, and bags are placed in a cooler until preparation.

To prepare the cuttings, the lower leaf is removed, and the base is cut at an angle for ease of sticking into the substrate. Each cutting will have three or four leaves (see photo at on previous page). It is not necessary to wound the base of the cuttings unless the cuttings are collected later in the season and they are hardwood.

Numerous preformulated rooting hormone products are available to treat the cuttings to speed the rooting process and help stimulate a well-branched vigorous root system. I prefer a rooting solution using Hortus 20% Water Soluble Salts in distilled water at an 8,000 ppm concentration (1.5 tablespoons per pint of water.) The hormone is applied using a five-second basal dip to the lower inch of the cuttings (see photo on previous page.)

Sticking:

One cutting per cell is stuck no more than 1.5 inches deep, and the substrate is gently firmed to the cutting to ensure good contact (cuttings loose in the substrate root poorly). As trays are completed, they are hand-watered and placed onto the propagation bench (see photo at right.)

Aftercare:

The mist system is energized, and the controller (see example below right) is programmed to deliver intermittent mist during daylight hours to maintain turgid cuttings. The weather and degree of rooting determine the frequency of mist applications needed to ensure hydrated, healthy cuttings without over-saturating the substrate and rotting the base of the cuttings. The Toro Evolution Ag controller is easily programed to accomplish this goal. During the morning and late afternoon to sunset, the controller is programmed to deliver fewer mist applications (a twenty-minute interval with an eight second mist duration) than the heat of the day program. During the heat of a hot sunny day, the controller is programmed to decrease the interval between mist applications (ten-minute intervals with eight-second duration) to



maintain turgid cuttings. During cooler or cloudy days, the mist controller program can be easily adjusted to prevent over-misting. The goal is to maintain a thin film of water on the cuttings without excessive mist applications, which would over-saturate the substrate and rot the base of the cuttings.

Until cuttings are fully rooted and mist applications are discontinued, weekly preventative fungicide applications are made after the last mist cycle in the evening to maintain disease-free cuttings. It is important to rotate fungicides with different modes of action to prevent pathogen resistance development to the fungicides. An algacide/bactericide is included in the rotation once every three weeks to prevent algal growth on the substrate and bench surfaces. An insecticide labeled for control of fungus gnats, a common occurrence in mist propagation, can be applied as needed in combination with the weekly fungicide sprays.

On average, cuttings of the cultivars stuck will initiate rooting in three to four weeks, and mist frequency is gradually reduced to stimulate fully developed rooting. Weekly half-strength water-soluble fertilizer applications begin at root initiation and continue until full root development to promote vigorous root development. The misting applications are discontinued at approximately eight to ten weeks from sticking when newly developed roots on the cuttings can provide the moisture and nutrients needed (see photo at right.)



Summary:

Camellia cutting propagation utilizing an intermittent misting system does require an investment in system components and propagation skills developed with experience, but the results can be well worth the effort. It has proven to be a reliable and cost-effective way to produce clonal cultivars that are available today. Both hobbyists and nursery professionals have been rewarded for utilizing this technique, which continues to be the backbone of camellia propagation globally.

Recruit New Members to ACCS

Invite your gardening friends to join the ACCS or perhaps buy them a one year membership. A membership entitles you to a journal published in January, May, and September and full access to ACCS Website. Also, invite and encourage friends to attend the 2025 ACCS Conference in Savannah, GA. Membership dues are included in the Conference Registration for attendees.

Yearly Membership (Single or Double:) \$25.00

Lifetime Membership: \$500

To join, simply send your check along with a sheet of paper that includes your mailing address to Fred Jones, ACCS Treasurer (see address at right.) Including your E-Mail and Telephone Number is Optional.

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

Grafting on Cuttings

By Jim Pruckler

Grafting onto unrooted cuttings provides camellia growers several benefits when trying to variegate solid flowers. It eliminates the time involved in growing variegated rootstock to a graftable size. It is relatively simple to do, and best of all, it is traditionally done in the summer months. Although it is possible to do this in the winter, the use of bottom heat, lights, and a humidity chamber would be critical to success.

