

Atlantic Coast Camellias

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Camellia Japonica 'Herme'

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From the Cover

‘Herme’

Photo taken by J. D. Thomerson

Herme originated in Japan in 1859, where it was called ‘Hikarugenji,’ which means “Brilliant Gem.” It came to the United States in 1875 and was renamed ‘Herme’ to make it more appealing to potential buyers. Herme became extremely popular and can be found in many old camellia gardens. It is medium-size and blooms midseason. Herme is slightly fragrant and tolerates cold better than most japonica varieties. It has produced many sports and is a seed and pollen parent to many other varieties. Herme is still very popular today.



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A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

by Carol Selph

Old-timers always said the older one gets, the faster time flies. Well, I must have become one of those 'old-timers' because the past two years have flown by. I really did not think it would happen so quickly. I still think of myself as being 50, but then again, I see a stranger that looks an awful lot like my mother every time I look in the mirror. This is my last 'President's Newsletter', and I will be turning over the office to Mr. Tommy Alden at the convention. Speaking of the convention, our 2025 annual fall meeting dates are Friday and Saturday, October 3rd and 4th. We are meeting on the weekend as we did when we met in South Carolina. The idea is to encourage our younger members to attend without having to miss work. Our intention is to increase the number of young members to enable them to become more active. This year's hotel rates are \$207.22 per night at the Embassy Suites by Hilton

Airport Savannah. We are trying to keep the costs for attendees as low as possible; therefore, the registration cost is the same as the past two years at \$175 per person. All the information you need to register is on the Atlantic Coast Camellia Society web page. Just remember, there are two parts: register for the hotel with the included link and send your ACCS registration check to Fred Jones. This is when you pay your annual dues. If you are not attending the convention, send your dues to Fred by Sept. 30th.

So why should one attend the convention? First, you get to spend the weekend socializing with some of the best growers in the entire world who are eager to share their secrets. Second, on a more formal note, Bob Black, the Second Vice-President, has lined up three dynamite speakers who are knowledgeable and entertaining! You will get to hear presentations by my friend, John Davy, from the Pensacola area, on 'Not Your Grandmother's Camellias'; our entertaining J. D. Thomerson speaking on 'Successes, Failures, Regrets, and Recommendations from a Backyard Camellia Grower'; and the International Camellia Society's Convention Chairperson, Forrest Latta on 'Camellias: An International Language.' Third, you have the best chance of increasing your garden with the most award-winning, prized varieties at the auction. Many of the auction plants are brand new grafted varieties. It is also an opportunity to purchase homemade jam, jellies, and wine. And finally, and most importantly, you can become friends with the finest people in the world.

I have been very vocal about becoming more active in your local clubs by attending all the meetings, volunteering, helping with the local show, and mentoring new



Carol Selph

members. One cannot imagine the joy one receives from getting friends and neighbors involved in the growing and, hopefully, the showing of camellia blooms. We have gifted many of our neighbors with an easy-to-grow plant ('Royal Velvet' and 'Frank Houser' are two great examples) to get them interested and, hopefully, addicted. Jerry and I are 'camellia pushers' but not as bold as the late Clayton Mathis was. He grew seedlings just to give away and taught the person how to plant, until almost every family in Douglas had at least one camellia growing in their yard. Just try it. I also hope you keep up with our older members who can't get out much. They really appreciate a quick call or visit to let them know we still care. You could even pick them up and take them to the meetings.

Jerry and I used to spend many, many hours in our camellia garden. Numerous neighbors and friends visited our garden regularly simply to enjoy it. The garden was a way to get back to my 'roots' since it was on the farm where I was raised. The land had been in my family since before the Civil War, and I often imagined what it must have been like to farm the land in the 1800s without the equipment we had even back in the 1960s. Our ancestors were so much tougher than we can even imagine.

Spending hours in the camellia garden doing mundane jobs like pruning, disbudding, picking up spent blooms, and mowing gave me time to think about how amazing nature is. It was the perfect time to get close to God by praying for others and enjoying God's beautiful world. There is no doubt God blessed our garden. Jerry is an excellent grower, but our success in showing camellias came straight from the good Lord. On any Thursday, I would be concerned about not having blooms to show in all of the divisions, and lo and behold, on Friday morning, there would be the exact blooms we needed to fill those categories, and they were our division winners. We were often asked how we won so much. We owe our success to Jerry's knowledge, growing varieties that win, and many long hours working, but our true success came straight from the good Lord. As our world becomes more complex and the war between good and evil becomes more obvious, we must be extra aware of our spiritual well-being. God is so very good every day.

A big thank you to all of the members who supported me during my term. I could not have done this job without you. I cannot wait to see each of you in Savannah in October. May God pour out his blessings on each of you — Carol Selph

Join or Renew Membership to ACCS

Annual membership dues for ACCS are collected each year by Sept. 30. Annual dues are included in the Conference Registration for attendees but if you do not attend the conference please pay your annual dues by Sept. 30. **Note:** For new members that joined after March 1, 2025 you do not have to pay again until Sept. 30, 2026.

Also Note: If you have paid for multiple years and do not remember when you need to renew please contact Fred Jones at 229-941-5774.

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

To join or renew, 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**

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>

	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 Cemetery 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

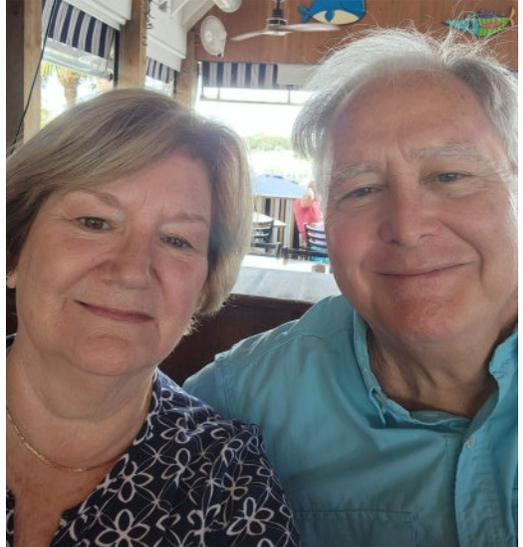
	Saturday, October 4, 2025
6:30 - 8:30 a.m.	Breakfast on Your Own/Complimentary Hotel Breakfast
9:00 - 10:00 a.m.	Bloody Marys/Screwdrivers/Coffee Bar (Hotel Meeting Room) Individual Items for Sale
10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	General Meeting Followed by Auction (Hotel Meeting Room)
12:30 - 2:00 p.m.	Lunch 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"

