

THE GULF COAST

# *Camellian*

Autumn 2019

Volume 45 No. 4



*C. japonica* 'Lucy Stewart'

*A Publication of the Gulf Coast Camellia Society*

# The Gulf Coast Camellian

Volume 44 No. 4 Autumn 2018

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And our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/gulfcoastcamelliasociety](http://www.facebook.com/gulfcoastcamelliasociety)

## From the Cover .....



### *Camellia japonica* 'Lucy Stewart'

White, large to very large loose peony form chance seedling that first bloomed in 1968 and introduced in 1971 by J. M. Haynie of Theodore, Alabama. Blooms mid-season to late. (*Photo Alabama Camellias*)

# President's Message

**Dennis Hart**

New Orleans, Louisiana



I hope everybody and their camellias have survived the heat of the summer. Cool weather should be arriving soon. I am ready for October!

We had a productive, well-attended GCCS Board meeting on Monday, June 3rd at the Gulfport Yacht Club in Gulfport, Mississippi. It was decided at the Board meeting that we have sufficient funds in our investment account to reduce the cost of the GCCS conference registration over the next four years. The \$30 registration cost for the October 2019 meeting in Brookhaven is waived. All the more reason to attend the conference in Brookhaven this October!

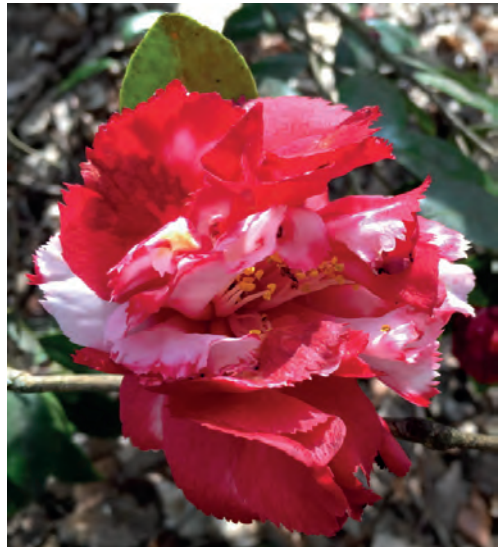
Also at the Board meeting, an Award of Honor for life-time contributions to GCCS was suggested and discussed. A committee has now been established to select a candidate and present the award in 2020. Finally, a judge's re-accreditation class will be held at the GCCS meeting from 10 am – 12 noon on Monday, October 7th.

Included in this edition of *The Camellian* is a summary of Will Hembree's master's thesis on the DNA of camellias. GCCS has provided funding to Will over the last three years and we congratulate him on all of his hard work. It is definitely worthwhile that our GCCS organization can provide funding for camellia research like this.

Our annual GCCS conference will be held on Monday – Tuesday, October 7th and 8th in Brookhaven, Mississippi. Bill Perkins and the Brookhaven Camellia Society will host the meeting. Bill has done a great job lining up the events and places

to dine. One event of special interest is a tour of The Great Mississippi Tea Company plantation in Brookhaven. Also, the keynote speaker will be horticulturist Gary Bachman from Southern Gardening television which airs weekly in Mississippi. Please contact Bill Perkins at (601) 757-4502 or [billshoots4u@yahoo.com](mailto:billshoots4u@yahoo.com) with any questions. We hope you can all attend what should be a fun and informative conference this October in Brookhaven!

In summary, keep sending your camellia articles to Kenn Campbell for ..and to Jim Dwyer for the GCCS website. They love to have them. And remember– keep learning more about camellias, recruit some new members, and have fun!



*Photo of a real 'Ville de Nantes,' complete with fimbriations and rabbit ears, taken by Dennis Hart in Nantes, France.*



# Jazz, Blues, Latin Rhythms, Country, and . . . . Camellias?!

By Ruby G. Campbell, Baton Rouge, LA



*What do all of these musical genres have to do with camellias? They are not varietal names nor are they synonyms for same. The answer is Ralph Sylvester Peer (1892-1960), producer, engineer, talent scout who moved the U.S. recording industry from its classical and operatic base of the concert halls to the regional, popular, “what’s happening now” music in local undiscovered areas, and who also had an avid interest in growing camellias, in which field he ultimately became an expert.*

Born 22 May 1892 in Independence, MO, the only child of Abram Bell Peer & Ann Sylvester who had married the previous year in Detroit, Ralph’s family had followed a typical immigrant route from southern England to Co. Cork, Ireland, to New York, then points west.

Ralph’s knowledge of the music world came from his father’s sewing machine shop which also sold talking machines (as record players were called) made by the Columbia Phonograph Company. Abram also sold records for these machines:

some old style cylinders; some new flat 78 rpm platters produced by the same company.

Ralph helped out in the stockroom and by the time he was 11 in 1903, he was taking the new electric rail line which ran

right past the store to downtown Kansas City to the Columbia Phonograph’s regional office and warehouse to pick up packages of records, needles, etc., thus making the acquaintance with the Columbia organization.