This is an old technique. The first article published on this subject was “Graft-Cutting Method of Propagating Camellias” by Shogo Yamaguchi (Camellia Yearbook, 1950). The second reference is “The Cutting Graft, The Background, The How, The Importance” by Savell and Clark (Camellia Yearbook, 1977). Finally, there is a short reference by C. D. Cothran, “Unusual Ways of Rooting Camellia” (The Camellia Review, vol. 66, 2004).

When I give a talk on a process that uses sharp instruments, I say that I measure success by having the same number of fingers at the beginning and end of the process. That is setting the bar pretty low, but I must emphasize that these knives are sharp, and safety is critical.

The first step is to select a “rootstock.” I usually use “Shibori Egao” (Egao variegated). I have a strain with a very strong virus; I find about 1% of the normally pink blooms are solid white on this plant. In North Georgia, the new spring growth is hardened off usually by mid-June. I select the largest stems of hardened growth and cut them at 4-5 inches in length. I remove all but the top three leaves and make a half-inch angled cut about halfway down the stem (See photo 1).



Photo 1

Next, the scion is prepared by removing all but three leaves from a 2 - 3 inch scion cutting. A wedge is created by making two half-inch cuts on opposite sides of the cutting (see photo 2). The wedge is dipped in rooting hormone and then inserted into the angled cut on the root stock cutting (see photo 3). I like

to wrap each graft union with a product called “Parafilm M”, which is available online. Many grafts can be made in a short time frame (see photo 4).

The last step is to make a beveled cut on the bottom end of the root stock and dip the wound in rooting hormone prior to sticking in a well-drained ground pine bark/perlite mixture. The potted cutting graft is then placed under mist or in a humidity chamber and misted daily.



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5

With luck, roots will form on the rootstock, and the graft will take, forming a new plant with both the rootstock and the graft growing. The two plants should be grown together (see photo 5) for a couple of years before the Egao rootstock branch is trimmed away (see photo 6 on next page.) The resulting plant should now be the grafted variety but with a virus-induced variegation pattern (see photo 7 on next page). Currently, this plant is only a couple of years old and hasn't bloomed yet. But it has a bud, so we will see if it variegates!



Photo 6



Photo 7

This procedure is easy to do, but there is always a catch. Since you are combining two different techniques, the success rate will be lower than expected for either technique alone.

For example, if you do 100 graft cuttings and only 50 cuttings generate roots, you have a 50% success rate for the cutting process. If 50% of your 50 rooted cuttings have successful grafts, you will have 25 successful graft cutting plants. This means that you had an overall 25% success rate for the graft-cutting process. Of course, your actual success rate will vary based on weather, mist system failures, the camellia varieties used, your luck at propagation, and so on.

Camellia Club Activity Spotlight

Members of the Gainesville Society Enjoying an Annual Air Layering Day
Held at the Home of John Swanson — Spring 2025



ACCS State Directors' Reports for Spring 2025

South Georgia's State Director's Report - (by Sandra Jones)

Middle Georgia Camellia Society kicked off the 2024-2025 show season with the Georgia National Fair Show in October. Chattahoochee Valley Camellia Society closed it in our region with their show at The Columbus Museum. These two societies and the Wiregrass Camellia Society sponsored or supported five ACS-sanctioned camellia shows this past season. Middle Georgia also hosted the ACS show at Masee Lane. Wiregrass Society holds its show early in November and then supports the Quitman Show the first of February.

Middle Georgia and Wiregrass have monthly meetings, and the Chattahoochee club has meetings on an "as needed" basis. All these clubs sponsor workshops on camellia education that are open to the public—these workshops feature sessions on grafting, gibbing, pruning, fertilizing, waxing, and planting. Wiregrass Society's December program always features waxing and is the most popular.

Middle Georgia holds workdays regularly at Masee Lane and recently voted to pay for two new picnic tables for the grounds. Wiregrass recently voted to donate \$500 to the Sara Oliver Garden, dedicated to Hulyn and Janet Smith, for expenses of upkeep and restoration. Almost all the camellias planted during the 1903 rebuild of Pebble Hill Main House have now been identified with the help of Wiregrass members. Chattahoochee Society adds plants regularly to the Sam Wellborn Garden at the Columbus Botanical Gardens and the Old Town Garden. All three Societies believe in giving back to their communities and sharing their collective knowledge of camellias. They feel these efforts will help with the sustainability of these wonderful plants.