MARTY AND DIANE CLARK'S CAMELLIA JOURNEY

BY BOB BLACK

The Journey Begins

While living in Raleigh and house hunting for a future retirement property in the Wilmington, North Carolina area, Marty and Diane Clark accidentally began what would become a long and fulfilling camellia journey. Towards the end of an unsuccessful day of house hunting, their real estate agent showed them just one more property in the Olde Point Community in Hampstead, ten miles north of Wilmington. It was February of 1997, and the damage from Hurricane Fran, which made landfall in the area as a major category three storm in September the



Marty and Diane Clark



The Clark's Back Porch

prior year, was still very evident. Diane described the house during this showing as "avocado green inside and out with a large portion of the roof on the back of the house still missing from the hurricane." This property did not look very promising until they walked around back and saw the FABULOUS waterfront view of New Topsail Inlet and the Atlantic Ocean from the second-story porch. Only a few pilings of the dock remained after Hurricane Fran, but the view and deep water remained. They were instantly sold!

Introduction to Camellias

Also, during that first visit to that Olde Point Loop property, Marty and Diane noticed about twenty large shrubs with big colorful flowers under the live oaks growing in the front of the property. Born and raised in Michigan, they did not recognize these shrubs, which were blooming in February. So, they asked the real estate agent if she knew what they were. She explained that they were camellias and that a man named Olge Hess, who lived just down the street was the local camellia expert (more about this later).

Labor of Love

Living in Raleigh and still working, Marty as a professor at The University of North Carolina teaching Biochemistry relating to reproductive medicine, and Diane as Senior Vice President of Information Technology for IQVIA Corporation, which kept her traveling internationally regularly, leaving little time for getting their newfound future retirement property repaired and renovated. Most weekends and vacations were spent making the two-hour commute to the property to make repairs and renovations. Contractors were hired to do the heavy repairs from the hurricane damage, but Marty and Diane did as many of the renovations as possible themselves. Little by little, the avocado green disappeared, the boat dock was rebuilt, and their retirement property began to feel more like home. Upon retirement in 2005, they moved in permanently.



A Sunset View out the Clark's Back Yard

Mentors

During one of the weekend trips to Hampstead, Marty and Diane walked down the street and knocked on Ogle Hess' door to introduce themselves and learn more about the large shrubs with colorful flowers, which the real estate agent called camellias. Olge was a very experienced camellia grower with a large collection of camellias on his property and a veteran member of the local Tidewater Camellia Club. Olge offered to teach them about caring for their camellias, but only if they became new members of the TCC in Wilmington. Soon after, they were his guests at their first TCC meeting, began attending regularly, and met many knowledgeable camellia growers who would become mentors, sharing their contagious camellia knowledge enthusiastically. A partial list includes Ed and Lou Powers, Thomas Sellers, Bill Wicox, Bill Howell, Matt Hunter, and Richard Buggeln.

Getting Hooked

Attending their first American Camellia Society flower show in 2003, hosted by the Tidewater Camellia Club in Wilmington, was a real eye-opener. Show Chairman Bill Howell took the time to explain how flowers were exhibited and judged. Marty and Diane were amazed by the beauty of the show. The variation of colors, forms, and sizes of the flowers in the exhibition was inspiring. According to Diane, that day was when "The Hook Was Set," and the journey kicked into high gear.



Their Camellia Garden

With a fresh case of "The Camellia Bug" and being new retirees, they quickly added to the original twenty existing camellias on their property from purchased and propagated plants. Numerous early mentors helped by graciously teaching camellia growing tips and allowing them to air layer camellias in their collections. Two members in particular, Ed and Lou Powers, became close friends, and their extensive collection of camellias was a major source for obtaining excellent show varieties.

Grafted camellias also became a way of obtaining new plants. Thomas Sellers of Bolivia, NC, the TTC expert camellia grafter, taught Marty and many other members his successful technique during TCC educational workshops at his greenhouses and camellia garden. Thomas shared many scions and grafted plants with TCC members. From these sources and others, the Clarks' camellia collection grew to 350-plus cultivars, which annually produce many award-winning blooms.

Cultural Practices

The Clarks grow both unprotected and protected camellias for show exhibitions. Most of their camellias are grown unprotected in the ground. The native soil is a sandy loam, which is amended with organic matter from compost and elemental sulfur to acidify the soil to a pH range of 6.0 to 7.0 before planting. An irrigation system supplies water from a shallow well during hot, dry weather. The high population of tame deer in the area, caused by neighbors feeding the deer, has required the installation of a six-foot deer fence around the perimeter of each grove of camellias to prevent browsing.

In 2019, a 12 X 36-foot Quonset-style greenhouse was constructed for growing protected camellias, primarily above ground in containers in a bagged substrate (Daddy Pete's Lite Soil Mix).



The Clark's Greenhouse

The Clark's Favorite Camellias

Japonicas: Royal Velvet, Terry Gilley Variegated, Charlie Bettes, Rosea Plena, and Fircone Variegated.

Reticulata Hybrids: Frank Houser Variegated, Curtain Call, Pleasant Memories, and Dr. Clifford Parks.

Non-Reticulata Hybrids: Cile Mitchell, Show Boat, and Julie Variegated.

Sasanqua: Midnight Ruby

Favorite Cultivars to Gibb: Rosea Plena, Les Marbury, Early Autumn, Magnoliaeflora, Pink Perfection, and Pleasant Memories.

The greenhouse has a small electric heater and fan for heating and ventilating as needed. Most of the year, the greenhouse is uncovered, except for a fine mesh screen to provide protection from rodents. The greenhouse is covered for five months during the cold season, but unless the heater is needed to protect open blooms, the end walls of the greenhouse remain open for passive ventilation. Primarily, reticulata hybrids and a few other favorite japonica and hybrid cultivars are grown protected for exhibition.