Also at this time of his life, he discovered another interest which would last a

lifetime. In a memoir written late in life, Ralph wrote: “. . . when I was nine years old, a local newspaper offered prizes for ‘backyard’ gardens belonging to amateurs. At that time my mother and father

lived in an apartment house. . . In the back of this house was a high bluff. I laboriously carved out a spot for a small garden . . . . The fact that I was only nine years old, and the unique character of the garden, earned for me a prize of \$10 and created



*Ralph Sylvester Peer  
1892-1960*



an ardent interest in gardening for the rest of my life.”

Following his graduation from high school, Ralph S. Peer went to work at the Columbia Phonograph Company, clerking full time. This was a period of much growth in the music industry, particularly in the sale of sheet music and pianos, player pianos, and records – platters and cylinders. Peer was learning what made a record stand out and how money was made in the business. In 1915, at the age of 23, he was made assistant manager of the entire Midwest region and relocated to Chicago.

When the US entered WWI, Peer enlisted in the US Naval Reserve Officers Training School at the University of Chicago. He made a training trip on a merchant vessel to Liverpool only to learn that by the time he reached Great Britain (now the UK), the war had actually ended. Rather than hang around the base for six months, he signed on as second mate on a freighter owned by the Imperial Munitions Board, drawing both his navy pay and his salary from the IMB.

Following his discharge from the navy on 26 June 1919, Peer signed on with his former employer who had left Columbia and was now general sales manager of the new record division of the Otto Heineman Phonograph Supply Company in Manhattan known for its high quality sound and operated under the Okeh record label.

Okeh’s roster of recording artists lacked the quality musicians under contract to the Victor Company such as Al Jolson, Enrico Caruso, or name bands such as Paul Whiteman, so this is where Peer’s work began. He decided to record music in the performance style of its originators which reflected the region and the people from which it came. He would record local musicians and sell the records to the people in that location. His first blues recording

specifically aimed at the African-American market was Mamie Smith’s “Crazy Blues.” Peer described that as “the most awful record ever made, and it sold over a million copies.”

He is also credited with what is called the first hillbilly (now country music) recording. Fiddlin’ John Carson’s “Little Old Log Cabin in the Lane” and the novelty number, “That Old Hen Cackles and the Rooster’s Goin’ to Crow,” the latter showing off Carson’s ability to imitate barnyard birds on his fiddle.

In 1924, Peer recorded Louis Armstrong and his Hot Five with his fellow New Orleans players and wife Lil Hardin, later adding two more players as the Hot Seven. These recordings which included Armstrong’s scat-singing and vocals are accepted as the primary recordings of jazz history.

Peer left Okeh records in 1926 and signed on with the Victor Talking Machine Company for no salary but with “control of the mechanical rights” whereby he



would receive one cent per record side that he would divide with the artist.

At a makeshift studio in Bristol, TN, he recorded Jimmie Rodgers, who later became known as the “Father of Country Music,” and the Carter Family in the same

session. The following year, Peer recorded the “Fathers of modern Rhythm & Blues,” the Memphis Jug Band, in another makeshift studio in Beale Street.

Within months of Bristol, Peer was enjoying substantial funding results under the terms of his agreement with Victor assigning mechanical royalties to him, including royalties from other label’s recording of Rodgers-composed songs. He claims he took in “close to a quarter of



*What Jimmie Rodgers got with his royalties.*

a million dollars” for the second quarter of 1928 alone. (Incidentally Rodgers, the Carters, and the other artists were getting their share of the royalties, as well.) Peer incorporated the United Publishing Co. which would become the core of his business interests for the next 32 years under the name of Southern Music Publishing Co. Now known as *peermusic*, it is the largest independent music publisher in the world.

Peer went on to publish other country and jazz artists as Fats Waller, Jelly Roll Morton, and Count Basie. He recorded Hoagy Carmichael’s “Georgia on My Mind.” During WWII, he published songs as “Deep in the Heart of Texas,” and “You are my Sunshine (Jimmie Davis), “Humpty Dumpty Heart” (Glen Miller), and “I Should Care,” (Frank Sinatra).

In 1940, he collaborated with Walt Disney and Nelson Rockefeller in the

making of a film featuring Latin music to counteract the blatant Nazi propaganda being conducted in Venezuela. Disney had immediately gravitated to two catchy songs known in the US as “Brazil,” and “Tico Tico,” both of which had already been recorded by Peer who had also popularized “Bésame Mucho,” “Green Eyes,” and “Amor, Amor, Amor,” and other Latin songs.

As a result of Peer’s work in the music and recording industry, people around the world have been introduced to, and have enjoyed all of these regional sounds and rhythms.

By now, Peer had married his third wife, Monique Hildborg Iverson on 11 January 1940. Together they traveled to many places around the world. She supported his work and his avid interest in horticulture, specifically his work with camellias.