South Carolina State Directors Report – (by Philip Thomas and Paul Cloessner)

The Coastal Carolina (Charleston) Club had a successful fall and winter. Membership has remained strong, with at least 30-35 members attending the monthly meetings. A key to improving attendance was moving our meetings to Sunday afternoons. Some of the area's most talented gardeners spoke at our monthly meetings. Snow and ice in Charleston a few days before our scheduled camellia show in late January resulted in the show's cancellation because of travel issues for the judges. However, the event went ahead with a camellia exhibition with about 150 blooms provided by local members attending the Saturday event. Over 200 people attended the exhibition with many purchasing plants offered by the club. In February, the club provided and planted five high-quality camellias at the City of Charleston's Hampton Park to start a new camellia garden, which will be expanded over the next two or three years. We had discussions with the national leadership of ACS this March and April about hosting the 2026 National Convention in Charleston. The club plans to host the event featuring Magnolia and Middleton Gardens.

The Grand Strand (Myrtle Beach) Club also had a good year. Attendance remains good, with at least 20 members at each meeting. We had a very successful show and plant sale with 500 sold. We had a great turnout of club members to work at the

show. There was also a club luncheon in March and a wholesale fertilizer sale for club members, with a ton of 16-4-8 and 4-8-12 sold.

The Aiken Camellia Society has experienced modest growth in membership while attendance at our meetings has increased significantly, averaging almost 30 members. Attendance at the auction was especially good and sales were great. We were fortunate and honored to have Tom Johnson speak at one of our meetings just a few weeks before his untimely passing. Unfortunately, the freezing weather just before our show impacted the number and quality of blooms. However, turnout was good, with over 430 blooms and the quality of many being much better than expected. The Aiken Society also supported an exhibition at Lookaway Hall in North Augusta, former home of Dr. Harry Mealing, developer of many unique varieties. Members made presentations and taught classes at the Augusta Society. We also had a table at the Aiken Master Gardeners plant sale, where we distributed ACS information, answered questions about camellia care, and educated interested people on the world of camellias.

The Mid-Carolina (Columbia) Camellia Society also had another successful season. The annual show was held in October in conjunction with the South Carolina State Fair. This show is one of the earliest of the season but has a good turnout every year. This year, there were 261 blooms exhibited, 500 attended, and 16 exhibitors. The Mid-Carolina club also hosted "Camellia Love," their annual festival and plant sale in March of this year, and that was a huge success as well.

So, despite some harsh weather this year, the South Carolina clubs had a very successful year in the 2024 - 2025 season, and we are looking forward to another exciting year in 2025 - 2026!!!

State Director's Report from North Carolina - (by John Fields and Cathy Kubeny)

The fall of 2024 was one of hope and excitement as the camellia season was about to begin. The sasanquas were beginning to show color, and the buds on the japonicas, hybrids, and reticulatas were swelling for the upcoming show schedule. The NC clubs were planning two great ACS-sanctioned shows and a third for educational purposes, and everyone was looking forward to all the shows in our region.

The NC show schedules for the Fayetteville and Tidewater Camellia Club in Wilmington were confirmed, and the Charlotte Camellia Society was also planning an exhibition for public education. The Fayetteville Camellia Club's fall plant sale in October 2024 was held at Ross and Cathy Kubeny's Garden. The Tidewater Camellia Club's year kicked off with a summer party on the same night Tropical Storm Debbie hit Wilmington, yet 32 members showed up to enjoy pizza, salad, and beer! They started the year with about 80 members, at least 40 of whom were active. After our two sales, they gained about 40 more members! Many club members and public attendees of all ages supported and enjoyed both events.

Like last year's weather, the season was blessed with ample rain; however, the constantly cold temperatures damaged many blooms, and the shows scheduled for January and February did not have as many blooms as in previous years. This did not inhibit the shows, and the displays were very successful.