The biggest annual chores to maintain a healthy camellia collection are pruning and cleaning up old blooms and debris in the Spring. The goal is to maintain the camellias at a size that can facilitate performing all the cultural practices necessary to produce show flowers. Biannual Neem oil sprays are made to control scale insects, aphids, and spider mites. Greenhouse-grown plants are periodically sprayed or drenched with a rotation of three fungicides: Captan, Daconil, and Phosphite to prevent diseases such as phytophthora and dieback.

Fertilizer formulations and applications vary based on plant needs. Typically, a split application is made using a 16-4-8 granular formulation in April and a 4-8-12 granular formulation in July for younger plants grown in the ground. More established plants don't require as much fertilizer and are only fertilized once a year in April with a lower formulation, such as Epsoma Holly-Tone 4-3-4. Container-grown plants in the greenhouse are fertilized with a low rate of Osmocote 15-9-12 controlled-release fertilizer.

Disbudding and gibbing for larger flowers begins in early September. A few buds are gibbed (ProGibb T&O diluted 1 to 3 with pure water) on each plant weekly through the Fall to provide flowers to exhibit at the shows.

Cutting and Packing

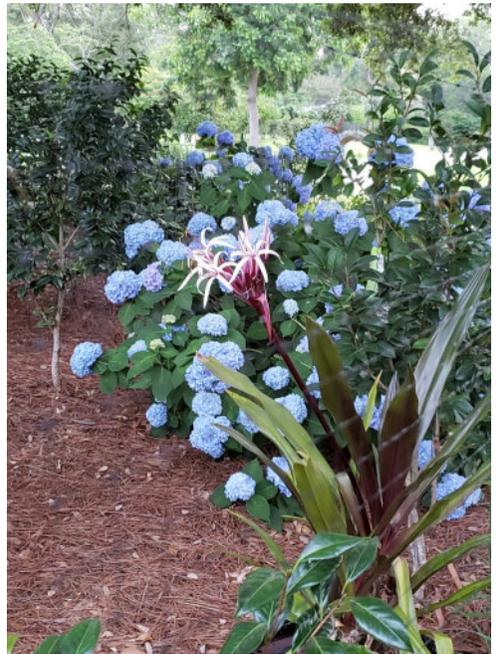
Fresh, newly opened flowers are collected up to a week before the show. Stems are immediately dipped for five seconds in Quick Dip 100 by Floralife and inserted into a floral tube with



**Marty Teaching TCC Members
How to Enter Blooms at a Show**



Marty Building a Garden Gate to Enter Their Gorgeous Garden



Just a Small Example of the Clark's Beautiful Plants

Floralife Crystal 200 solution. Flower petals are allowed to dry at room temperature, then sprayed lightly with a floral preserving spray, Clear Crowning Glory by Floralife. Once this is dry, they are boxed on a bed of poly-fil fiber, covered, and stored in cold refrigerators. An ice pack is placed in each box when transported to the show in insulated bags.

Leadership

Marty has served as TCC Treasurer, 2013 - 2015, and President, 2014 - 2015. He is currently volunteering to keep the TCC website relevant and up to date. Diane has served as TCC Vice President 2009 - 2010, President 2011 - 2012, Show Chairperson for many years, and currently. She also serves as a member of the ACS Camellia Trail Garden Committee. Marty and Diane have and continue to host educational workshops and TCC membership meetings at their Olde Point Loop home and garden to share their camellia knowledge, scions, and air-layers with enthusiastic new members.

Looking Back

When asked, "If you knew then what you know now, what would you have done differently?" To that, Marty replied, "Buy a bigger place." The camellia garden is full, but "The Camellia Bug" remains uncured.

Most Rewarding Aspect

In answering this question, Diane quoted from a dear camellia mentor, 97 years young, Lou Powers, "Camellia people are the best people!" The relationships built through camellia involvement are the most rewarding aspect of the camellia journey. And Marty and Diane Clark are perfect examples of camellia people worth getting to know. Now, they are mentors, sharing their love and knowledge with the next generation of camellia gardeners as the camellia journey continues.

Well, I've Been Thinking Again!

By J. D. Thomerson

Reconsidering Late-Season Blooming Camellias

I never thought I would write an article with the above heading. For years (really up until this year), I was not very interested in late-season blooming camellias. Why do you say, well, they really didn't do very well in Valdosta, GA. The buds often never opened before hot weather arrived in mid to late March and the buds just fell off. Also, all the camellia shows within 300 plus miles of Valdosta had concluded by the first weekend of March (Columbus, GA Show.) I was also just ready to move on to Spring and enjoy the azaleas, deciduous blooming magnolias, the bright new leaves on all the various colored Japanese maples, and beginning to plant annuals for great color. Honestly, I am unsure if I paid much attention to the late-blooming camellias. That is, except for the Reticulata varieties. Oh, I loved their incredible performance in March. I didn't miss any of them, but I just passed right by the japonicas and non-retic hybrids.

Now, I am the first person to say I much prefer the early and mid-season blooming camellia varieties the most – no doubt. And, many late-blooming camellias don't perform well in the deep south. Further north into the Carolinas, Virginia, and Maryland, especially when a good distance from the Atlantic Coast, I knew they were good choices – but not down in Valdosta, where we are 75 miles from both the Gulf and the Atlantic Ocean.

For various reasons, though, this past year has changed my mind. It has been the most beautiful Spring that I can remember. Over the past two years, the terrible hurricanes have brought much-needed sunlight into my garden, making azaleas, magnolias, maples, and other blooming plants really show out this year. But, this year, I have noticed some great late-blooming japonica and non-retic hybrid camellias (see photos on this page and next.) I think the cold snaps we had in December and January helped push back many of these blooming times – including some I would say usually are just mid-season bloomers. Enough introduction; let me spotlight some of my yard's impressive late-season bloomers this past season.