He recalled his first introduction to camellias. “We had purchased [the Park Hill estate] because of the wonderful evergreen trees, but soon we noticed that



*Peer planted his first three camellias just outside the gates to his Park Hill Estate.*

the deep shade under these trees would permit nothing to grow, even grass. A camellia nurseryman gave me the idea that camellias and azaleas could be grown in some of the barren area. I started with three small camellia plants placed just outside the front gates [that] thrived might-

ily and I began an expansion of the camellia planting activities. . . Almost at once I took advantage of my travels abroad to learn more about camellias and to bring in varieties and species from the various countries I visited.”

He reached out to other camellia growers as his devotion to camellias began. A letter, dated 9 April 1948, to a Mr. D. I. Feathers in Oakland, CA. tells of his first entry into the importation of plants:

“Dear Mr. Feathers:

“I live on a small estate located on the hill overlooking Hollywood and because of conditions which have developed through the planting of a large number of trees, I find that camellias do very well in this property. Consequently, I have between 60 and 70 varieties which I have acquired from time to time.

“My business is international in character, and I have taken advantage of this fact to obtain information regarding camellias from various countries. My manager in Sydney, Australia, has just sent to me a catalog from the Camellia Grove Nursery together with the information that you have imported various plants recently as an experiment. I am thinking of bringing over a few varieties myself, and it occurred to me that it would be a good idea to get a list of what you had brought in so that there would not be unnecessary duplication. I am also interested in knowing what luck you have had. So far, I have not actually imported camellia plants although I expect a small shipment from England in the near future. I am a member of the American Camellia Society.”

It wasn’t long before Peer’s collection grew from “60 or 70 varieties” to nearly three thousand camellia plants which were planted in terraces on the three-acre grounds of Park Hill. They came from remote regions of the camellia world which Peer and Monique brought back for

their gardens. However, one of the plants on site was huge 30-foot tall camellia japonica transplanted into the gardens from near-by Pico Rivera where it had been planted ca 1888. This significant historic specimen is said to have arrived as an unnamed seedling on a Japanese tramp



*C. japonica ‘California’ Japan to U. S. 1888*



*C. species granthamiana*

steamer at Redondo Beach Harbor, and purchased for 25¢. Named ‘California,’ it is now growing at the Huntington Gardens.

Included among his collection were the rare and endangered species of *Camellia granthamiana*, which was first discov-



ered in Hong Kong in 1955, and the rare species of “Kunming Reticulates” that he had introduced from the Kunming Basin of the Yunnan Province in China. One of these reticulata cultivars, Camellia ‘Shot Silk’ (aka ‘Dayinhong’) develops lighter areas as the bloom ages. [Ed.’s note: See “The Yunnan Camellias” by Hyman Nor-  
 sworth in the Summer 2017 issue of this



*C. reticulata ‘Shot Silk’ Yunnan Reticulata  
 China to US 1948 Descanso and Peer*



*C. reticulata ‘Captain Rawes’ (Guixia)  
 China to England 1820*

journal, Vol. 43, No. 3, pp. 4-6.]  
 While the first reticulata was known to have left China in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century for Japan, it was not until 1820 that this

same cultivar, later named ‘Captain Rawes,’ appeared in England, and then in the University of California Botanical Garden in Berkeley in 1948. Strangely enough, the cultivar died out in China and was reintroduced there in 1974 as ‘Guixia’ (‘Returned Glory’).

A few other reticulata cultivars found their way to the western world in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, such as ‘Pagoda’ (aka ‘Robert Fortune,’ ‘Pine Cone Scale’), but it wasn’t until 1948 that Ralph Peer and Walter Lammerts of Rancho del Descanso (now



*Ralph Peer with his prize winning camellias.*

Descanso Gardens in La Canada) imported about twenty sets of reticulata cultivars. Unknown to each other, they soon made contact and shared information.

Peer’s work with camellias was quickly recognized as he established the Los Angeles Camellia Society and served as its first president. He then became the vice-president of the southern California Camellia Society, State Director of the national society, and in 1957, president of



the American Camellia Society, and a director of the American Horticultural Council.

Internationally, he sent a strain of camellia seeds to the Royal Horticultural Society in the UK that he knew would survive in the muggy British climate. He established a camellia society in Japan and sent 100 species to be grown in that country for the first time.

In 1954, Peer and his wife Monique made headlines in their attempt to locate a long-lost naturally growing yellow camellia in Indochina (today's Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos). Unfortunately, because it was in the war zone, in the middle of the battle of Dien Ben Phu, the place they wanted to reach was indeed unreachable. Worried that the species might be destroyed as a result of the battle, the Peers spoke to students in Taiwan and funded an expedition led by Professor Takasi Tuyama of Japan in an attempt to locate the plant. Initially the results were negative. But years later, Tuyama did find an actual plant in China, and hybridization of yellow variations began in the 1970s.