The Fayetteville Show was held on the 200th anniversary of the visit to Fayetteville by the Marquis de Lafayette. It was a historic show and took place on March 1st and 2nd, 2025, at Cape Fear Botanical Garden (CFBG), Route 301, Fayetteville. Although the weather was awful, and freezing temperatures hit the area the week of the show, it was an overwhelming success. With an estimated attendance of 500 visitors and 491 blooms, the show was an outstanding demonstration of the resilience and dedication of the club members. Many plants were sold, and the first in many years, a raffle helped offset the cost of plants. Although many plants were unsold, they are still being sold online, and the effort was an overall success.

In addition to the show itself, the Fayetteville club prides itself on our grafting and air layering classes, 25 Ikebana Club displays, and Raleigh Nippon Club's hands-on class on Japanese Tea Tradition. Lafayette only visited one of the many US cities named for him. We marked the 200th anniversary of this visit to NC by planting two japonica camellias, 'Lafayette Legacy,' at the CFBG Main Entrance and auctioned off a plant to honor his memory.

The Charlotte Camellia Society also held its exhibition at Maple Walk Gardens in Charlotte, and it was a great success. Many plants were sold, and over 300 visitors attended the event, enjoying the numerous blooms that local members brought to display for the public. The plant sale was a tremendous success, with all plants being sold. Kelly Rhoads helped promote the exhibition on multiple social media outlets, contributing to the event's outstanding success. Although this was not a sanctioned event, Steve Bott, the club's president, mentioned that future sanctioned events might be in the picture. We can only hope so. It would be wonderful to have another show right after Fayetteville's show and before the Norfolk show here in NC again.

The Tidewater Club held its Annual Camellia Festival on February 22-23, 2025, at the New Hanover County Arboretum. This was a smashing success. The club held a prosperous fall sasanqua and spring japonica sales and had a very triumphant show with 541 blooms despite an unusually cold and snowy winter. At our December Holiday party and pre-show Judges banquet, we had fun centerpiece contests and a phone quiz game everyone enjoyed. This was a very special time for all.

Both shows and the exhibition created a great deal of publicity for the camellia, and more than 1200 blooms were shown by over 40 exhibitors, along with untold numbers of members from all three clubs. Many new members joined the ACS and the local clubs as part of the festivals. There were camellia care presentations, hands-on workshops, camellia garden tours, floral displays by local clubs, fun family activities, plus county schools' camellia art displays at both shows, involving a record number of young artists.

In addition to the outstanding shows, the Tidewater Club held its monthly meetings, which featured speakers on birding, history, and more. Club members also gave 15-minute talks about identifying blooms, fertilizers, forms, cultivars, and other topics. We had two visits to members' gardens (I believe the Clarks' garden visit will become an annual event!), a winter walkabout at Airlie Gardens, and a spring tour of Oakdale Cemetery with an emphasis on their historic camellias. We also visited a

Japanese Maple nursery for a grafting demonstration and a member's apiary, where we sampled their delicious honey.

Finally, the Tidewater Club donated \$500 to a community college landscaping student, \$1000 to the Arboretum, and donated and planted many camellias to a local low-income housing community, the Arboretum, Oakdale cemetery, and LINC housing for rehabilitated felons. Various club members led five pruning activities at Oakdale cemetery (they have rescued many camellias lost in vine and privet overgrowth), two "air layering for newbie" events, five air layering events for experienced club members at some amazing private gardens, and a grafting workshop. Overall, the club's successes were many.

The Fayetteville Club also participated in many fascinating outings and hosted special guest speakers. One notable speaker was David Parks from Camellia Forest, who presented a program highlighting some of Dr. Clifford Parks's contributions to the world of Camellias and their cold hardiness. The Fayetteville club took part in local garden tours, preserving many old cultivars through cuttings and air layering, and planted multiple camellia plants at the Cape Fear Botanical Gardens. Additionally, they dedicated a day to volunteer time to refurbish the Cape Fear Botanical Gardens Camellia Garden, preserving the large plants that nearly died due to flooding several years ago. This public service effort will hopefully become an annual event. Furthermore, with the expectation of new members joining due to the revamped Facebook page and the use of Instagram and other multimedia platforms, they hope to increase awareness and excitement among a new generation of camellia enthusiasts. This will be one of their priorities for the new year.