Tudor Baby Var



Princess Masako



Large Hedge of Taylor's Perfection

All the *reticulatas* were outstanding, but as I discussed above, this is not new. Even though the many Tomorrow varieties are listed as mid-season blooming, they bloomed near the end of the season for me this past year, and they were beautiful (see photos on next page.) I remember Hulyn Smith telling me that there are good "Tomorrow blooming years" and bad "Tomorrow blooming years." The mass-blooming Taylor's Perfection always puts on a good show in the late season, as does my favorite small japonica Tudor Baby Var. Maroon and Gold is always a good late-season bloomer for me, as is Georgia Fire, Miss Charleston, and Midnight Magic, even though several are listed as M-L season blooming. Some Non-Retic Hybrids that bloomed well late in the season last year included Spring Daze, Night Rider, and Island Sunset. A couple of newer registered varieties that bloomed great later this past year were Julius Nuccio and Amanda Ann – both of these are great camellias. The ever-popular Ville de Nantes and its Lady Kay sport seemed to bloom later last season than usual and were the best I had ever seen. Other varieties I jotted that were blooming well near the end of last year's bloom season included Dusty, Blood of China, Irene, Cabernet, Princess Masako, Sea Foam, and Satsuma-Kurenai.

I know I left out many other great varieties that bloomed well in Valdosta later in the season, and I am sure there are many great late-season blooming varieties that I am not currently growing. Different late-season varieties will bloom better in various parts of the country. In the coming years, I will be looking for the varieties in my area that bloom best later in the year, and I hope you will as well. So, if you have not been paying much attention to late-season camellias, I encourage you to reconsider them.



Spring Daze

How Camellia 'Tomorrow' Got Its Name

During the initial public display, the Camellia's originator, Mrs. Ross H. Hayes, was asked about the name she was giving her new seedling.

Misunderstanding the question, she thought the person was asking when she planned to name the plant, to which she replied, "Tomorrow."

The onlooker, appreciating the unique response, exclaimed that it was a wonderful name. After a moment of consideration, Mrs. Hayes agreed and decided to officially name the prize-winning Camellia 'Tomorrow.'

Today, there are over 20 sports of the original 'Tomorrow' camellia.



Tomorrow Sweet Image



Tomorrow's Park Hill Pink Var



Tomorrow's Leanne Var



Tomorrow Var



Tomorrow's Dawn

Why I Am Turning My Back on Grass

For 25 years, I have dreamed of a lush, beautiful green lawn you just wanted to lie in and enjoy. Kay and I bought our house in the year 2000. I have fertilized and sprayed weed killers of all kinds, including pre-emergent herbicides as well as post-emergent ones. I have watered, edged, mowed at various heights, and hand-pulled weeds, all with minimal success. I have tried St. Augustine and Centipede grass and studied countless hours on the needs of each of these varieties. In Valdosta, GA, these are our only real choices other than Bermuda grass, which creeps into flower beds vigorously and is impossible to remove and control. It is great for football and soccer fields, but not a lawn with as many curves, side yards, and flower beds as mine.

What has all my hard work accomplished? A yard full of weeds and bare patches that looks about as good as the first two or three years when I did nothing to the yard except mow. My visions of lying in cool, thick, lush grass have not materialized. If I lay in my grass, I would quickly encounter a lot of bare dirt and weeds (including the terrible cockerburl). And I haven't even mentioned the terrible Fire Ant. Oh, I can move them around a bit with Ant Killer, but they will return. Some years, I think I push them over into my neighbor's yard, and I don't have as many – but the neighbor then puts out killer, and they eventually move back to my yard.

The time I spend on my grass is just not paying off. Therefore, this year, I have decided to get rid of even more grass. It is just not worth the effort to be disappointed time and time again. I have reevaluated my strategy and have decided that less grass is better. No, I have not eliminated all my grass. I still think small amounts of green grass give contrast and defined borders for flower beds and camellia trails (see photo at right). But each year, I remove more and more grass and have never regretted it. My recommendation for most plant growers is to remove $\frac{1}{2}$ or more of your grass and plant better, more interesting, and rewarding plants. Many of you have heard me quote Hulyn Smith when he advised people to get rid of extra grass in their yard – He said, "Have You Even Been to a Grass Show?"



Kay's and My Side Yard

I will toot Kay's and my horn a bit here, many people have told us we have a beautiful yard. At different times of the year, they mention beautiful camellias, citrus, Japanese maples, annual flowers, and other plants. But, not once was there any mention of grass – even in the few years my grass looked somewhat decent.

I often hear camellia folks say they don't have any room for more camellias, and the first thing I say is, "Do you have any grass?" If they answer, "Well, of course," I quickly say to get rid of some of it. The front yard is the only place where grass is



Kay's and My Side Yard

needed for most homes. I think side and backyards can be replaced with shaded paths, maybe with pea gravel or paver walkways. Areas for a fire pit and other sitting areas are very nice. Yes, I will admit if you have small kids, they might need a grassy area to play in – but a woody backyard can be just as adventuresome.

If you have that picture-perfect grass lawn that I used to dream about, well, that would be great for you. Please invite me to your house to see and enjoy it. But, if you are like me and the reward is not worth the cost, time, pain, and disappointment, I say get rid of as much grass as possible. Plant the more beautiful, less demanding, and rewarding other plant varieties. And, if you need a suggestion – Plant More Camellias!

Remembering the Fabulous Fifties (and, No – I was not born during the 1950s)

When Hulyn Smith passed away, his family gave me all of Hulyn's ACS Yearbooks, Journals, and other camellia books. I have really enjoyed reading all of this information – especially the camellia articles from the 1950s.

The 1950s in the United States are often called the "Golden Age" or the "Fabulous Fifties". These names reflect the decade's economic prosperity, technological advancements, and cultural shifts following World War II. The 1950s also saw the rise of rock and roll music and the start of the Baby Boom.

The 1950s could also be called the "Golden Age" of camellias. Why, you ask? Well, let me tell you. Can you believe that 56 different camellia articles were written in the 1952 ACS Yearbook – yes, 56, with over 50 different authors. This was true not only of 1952 but also of all ACS Yearbooks during the 1950s, which had similar numbers of articles. The quarterly ACS Journals were also full of numerous and great articles. I am planning to write an article soon titled "They Were Not as Dumb as I Thought" that discusses how camellia growers many years ago actually knew what they were doing. And, in fact, many things that we think we have just figured out about growing camellias, they knew and were practicing way back in the 1950s and earlier.