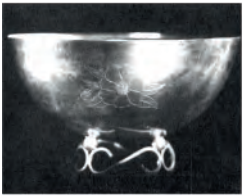
Peer was awarded the Veitch Memorial Medal by the Royal Horticultural Society in 1955, and was elected into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1984 (although his favorite genre was said to have been classical). The ACS has honored his memory with the annual Ralph Peer Sasanqua Award to the originator of a seedling sasanqua since 1958.

Ralph Sylvester Peer died of pneumonia 19 January 1960 at the age of 67, but his legacy lives on in the fields of both music and camellia culture.

[ Source: Barry Mazor. *Ralph Peer and the Making of Popular Roots Music*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2015.]



# Peer Sasanqua Award



*Peer Cup*



*Peer Plaque*

*1<sup>st</sup> annual Peer award winner 'Chansonette' 1958.*



*'Leslie Ann' 1961*



*'Miss Ed' 1964*



*'Navajo' 2017*

# A Camellian's Diary

By Caroline Dickson, Poplarville, MS



## *Hearts and Pearls but no Love for Greenbrier*

The USDA Plant Database identifies Smilax, Greenbrier (aka Sawbrier), as native to the southeast United States. Across the world, there are hundreds of varieties. Within the U.S. there are about 20 different varieties.

My first introduction to Greenbrier was when workers were tying vines onto a trailer hitch to pull it out of trees using the strength of a truck needed due to all the tendrils that hold the vine to a tree. I later learned Greenbrier is easily regrown from underground roots.

The variety in South Mississippi will grow in all directions from the original plant forming a mat that can be four feet across and a foot deep. If left in the ground, new sprouts appear within two to three weeks. With a good anchor, the sprouts can grow vertically several inches a day which will make them unsightly in the garden. At this point, I can mention that I have a friend who is a trained naturalist who harvests and eats the sprouts from a designated trail. I have not cooked Greenbrier like asparagus to try it as food.

My control of Greenbrier starts in April by looking for the heart shaped leaf of new seed origin sprouts. When I find the inch size heart shaped leaf, I dig for the seed located two to four inches under the soil. I will frequently find a



*Heart shaped leaf of Greenbrier seedling*



*Six inch Smilax taproot.*

cluster of individual seedlings from the natural occurrence of a cluster of berries falling together or a bird that ate multiple berries. I have adopted the just dig it as routine because it is a waste of time to rip off the leaf from the root time after time when a root has matured beyond half an inch wide.

We all have times when we can't get out in the garden which is how this big root for Smilax happened. I have



*Greenbrier root. (Quarter for scale)*

pictured the same vine as in the ground as a root with multiple shoots, emerging at ground level covered by pine straw, and emerging from the top of a mature camellia. My plan is to dig out the root by hand with a shovel. If that fails, I will use a backhoe to remove it.

There are instructions in some publications to use a general herbicide. One method is to continue to paint the solution



*Mature Greenbrier vine*

on the sprouts until they stop growing after multiple applications. The other method is to use a floral tube containing herbicide with the stem of the vine inserted into the tube. I have too much wind and wildlife to do either of these methods.

### ***“All Retics Are Hybrids, But Not All Hybrids Are Retics”***

I heard this statement from an old school Camellian spoken to a relatively new Camellian. I watched the surprised look on the new Camellian’s face who responded “I don’t know about that.” I watched as there was no explanation of the statement. Both redirected to other subjects.

The explanation can be found in the Fourth Edition of “The Colour Dictionary of Camellias” by Stirling Macoboy printed in 1991. On page 17, *Camellia Reticulata* (wild form) is described as “The simple single form of *camellia reticulata* is probably the parent of all the cultivated ornamentals seen today.” The wild form grows naturally in Southern China near the Tropic of Cancer above 6,500 feet. The broad heavily reticulated leaf has a network of lines and veins that are distinctive. The three-inch light rose color flower appears in mid to late season.

Although camellias were recorded in China since the eleventh century, they were considered family treasures, not to

be shared. A few *camellia reticulatas* were brought to England by Captain Rawes after 1820. Sterile forms were included. A second plant was brought to England in 1847 by Robert Fortune which was sterile and difficult to propagate in the cooler weather of England. These were the only two specimens attractive enough to get attention for 100 years in England or the United States.

The wild form of *Camellia reticulata* had hundreds of years to cross pollenate in the subtropical areas of China. By 1997, the wild form was very rare.



*C. reticulata wildform*

Macoboy details how difficult importation of sub-tropical *camellia reticulata* to the United States has been. A list of 44 plants imported by 1980 is included in the Fourth Edition. Most of the plants were from Yunnan Province in Southwest China.

Difficult survival of *reticulatas* and *reticulata* hybrids has been a problem since the United States is far north of the Tropic of Cancer. *Reticulatas* will accept *Japonica* pollen leading to numerous hybrids.