The Charlotte Camellia Society also participated in numerous events, including planting two-year-old air layers in low-income areas to enhance the beauty of the community. They have employed a public awareness professional to expand their digital footprint, aiming to spark interest and increase attendance. These efforts have been crucial in spreading the news that camellia clubs are still active, and the club credits part of their revival from near closure to these electronic conveniences. Additionally, using multimedia to reach unconventional growers who use Instagram and watch reels for their news has benefited their growth. They should create a pamphlet titled "From the Verge to Vitality" to share their successful comeback story. I'm sure we could all benefit from their experience.

Tidewater, Fayetteville, and the Charlotte Clubs are excited about the upcoming year and look forward to sharing their beautiful blooms again in 2025.

Peninsular Florida Report - (by Jerry Selph)

Orlando (Central Florida) Camellia Society The club maintains its place in the myriad of flower societies in the Orlando area. They are still allied with Lew Gardens, as they have been for over a decade. Membership remains steady to a limited expansion. They meet regularly with guest speakers and topics of interest to members. The planta-palooza at their show is still quite popular with vendors and show visitors. Camellia culture interest is growing but not exploding due to their many sub-tropical options that offer competition.

Lakeland Camellia Society Their membership is growing steadily due to the hard work of the members and Officers. They participate in every plant sale that they can identify. This allows them to sell plants to help finance their activities and proselytize Camellia Culture as a hobby. They also make a great effort to get new Camellia Owners to attend their meetings and shows. They advertise special events like air layering and grafting demonstrations. Their show was a success, and they presently have a membership of 65 members.

Ocala Camellia Society The Ocala Camellia Society is moving ahead after some hard knocks. The officers and members are working hard to gain new members, but most importantly, active members. Their show was a success, and they are adding new activities to try and gain traction in an area heavy with things to do.

Gainesville Camellia Society Gainesville is still humming mightily! They sponsored the annual convention of The American Camellia Society. Their annual show was in connection with the National Show. Their Show and Convention was a success, including a feat that will be difficult to match. They sold 800 camellia plants on the first day of their show! This is an amazing success and will attract many members to them in the future. They are still attached to Kanapaha Gardens in Gainesville, as they have been for over 30 years. They have succeeded in getting Kanapaha Gardens listed on the American Camellia Society Camellia Trail. This, along with her sponsorship of the Wilmont Garden at the University of Florida and its many SPECIAL activities, keeps the office and members very busy. They are continuing their two \$1000 scholarships in Ornamental Horticulture at the University of Florida, which is very admirable.

Virginia State Director's Report - by (Toni McKenna)

Virginia Camellia Society continues to strengthen relationships with the garden communities of Hampton Roads. Because of the construction projects ongoing at the Norfolk Botanical Garden, the VCS Board decided to maximize the exposure of our shows to the public by varying the venues around the Hampton Roads area. We were delighted that the Norfolk Zoo agreed to host our November 2024 Camellia Show and Plant Sale. The location and size of the exhibit space were ideal. We conducted the plant sale right outside the Zoo admission gates and sold 51 camellia plants. As part of our show program, we scheduled a camellia planting event for zoo visitors to witness in an area the Virginia Zoo selected as their camellia garden. To increase the interest of zoo visitors, VCS decided to plant camellias with animal names. This effort became an interesting challenge as some camellias holding animal names are older cultivars that are not readily available in the nursery trade. We invited two teachers and several elementary students from Tarralton Elementary School, Norfolk, Virginia, to our show to make paper camellias and interact with other children at the Zoo. VCS plans to maintain this relationship by scheduling camellia planting events in the future. The fall event was a great show in a fun location. We are grateful for our local exhibitors and camellia friends from Northern Virginia and North Carolina as we presented 308 blooms in the show.

Before our fall show, Peggy and Dean Troyer were very gracious in hosting the Friday evening judges' party at their home in downtown Norfolk. Their parties are always a huge success, and we are very grateful for their hospitality.

In January 2025, VCS hosted a workshop at Sandy Bottom Nature Park in Hampton, Virginia, in conjunction with the Hampton Master Gardeners. Again, this event showed VCS's effort to get out into the community in places we are generally not active in. We had several educational stations where attendees could learn how to prune, plant, propagate, and show camellias. Chesapeake Arboretum, Camellia Trail Garden is also where VCS hosted tours and sold camellia plants.