In addition to the many camellia articles in the 1950s, let me tell you about the camellia shows during the 1950s. For example, camellia shows in 1950 had huge numbers of camellia blooms displayed, but the number of growers and attendees at these shows were also huge. Here are a few 1950 Show Report examples:

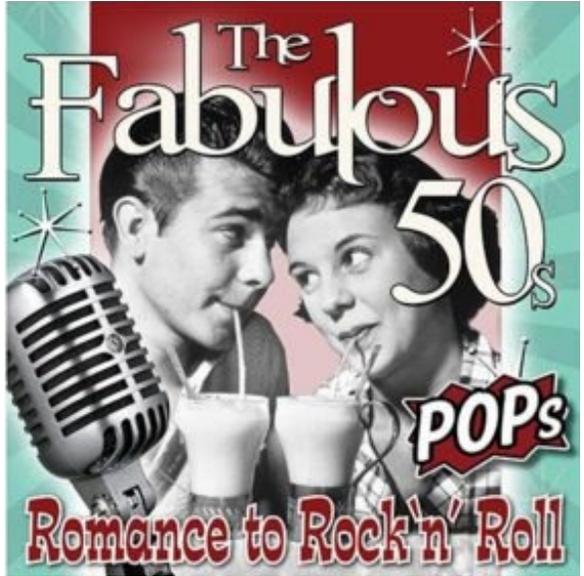
Charleston, SC -- Blooms 6,000, Attendance 8,000; **Orlando, FL** -- Blooms 10,000, Attendance 4,500; **Savannah, GA** -- Blooms 6,000; **Lafayette, LA** -- Blooms 25,000, Attendance 70,000 (this show was part of the ACS National Convention); **Shreveport, LA** -- Blooms 6,000, Attendance 25,000.

I promise I am not making the above numbers up, and the above is just a few examples. Wow, how did they handle all those blooms and the numbers of attendees? Well, for one the typical local camellia club had over 100 active members back in the 1950s. And, the annual camellia show was one of the major events for each city back then, with town folk volunteering to help with all the duties needed to put on a big show. There was an amazing total of 51 ACS Camellia Shows during the 1951-52 season.

Another amazing camellia fact of the 1950s is how many local camellia societies existed in the “fabulous fifties.” In 1952, Georgia alone had 13 camellia societies that hosted camellia shows – these shows were held in Atlanta, Columbus, St. Simons Island, Albany, Dublin, Guyton, Perry, Augusta, Cordele, Waycross, Savannah, Thomasville, and Macon. South Carolina was second with 11 shows held in Darlington, Summerville, Georgetown, Beaufort, North Charleston, Charleston (2 shows), Columbia, Greenville, Sumter, and Greenwood. The following were all ACS sanctioned shows – I am sure there were many other exhibition-only shows.

Yes, I would consider the 1950s to be the “Golden Age” or “Fabulous Fifties” for camellias. As amazing as all the numbers above are for the 1950s it makes me think hard and worry a bit about where we are today in the 2020s era of camellias. We do not have near the number of camellia shows, local camellia clubs, or camellia club members as we have had in the past. Where will we be in the year 2035? Year 2045? I don’t know – hobbies and interests sometimes ebb and flow over the years. Hopefully, camellia enthusiasm and memberships will increase in the coming years. But, I know that it will take a lot of work and commitment from leaders currently in the camellia world.

For years, we have heard that we need to actively recruit and mentor new camellia growers. Most of us know that we are an ageing group of camellia enthusiasts. We need new members, especially younger ones, to continue the various camellia clubs and camellia shows we enjoy. I hope that as my daughter Katie gets older, she can enjoy camellia clubs and camellia shows like her mom and dad have enjoyed. But that is not a guarantee. Therefore, I challenge all readers to make a goal of recruiting and mentoring two new camellia growers. That will not be easy in today’s busy age, but it is so vital for the future of our camellia societies.



CONTAINER INNOVATIONS FOR GROWING HEALTHIER CAMELLIAS

By Bob Black - Windsor, Virginia

Innovations in container design available to growers today have provided an opportunity to significantly improve the health of plants and various crops, including camellias. However, multiple factors have limited their implementation, often resulting in a missed opportunity to grow better quality container crops. This article will hopefully encourage more growers to conduct trials to determine if the additional cost is worth the investment.

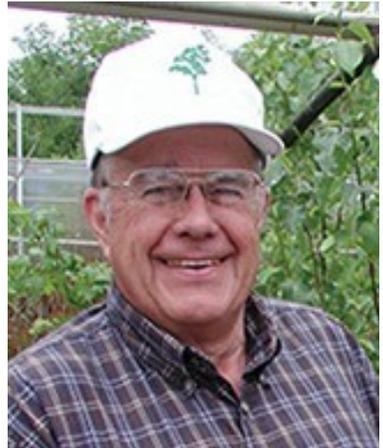
The Issue:

Many vigorous plant species with a coarse root system, which includes many camellia species, will develop a circling root system when grown in the traditional slick-sided pot. In time, the roots will develop into a solid mass at the perimeter, commonly called “Pot Bound” (see photo at right.) This is problematic for all plants, especially trees, when planted in this condition into the landscape. This type of root system cannot provide the necessary water, nutrients, or anchorage to support normal growth. Without major root pruning at transplanting, the circling roots will often eventually girdle the trunk, resulting in failure to establish and death.



Physical Container Design Solutions:

Several individuals were instrumental in researching and developing the redesigned or chemically modified containers available today to help growers overcome this issue. Oklahoma State University Professor Carl Whitcomb, PhD (see photo below) and owner of Lacebark, Inc. in Stillwater, Oklahoma, is internationally



regarded as a pioneer horticultural innovator. He was motivated to improve plant health and survivability in the landscape. Beginning in 1972, his research focused on developing containers that promoted air-root-pruning by design to eliminate the circling root issue. The patented Rootmaker[®] system containers and propagation trays available today resulted from many years of devoted R&D. This product line has been well-received by growers and is widely used. Both propagation trays and individual containers are very durable, made with injection-molded plastic, and can be reused for multiple crops. The Rootmaker[®] Company LLC in Huntersville, Alabama, was founded to manufacture and supply this extensive line of air root pruning containers and propagation trays. They are available in large quantities for commercial growers as well as small quantities online for hobbyists.