# Reading Tea Leaves: Cytogenetics of *Camellia* and Related Genera

William G. Hembree, Thomas G. Ranney, Brian E. Jackson, and Mark Weathington  
North Carolina State University, Department of Horticultural Science

*Note: The following summary of his master's thesis studying the DNA of camellias was prepared by Will Hembree. The Gulf Coast Camellia Society helped fund Will's research over the last three years.*

It is no revelation that there is tremendous diversity within the genus *Camellia*. With over a hundred species and tens of thousands of cultivars, camellias represent one of the most diverse groups of evergreen shrubs in the southern landscape. This can be seen not only in the array of different blooms among varieties, but in the genetic makeup of the plants as well. Cytogenetics, which is the study of the structure and function of chromosomes and how they influence inheritance, is complicated in camellias and has been studied extensively over the past century. Camellias are often polyploid (having more than two complete sets of chromosomes) and can range from diploid to octoploid. This means that different plants can have different numbers of complete sets of chromosomes in their cells. For example, *Camellia japonica*, the Japanese camellia, is typically diploid, meaning it has two complete and paired sets of chromosomes in each cell. Humans are similar, with one set of chromosomes being inherited from each of our parents. *Camellia sasanqua*, on the other hand, is typically hexaploid, having six paired sets of chromosomes, three sets from each parent. Plants with different ploidy levels will often not hybridize, though

this does sometimes happen. *Camellia*  $\times$  *vernalis*, the hybrid of *C. japonica* and *C. sasanqua*, is thought to have originated hundreds of years ago in Japan, and is tetraploid, having a ploidy intermediate to that of its parents. In addition to camellias, some other genera in the Tea family (Theaceae), are also polyploid. Understanding the ploidy level of plants is an important tool in plant breeding, as it can inform us about fertility, reproductive compatibility, and heritability of traits. Though species can be said to have a "typical" ploidy level, there have been reports of ploidy variations in several species including *C. japonica*, *C. sasanqua*, *C.*  $\times$  *vernalis*, and many others. These sometimes-conflicting reports of ploidy and lack of information on many modern cultivars provided the impetus for our study.

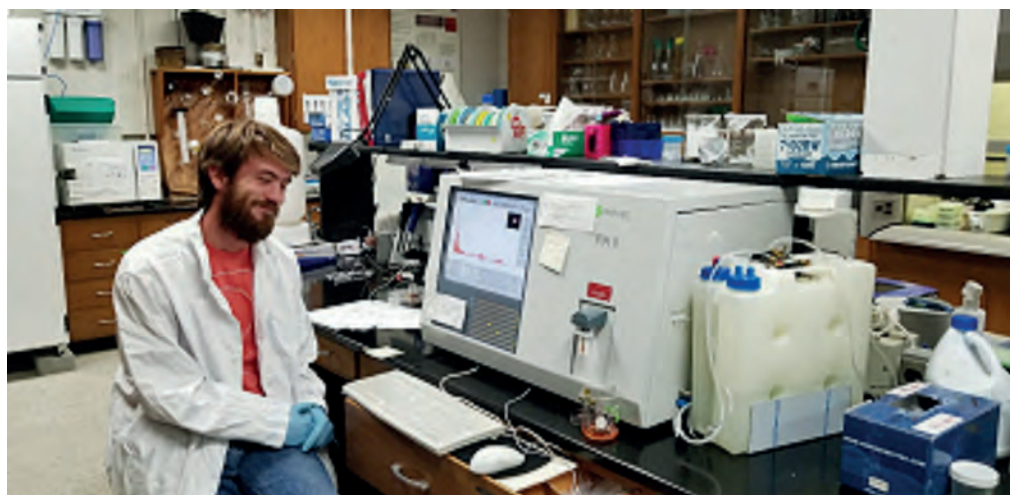
We were interested in determining the ploidy and DNA content (genome size) of a wide range of species, hybrids, and cultivars of *camellia* and other related genera, with particular interest in inter-ploid hybrids and species with no cytogenetic documentation. Our hope was that this new information would prove valuable to current and future plant breeders and benefit the development of new cultivars of camellias. Our project



had two primary objectives. First, to find what gaps existed in the camellia ploidy knowledgebase, we conducted an extensive literature review of Theaceae cytogenetics. Second, we selected species, hybrids, and cultivars to include in the study, focusing on varieties with valuable traits for breeding.