On March 15, 2025, our Spring Camellia Show and Plant Sale was conducted at Bide-A-Wee Golf Course in Portsmouth, VA. The show was an excellent opportunity to share our camellia passion and beautiful blooms with the folks in Portsmouth. The Portsmouth Master Gardeners displayed companion plants for camellias and conducted a tea tasting. The VCS Spring Show was another successful event, with 636 blooms entered. We are delighted that many of our members have increased their camellia collection and are exhibiting more blooms yearly. Our Friday night judges' party was held at Anderson-Wright Rooms and Garden in downtown Portsmouth, VA. Anderson-Wright is a high-end garden shop that contains a garden for our guests to stroll through and a stately Garden Room where we enjoyed a fun evening of great food and comradery with our members and out-of-town guests.

On March 30, 2025, VCS hosted its Spring 2025 show at Redwing Park, Virginia Beach, VA, for the Cherry Blossom Festival. As an outreach educational effort, several members of VCS have been assisting the Redwing Park gardeners in identifying the camellias on the property. We have also added more camellias to the garden, focusing on planting camellias that originated in Virginia.

In summation, the Virginia Camellia Society is doing well. Membership has increased, and active participation by members in our shows has increased. The VCS finances are healthy, and dues-paying memberships are being made promptly. Looking ahead into 2025-2026, no conflicting show schedule dates exist. As you can see, we are busy in the community. VCS will wrap up the Spring 2025 season with a picnic in May at the McKenna's property.

State Director Report for Maryland, Northern Virginia, and Washington, DC. - April 2025 (by Richard Mohr)

Potomac Valley State Directors Report We met on December 8, 2024, for our annual Holiday Banquet at Green Spring Gardens in Alexandria, Virginia. We had elections for various Officers. Lenka Lundsten will continue as president, Dr James Orrock will be elected vice president, Kathleen Graham will continue as treasurer, and Leslie Zupan will be in charge of our local web page. A talk on Camellia culture was then given.

In February, the CSPV met at the National Arboretum in Washington, DC, to discuss our upcoming annual camellia show and seek volunteers for the various positions in judging, classifying, and placement of blooms. We also discussed ordering camellias for our annual sale from Bennett Creek Nursery in Suffolk, VA.

Our annual show was held at Brookside Gardens in Wheaton, MD, on Saturday, the 29th of March 2025, and the truck bringing camellias from Bennett Creek arrived on Friday, the 28th, for delivery. The show had 285 blooms exhibited, 70 attendees, 14 exhibitors & 1 ACS Membership was sold. The list of participants was: Lenka Lundsten, show chair, judge, lunch and clean up; Fred McKenna, chair of judges & tabulation; Toni McKenna, Head clerk & tabulation; Carlton Maryott, sizing & classification; head table & tabulation, & Jane Maryott, placing, clerk & tabulation. In addition, four more accredited judges participated for a total of 6 judges. Gold certificate (unprotected) and 17 Blue ribbons were won by Fred & Toni McKenna. Lenka Lundsten won silver certificate (unprotected) 14 blue ribbons. Gold certificate (protected) 20 blue ribbons was won by Darren Sheriff of South Carolina and Silver certificate (protected) 1 blue ribbon was won by Sean and Pat Laane. Best Bloom in show unprotected (Phillip & Marjorie Ireland Memorial Trophy) "Grace Albritton" was won by Lenka Lundsten. Best Bloom in show protected Lou and Betty Daudt Memorial award "Tri-color (Siebold) Red won by Darren Sheriff.

A camellia sale of our leftover camellias is planned for next May at Greenspring Gardens in Alexandria, and a summer picnic is scheduled on the 28th of May at the home of Lenka and David Lundsten in McClean, VA. Our club currently has 36 households with paid-up memberships in the Camellia Society of the Potomac Valley.

ACCS STATE DIRECTORS

State	Name	Term
Florida	Jerry Selph	2022-2024
Florida	Mary 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



Camellia Reticulata 'TitleTown USA'

**Mark Crawford and J. D. Thomerson Planted a Small Three Gallon TitleTown USA
Plant in 2015 at the Valdosta Convention Center**

The Photo Above was Taken Ten Years Later by J. D. Thomerson in 2025