Today, other manufacturers have developed their own line of air root-pruning liner trays and containers. One of which is Nurserysource LLC in Boring, Oregon. They manufacture a complete line of propagation trays and containers. They are marketed as the Rediroot[™] brand. Their slotted design (see photos below) provides exceptional drainage and air-root-pruning. Both the trays and containers are injection mold manufactured for a long service life. They are available in both large and small quantities.



Chemically Modified Container Solutions:

The late Daniel Struve, PhD, Professor Emeritus (see photo below) at Ohio State University in the department of Horticulture and Crop Science (my college advisor), conducted early innovative research using copper root-modifying chemistry (copper hydroxide) to eliminate root circling in container tree production (1980s). In his experiments, copper hydroxide was suspended in latex paint at various concentrations, and the paint was applied with a brush inside nursery containers for growing vigorous trees to finished sizes in three-gallon containers. The results were impressive. The copper acted as a root growth regulator at proper concentrations, preventing the roots from forming the usual “pot-bound” mass. The results were published in





the American Nurseryman magazine to promote this finding, and many growers began trials applying and growing in containers painted with latex paint containing copper hydroxide. However, the thick consistency of the necessary quantity of copper in the paint proved to be very cumbersome to apply, thus limiting its use.

While working at the Griffin Company in Valdosta, Georgia, as Manager of R&D, Plant Pathologist Mark Crawford (see photo at left) developed a new formulation of a sprayable paint with copper hydroxide as active ingredient in 1998 (known as SpinOut[®] today) to make application to container and propagation trays more practical for growers and container manufacturers. It was widely used until the EPA reclassified it as a pesticide, requiring container manufacturers who sold SpinOut-treated containers to provide a printed label. Today, it is available as SpinOut 260[®] by Sepro, Inc. and labeled for application to not only containers and propagation flats but also landscape fabrics and tree wound dressing. Currently, it is only available in 2.5-gallon jugs, costing over \$900, which has greatly reduced demand.

To address the problematic issues of labeling and affordability of SpinOut[®], Mark Crawford, after leaving the Griffin Company, founded Nipan LLC in Valdosta, Georgia, to develop specialty horticultural products. Mark created a non-pesticide formulation of sprayable plant micronutrients in paint named Microkote[®], and it was introduced for sale in 2007 (see photos below.) Copper is an essential minor nutrient for plants, but it can also act as an air root pruning agent



at the concentration level of this product.® Microkote provides both minor nutrients for plant growth and acts as a plant growth regulator of the root system to prevent root circling. It is available from Horticulture Specialties, Inc. in multiple-sized packaging from eight-ounce up to 2.5-gallon jugs, making it more practical and economical for those who treat their own containers. Microkote® can also be brush-applied to containers.



Notice the Abundant Amount of Roots with no Circling

Application Services:

To alleviate the time-consuming application of either Microkote® or SpinOut 260® to containers or propagation trays, growers can have their containers professionally pretreated by KeCoat, LLC in Garrettsville, Ohio. KeCoat has offered this service for over 20 years and has treated millions of containers on its state-of-the-art automated application line (see photos below.) Customers must have their items delivered to the plant for treatment. Most customers have their items treated with Microkote®, but if they choose SpinOut 260® instead, they must provide it and deliver it to the plant with their order. Once their order has been completed, the containers or propagation flats are shipped back to the customer. The current price varies based on container size, from \$0.10 for a quart to \$8.50 for a 100-gallon container using Microkote®. Large or small quantity orders are all processed.



Opportunity:

The current lines of products today, whether physically or chemically treated, for growers to produce healthier plants starting with healthier roots, are available and being utilized successfully by growers willing to make the investment. Containers treated with either Microkote® or SpinOut 260® can be reused effectively for multiple crops when the coating is applied correctly, thus making them more cost-efficient. Physically modified containers and rugged injection-molded construction trays have been reused for up to ten years, significantly reducing the cost per crop. These products have raised the bar in the container plant world.

CAMELLIA BONSAI SHORT CUTS

By Jim Pruckler

My first exposure to the art of Bonsai was during a visit to the National Arboretum in Washington, D.C., many years ago. I was surprised by the size of the plant compared to the size of the container.

When Franco Ghirardi's book about the Higo Camellias was published, there was a series of photos of the Bonsai process. They showed the grafting process using very large root sections to create the appearance of great age.

My interest in Bonsai is solely in the technical aspects of creating the required appearance without the required decades of pruning and pampering. I attended a class at Masee Lane where the speaker demonstrated creating a Bonsai from a Camellia plant in a one-gallon pot. While it made a passable Bonsai, it really did not convey great age. I created a Bonsai this way using a "Hino Maru" Camellia, which, 20 years later, still has a diameter of less than half an inch.

When I look at the photos in the book, "Higo Camellia, A Flower for the Third Millennium", the bark on the root stock looked too smooth to be roots in my opinion. I tried direct rooting of cuttings in the 1-2 inch diameter range. The cuttings were 10 to 12 inches long and had no leaves when struck. About 25% produced new leaves, while less than 5% produced a weak root system after 6 months. Some have survived for almost three years but never became vigorous.



Photo 1



Photo 2

A more satisfactory method is to dig up an established plant and either use it directly as a Bonsai, or graft a desired scion onto it. The limitations of this technique will naturally be that there are not enough large Camellias available to sacrifice for rootstock.

An opportunity arose last year when I needed some Camellia roots to demonstrate Camellia root grafting. With Masee Lane's permission, I located a surplus

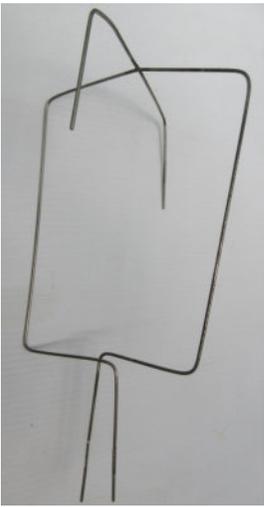


Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5

"Sparkling Burgundy" which was crowding nearby Camellias. Typically, I would have dug the plant out with hand tools, but we had the bright idea to use a chain and a tractor to drag it out of the ground (photo 1). Brutal but effective. After trimming away what I needed for the root grafts, I planted the Camellia in a large tray for future use as a Bonsai root base (photo 2).