We determined the ploidy level and DNA content of these selected camellias using two different methods, flow cytometry (measuring cell DNA content) and traditional cytology (visually counting the chromosomes). For flow cytometry, we chopped up leaf tissue with an extraction buffer to release the nuclei from the

microscope. Using data from both flow cytometry and the root squashes, we calibrated DNA content to chromosome number. For example, if a cultivar of *C. japonica* had a DNA content of around 6.0 picograms and was found to have the diploid number of chromosomes, we could infer that other camellias with a similar DNA content of around 6.0 picograms would also be diploid. In camellia, diploids, denoted as  $2x$ , have 30 chromosomes. This can be written as  $2n = 2x = 30$ . This can be interpreted as: a plant in the sporophytic phase ( $2n$ ) that is a diploid ( $2x$ ) has thirty total chromosomes. Hexaploids, such as *C. sasanqua*



*Will Hembree conducting flow cytometry on camellia samples.*

cells and tagged the DNA with a fluorescent dye. The tagged nuclei, when excited by a laser, emitted a measurable amount of fluorescence depending on the amount of DNA that was tagged and can be measured with a flow cytometer. These values were used to calculate the total mass of DNA in each cell. For cytology, we fixed actively dividing root meristems in ethanol then stained the tissue so that we could visually count the number of chromosomes under a light

( $2n = 6x = 90$ ), have three times the amount of DNA as diploids. Because flow cytometry is a rapid tool that can be used to process samples much more quickly than cytology, we only counted the chromosomes on one representative sample from each ploidy group.

Our study represented the first cytogenetic reports of six species of *Camellia*, including *C. azalea*, *C. amplexicaulis*, *C. chrysanthoides*, *C. cordifolia*, *C. cucphuongensis*, *C. flava*, *C. nanyongensis*,

and *C. trichoclada*, all of which were found to be diploid. We also reported new values for four species of *Schima* including *Schima argentea*, *S. khasiana*, *S. remotiserrata*, and *S. sinensis* that were also diploid. Both diploid and triploid *Stewartia ovata* were found, which indicates the possible existence of a ploidy series in this genus. Additionally, a ploidy series was discovered in *Polyspora* that ranged from diploid to octoploid.

In addition to species and cultivars of species, we looked at many interspecific hybrids as well as interploid hybrids, or hybrids made between two parents of different ploidy levels. Just as we used DNA content to determine ploidy of the camellias in this study, we also used it to validate interploid and interspecific hybrids. All noninterploid interspecific hybrids were consistent with their reported parentage, but some of the interploid hybrids were not. For example, the DNA content of an intergeneric hybrid between *C. japonica* × *Franklinia alatamaha* should be intermediate between the two parents. The DNA contents are considerably different for these two parents (5.78–7.11 pg for *C. japonica* and 1.62 pg for *F. alatamaha*), yet the putative hybrid USNA 79387 was 5.94 pg, effectively discounting hybridity. There are many factors that could have contributed to this misreported parentage, including pollen contamination, mislabeling, or apomixis, which is the production of seeds without fertilization (essentially a clone of the mother). Our study didn't delve into the reasons why each individual hybrid did not align with their reported parentage, rather we just identified hybrids that were not consistent with their reported parentage.

The extensive history of camellia breeding and selection has produced tens of thousands of cultivars that now serve as potential parents and breeding lines. The long history of camellia cultivation, global exchange of historical varieties and variable translations can cause considerable confusion which is further complicated by incomplete knowledge of the parentage and ploidy of specific clones. This confusion emphasizes the need for clone specific data regarding cytogenetics for individual accessions and breeding lines.

This study builds on an extensive body of cytogenetic research in camellia and provides new information regarding ploidy, DNA content, hybridity, and reproductive pathways for a broad range of cultivated camellias. This expanding knowledgebase provides improved understanding of genetic resources for Theaceae that will aid in the development of improved hybrids and cultivars. If you are interested in taking a deeper dive into camellia cytogenetics, please see: Hembree, W.G., T.G. Ranney, B.E. Jackson, and M. Weathington. 2019. Cytogenetics, ploidy, and genome sizes of *Camellia* and related genera. HortScience 54(7): 1 1 2 4 - 1 1 4 2 . <https://mcilab.cals.ncsu.edu/files/2019/07/hembree-et-al-2019.pdf>.

Many thanks to the Gulf Coast Camellia Society for providing funding to support this research!



# "il dolce far niente"

by Bette Hooton, Pensacola, FL



The Italian language has a phrase for what the past summer has meant to us at the Hooton house, 'il dolce far niente', the sweetness of doing nothing. And that's about the way it was this past hotter-than-Hades summer: mixed in with doctors' visits, antibiotics, and the like. We rested, we read, we followed the camellia world in the countries that celebrated winter with the camellia: New Zealand and Australia. And with one comment on Facebook about 'maybe we ought to summer in New Zealand', I started getting ads for flights to New Zealand.

The clubs from these two countries put all sorts of wonderful pictures from their shows on my Facebook page, which I transferred to the Pensacola Camellia Club page. This prompted comments from Dick about 'we can't grow that here' and 'pretty, but it really doesn't look like that'. Interestingly enough, the comments just created a longing and hunger for our new season

to begin. (Although the New Zealanders got excited when they found out that we might be visiting—hmm.)

With the summer board meeting of GCCS in Gulfport in June and the ACCS's packets arriving in July for its September conference in South Carolina, I hear the enthusiasm building, just like it does every year. ACCS has been hurricaned-out for the past two years—Randolph Maphis swears that this WILL NOT HAPPEN this year. Hmm...

Dick's emails lately are from Mark Crawford, Tommy Alden, Bobby Green, Jim Campbell when he sends his inventory out, Glen Read, John Davy, et al: and such excitement. These nurseries provide their lists, Dick and John Mate select and pick up the plants to buy, and the Pensacola Club is open for business!

Let The Games Begin. But in the meantime, let's celebrate *il dolce far niente*. I have one more book to finish.



*C. reticulata* 'Winter's Own Var' Aus 1989 - M. Greentree, Kingsgrove, NSW



*C. japonica* 'Paul Jones Supreme' Aus 1968 - E. G. Waterhouse, Sydney, NSW





*Cleaning up after the show at Brookhaven.*



*BRCS Repotting session #4: Elmo Deen, Dave Glass and Joe Holmes pot up this years grafts into 2 gal. pots.*



*C. japonica 'El Rojo'  
1972, Hody Wilson,  
Hammond, LA*

# AROUND THE



*Mid-Year Board Meeting at the Biloxi Yacht Club  
Front Row: Mark Crawford, Jim Campbell, Kenn Campbell, Caroline Dickson  
Back Row: Jim Smelley, Victoria Baugh, Lisa Miller, Dennis Hart, James Dwyer, Dick Hooton, Joe Holmes*

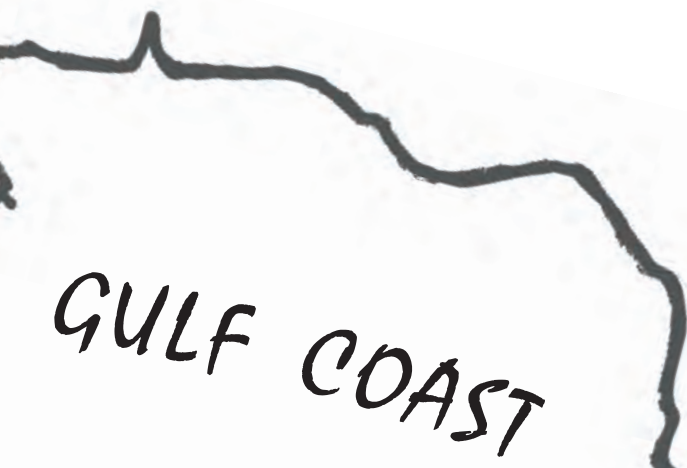




*BRCs Repotting session #4:*



*BRCs Repotting session #4:  
Kay Clark label maker and plant toter.*



*c. nr hyb 'Dancing Blaze' (NZ 2010) won a Blue Ribbon at BRCs 2019 Show for Skip Vogelsang of Pensacola FL.*



*Caroline Dickson and Lisa Miller discuss upcoming GCCS Annual Meeting in Brookhaven, MS with Bill Perkins, event coordinator.*



*Roger Vinsons 'Pink Perfection' still blooming May 1, 2019 in Pensacola, FL*

# Pruning Camellias - Part 2

By Mark Crawford, Valdosta, GA



In my article about pruning in the Spring 2019 issue of the *Camellian*, I described rejuvenation pruning where large overgrown camellias are brought down to 4 feet tall and only the main branches remain when the job is done. All the cross limbs and foliage are removed so that you have a totally new plant when the new growth emerges. This is a very difficult thing for some camellia growers to do and the average gardener cannot bare to do this type of pruning. The following photos show a before and after as the new growth emerges from the primary branches that remain. New growth starts about 6 - 8 weeks after pruning depending on the weather conditions and first appears as small bumps along the stem. This is to reassure the readers that this does not harm the plant if it is done at right time that is immediately after blooming and before any new growth starts in the spring. This assures that all the stored reserves in the roots will support the new growth on a much smaller plant.



*Typical new growth in May*



*Large plant pruned in February.*





*These plants were pruned in February and this is the new growth in May. The plants will probably skip the next blooming season and bloom again the following year.*

## Problems, Problems

By John Mate, Pensacola, FL

What is the biggest problem camellia gardeners face and what are they willing to do to solve the problem? For many, the problem is simply the need for more space to plant all the camellias they want to plant. Our Pensacola Club's recent trip to Jim Smelley's greenhouses show how this problem can occur. The solution is the hard part and you may have to get creative!

Here are some PCC members' solutions to space problems. (Their names will not be mentioned in order to protect them from questions about their mental state.) D.H. installed 74 steps down the side of a pretty steep cliff to reach new planting ground. R.V. removed a perfectly good tennis court in his backyard. C.H. bought a lot across the street from her home for

more camellias. S.V. asked a neighbor, who lived several doors down, for permission to plant camellias in the woods behind their house.

Then there is J.M., who had plenty of land for camellias but needed filtered light to provide good growing conditions and lessen the number of falling limbs from the trees in the space he chose. J.M. rented a 60ft bucket truck and hung out the sides with a chainsaw to trim trees for 40 hours last week. Every part of his body aches and he still has to clean the mess up!