As a rule, sasanquas are challenging for Bonsai because of their general growth habits. I decided to graft a species (*Camellia salicifolia*) as this species tends to "weep". The only drawbacks are that the leaves are tender, instead of leathery, and this species is very prone to tea scale.

I prepped the graft like I usually do. However, this time I used a wire cage courtesy of Magnolia Gardens and Plantation instead of a milk jug (photo 3). The cage method allowed me to graft two scions instead of one. Using masking tape, I attached the wire cage directly to the main trunk (photo 4). I secured a large bread loaf wrapper over the cage with electrical tape. A brown paper bag was placed over the plastic to prevent overheating of the graft. Time will tell if the graft was successful.

While this method can produce a fine Bonsai with a large trunk (photo 6), it is not my preferred method. I will explain my preferred but rather unorthodox method in a future article.



Photo 6

CAMELLIAS AS LANDSCAPE PLANTS

THE BEGINNER'S COLLECTION

By J. D. Thomerson

I have discussed with many fellow camellians that landscape companies seldom use camellias anymore. We have speculated on the reasons: camellias are more expensive than other plants, they grow more slowly, they are more prone to die in the first year or two than many other plants, and many with beautiful blooms are not vigorous, pretty bushes when not in bloom. There are other reasons, but these are some of the ones I remember. Camellia show nuts, like many of us sometimes care more about a pretty bloom than a pretty bush, the many months it is not in bloom. However, this is not the case for the avid landscape owner who wants a beautiful yard 12 months of the year. For several years, I have thought that we camellians could promote a “bullet-proof” starter package for the average homeowner who wants to add a few camellias to their landscape.



Seldom do you see beautiful camellias like this photo in newer subdivisions. what a shame.

The list might be slightly different for the southeast compared to the west coast or folks further north that are limited to cold-hardy selections. I will be brave and pick a starter package for folks in the southeast who want plants that are tough as nails, have pretty blooms, and look good all year.

OK—Here's My Beginners Package

1 Everyone needs a nice sasanqua, and what is better than **KANJIRO** to meet this need. There is a reason it is used as rootstock for difficult-to-grow camellias – it is tough as nails and grows great. Often overlooked is that it has loads of very pretty dark pink blooms early in the fall before cold damage is a threat. Also, Kanjiro grows very fast (for instant satisfaction), and the bush (more of a tree in this case) looks great year-round.



2 A large dark red is always popular. My wife Kay has seen all kinds of beautiful blooms from camellia gardens all over the southeast, but if forced to name only one, she will tell you that **ROYAL VELVET** is her favorite – and, to be honest, I can't argue with her. Royal Velvet is just a special bloom. It is dark red with a velvety texture and bright gold stamens. It has abundant blooms, and the bush is a strong grower with nice foliage and structure. I agree with Kay, Royal Velvet is hard to beat.



3 This choice might be controversial, but I am going to put one *reticulata* in the beginner's package. *Reticulata*'s are (in my opinion) more difficult to grow, especially outdoors, than japonicas and sasanquas, and many are (to be honest) ugly-looking bushes. There is an exception, and that is **FRANK HOUSER**. For me, it has been the best growing *reticulata* I have planted in my yard – I cannot say that the bush is just beautiful, but it is not bad looking. The reason I must include Frank Houser is that it just has an amazing bloom – and lots of them. Frank Houser or Frank Houser Var, either one is great, but since the starter package already has a beautiful red in Royal Velvet, I am selecting **FRANK HOUSER VAR** as the choice for the beginner's package. Once a homeowner sees a Frank Houser Var bloom in their yard, I bet they will be hooked on camellias as well as all their neighbors.



4 Everyone wants a white bloom. I will be honest, white is not my favorite (OK, please don't shoot me), but I realize I am in a minority with this view. Old timers always used Alba Plena as the choice for a white, but I don't consider it a very strong grower, and nursery folks tell me it is hard to root and does not grow fast. I am willing to defer to others on the best white for a beginner's package – but, since I am writing this article, I guess I should pick one. Ok, my choice is **SEAFOAM**. Remember, it needs to grow fast and easy, look good as a bush, and have a pretty bloom – I think Seafoam's perfect white formal double bloom meets these standards.



5 What about pink – my goodness, there are hundreds to pick from. In my area, older gardens are full of three pink varieties: Debutante, Pink Perfection, and Lady Claire. There is nothing wrong with these, but I think we can do better and be more unique. I am going to pick a fairly new variety named **EARLY AUTUMN**. The Gordys registered this one, and they only register varieties that grow and look great in the yard – and this definitely is true of Early Autumn. A big bonus is that Early Autumn, just like the name implies, blooms in early autumn. It blooms early, profusely, and over an extended time. It is a perfect pink formal double of medium size. The bush could be used for landscape purposes even if it never bloomed.



6 OK, our Beginners' Package needs a great growing striped variety. There are many great striped camellias, but I don't think any of them are better all-around growers than **HAPPY BIRTHDAY** (see photo below left). Happy Birthday grows fast, has beautiful leaves and bush form, and a gorgeous bloom — it definitely belongs in an easy-to-grow Beginner's Package.



7 Have you ever noticed that when non-camellians look at a nice camellia flower, they always want to sniff it, then look just a bit disappointed that they smell nothing? This will not be the case with **HIGH FRAGRANCE** (see photo above right). Jerry Conrad and many others have told me that High Fragrance smells more than any other variety. I usually can't smell any of the so-called fragrant camellias (I guess my sniffer is bad), but even I can smell a High Fragrance bloom. What's more, a bush in the yard with just a couple of blooms can be smelled (or "smelt" as my wife says, and I always kid her for saying) from several feet away. To further endorse High Fragrance, it has a very pretty medium-sized peony bloom of ivory pink with deeper pink shading at

the edge. Folks in many parts of the world use High Fragrance for rootstock, which shows that it is a very tough and fast grower.



8-9 Most people really like variegated blooms, so we need one or two in the beginner's package. Two names come to my mind for great growing, nice looking, dependable variegated varieties: #8 **TERRY GILLEY VAR** (top right) and #9 **RENA SWICK VAR** (top left). However, when looking up award winners in the ACS Journals, I notice these two win very few awards. But, remember that we are talking about great yard bushes and flowers that will reward normal homeowners, not people that typically enter camellias in a show. I have about 600 camellias planted in my yard, and I only have duplicates of about twenty. Two of the varieties I have two of are Terry Gilley Var and Rena Swick Var – so, this might tell you how impressed I am with these two as great yard plants.

10 Everyone needs a **TAMA** (photo at right is of Tama Electra), and there are many to choose from. There is Tama Americana, Tama Beauty, Tama Glitters, Tama Electra, Tama Vino, Tama Bambino (yes, a miniature), and several others. The Tama's began in 1947 when an unknown seedling was discovered in a charcoal pit in Japan – it was named Tama-No-Ura because that was the name of the town where it was found. Since then, many other Tama's have been introduced. All Tama's are unique, having bright red petals with a white band around the petal edges. Also, Tama's are excellent growing plants and produce many seeds that produce interesting seedlings. I can't single out one Tama variety as the best – they are all good. If you want things that are different and unique, then you want at least one Tama.



11 Ok, what about a blush pink, a white fading to pink, a white washed with pink, or some other similar description for our beginner's package? Nuccios Nursery introduced two good candidates, Nuccio's Jewell and Nuccio's Pearl. Older varieties such as China Doll, Erin Farmer, and Omega are also excellent candidates, among many others. I could not decide, so I did a Google search of all of the above and decided I liked **NUCCIO'S JEWEL** the best. I have this one in my yard, and while it has not grown really fast, it has always looked nice. I even succeeded with an air-layer on a Nuccio's Jewell, which also increases my faith that it would be a good choice for a beginner.



12 Yes, we need a miniature. Huly Smith, my camellia mentor, would give me "Heck" (well, he would actually be more specific than that) for choosing a miniature, but many people really like them. And, in fact, I am quickly learning to appreciate the miniatures. As landscape plants, and that's the title of this article, miniatures actually make a big statement in the yard. Miniatures are typically loaded with blooms, and most have smaller, more pleasing foliage. First, let me warn you that many miniatures you typically see winning awards at camellia shows are not the best



for landscape purposes. The varieties Tinsie, Lipstick, Fircone, Night Rider, and other miniature varieties that win big at the shows are beautiful but probably best left for the advanced camellia grower. The miniatures I am talking about for the landscape must be easier to grow and keep happy. Here are some miniature varieties that I think are good landscape candidates: Cinnamon Cindy, Fragrant Joy, Fragrant Fairies, Fragrant Pink, Hallstone Spicey, and Spring Festival. These will all put on a mass blooming show much later than the sasanqua varieties. All of the above are non-retic hybrids, and if you look at the

names closely, you will see that most are also fragrant. I am by no means an expert on which of these is the best, but I have recently planted a Spring Festival, Hallstone Spicey, and a Cinnamon Cindy in my yard – and, I am very pleased so far — I will flip a coin and pick **CINNAMON CINDY** for this category.

13 Well, some people think the number 13 is bad luck, so let's say this is a "**Baker's Dozen**" instead. I had planned to stop at twelve, but having recently experienced some bitterly cold weather, I am inclined to pick a cold-hardy variety. **CRIMSON CANDLES** is my choice. Crimson Candles is actually a reticulata hybrid, but it does not look, grow, or act like the typical reticulata. It resembles a sasanqua that blooms with thousands of dark pink single blooms. However, it blooms in the middle of winter and is extremely cold-hardy. In fact, it blooms up in areas that get plenty of ice and snow and does not seem to be bothered by this weather. Many photos on the web show Crimson Candle blooms covered in snow and looking beautiful. Even if cold hardiness is not a concern, you will be very pleased with Crimson Candles – it is a great landscape camellia.



**Notice the Snow on the Open
Crimson Candles Bloom**

OK, that's a baker's dozen, and that is enough for a beginner's package. I am sure others could list many other fine camellias that would be great for landscape purposes and beginners. There are thousands of camellia varieties, but I will submit these as my recommendations. Wouldn't it be nice to see new homes landscaped with camellias instead of the same old plants, one home after another? Wouldn't it be nice to see Camellia Collections or Series at nurseries and garden centers like we typically see Encore Azaleas and KnockOut Roses? Well, why can't there be? Camellias are definitely worthy of such respect, and years ago, they were prized as the kings and queens of the landscape. Perhaps this vision will come true if we, as camellians, agree upon and promote a bullet-proof camellia "Beginner's Collection" for landscape purposes.



Yellow and Purple



Bonnie Serpas

FROSTED CAMELLIA'S Oh My!

During the 1970s and 80s when Frank Pursel, from Oakland, CA, was hybridizing hundreds of Reticulata varieties, he decided he wanted to try and breed reticulata camellias for fragrance. He began crossing the Reticulata varieties with Lutchuensis and Saluenensis varieties (both known for being fragrant). He stated that his efforts to introduce fragrance into the Reticulata's was a complete failure. However, many of these crosses did possess amazing blooms (Pat Pinkerton, Jim Pinkerton, Pearl Buck, Mandy Smith, Tommy Land & others), and he discovered something new – **FROSTING**. Fellow hybridizers such as Walter Homeyer, Marvin Jernigan, Jack Mandarich, and others also discovered Frosting when their retic hybrids began to bloom. The FROSTED camellia bloom was born, and it has become a very desired feature of many of the new Reticulata hybrid introductions. Enjoy the ones shown below.



Dr. Dan Nathan Supreme



Tony Pinheiro



Mandy Smith



Anne Hightower



Walter Homeyer



Raspberry Glow



Lee Roy Smith



Marilyn Maphis



Pearl Buck (Unfortunately Extinct)



Bette Jean Daugharty



***Camellia Japonica* 'Terry Gilley Var.'**
Grown and Photographed by J. D. Thomerson