I hope you are enjoying the camellia blooms in your own garden and if you'd like to share how you overcame your camellia space problem, come talk to me.



# For the Love of Camellias

By Lauren Mate, Cantonment, FL

**I**n the Pensacola Camellia Club February 2019 newsletter, John Mate reported on the the major camellia garden project he is undertaking at our home in Cantonment. John rented a 60 ft power lift for an entire week and spent every day hanging precariously over the bucket's edge with either of two chainsaws, mini or regular size, trimming branches on our property. He did all of this hard work with the goal of getting more sunlight into an area he plans to plant camellias. (We have nearly 100 camellias in pots just waiting to be planted.) Seven days and much soreness later (800 mg Motrin is a wonderful thing), the trimming was done!

What immediately followed was another laborious week of picking up branches, chain sawing felled limbs to a manageable size, and then transporting them by trailer and front end loader to our wood pile wall or a pile for burning later. John does enjoy industrial power equipment. He especially likes sharing Papa's equipment action videos with our 2 1/2 year old grandson. John tells me they save him a lot of time and that's why we need to rent them, but I know he really has fun running the equipment!







Now we are in April. It is time for next project phase--installing a new water line to our home and separate irrigation lines to the new camellia garden. (By the way, as part of the project, our home's water meter also had to be relocated to accommodate the new household line and irrigation line. Did I mention our home sets back at least a ¼ mile from the road? That's potentially a lot of trenching and PVC pipe.) And now it is time again to rent another "fun" piece of power equipment, an industrial trencher. A new power toy--yeah!

I quickly found out from John that using a trencher was not the "cure all" to make the job an easy one. Many times he had to kneel on the ground with a saws-all or hand clippers, or stand above the trench wielding a pick-axe, to cut through the tree roots to get to a trench depth of 12-24 inches for both the main water line and separate irrigation line to fit.

The weather cooperated enough this week for John to finish installing the main water line to the house (thank goodness we have running water) and part of the irrigation line. The rest of the irrigation installation job will have to wait until the next good weather window. And I'll say this, as much strenuous manual labor that my 60+-year-old husband performed, there was never a complaint, for all of this was done for the love of camellias.





## *Camellias of Victoria, British Columbia*

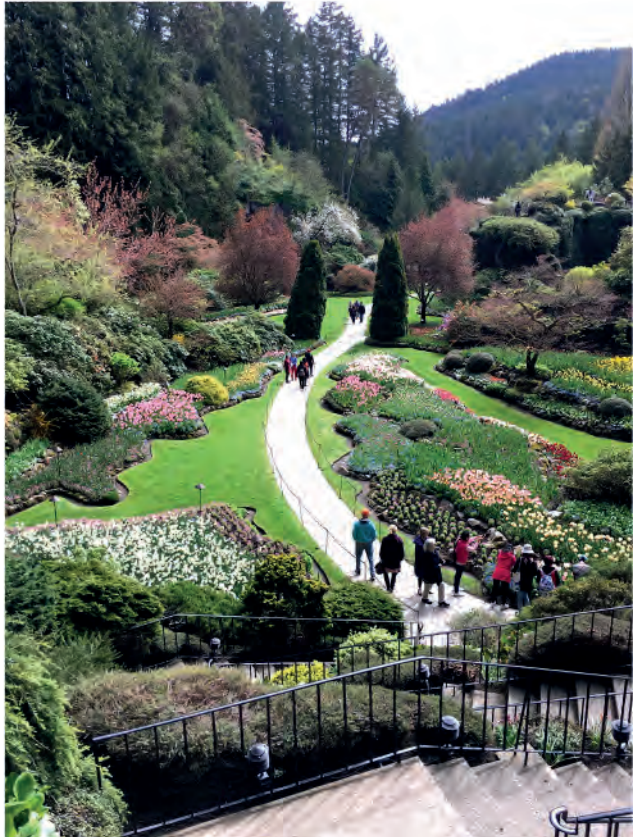
By Mark Crawford, Valdosta, GA

In April I took a family vacation to the Pacific Northwest to attend the tulip festival north of Seattle in the Skagit Valley. In 2018 friends went there and came back saying they saw more tulips than when they went to Holland. My wife had never visited the Northwest and we decided then to plan for this trip. Our 2 children were able to accompany us along with my sister-in-law and her husband. Seattle is an easy city to get around using public transportation so we decided not to rent a car. We used a tour service to visit the tulip farms that were in peak bloom on April 17th. The fields of tulips were spectacular along with incredible display gardens at 2 locations. We saw some daffodils but they were nearing the end of their bloom season.

The next day we caught the Clipper ferry to Victoria, B.C. to visit Butchart Gardens. We had planned to visit the gardens that day but it was raining and we were able to change our tickets to the following day. When we arrived in Victoria and checked into our hotel we just explored the city. Visiting Butchart gardens is an incredible experience as I had previously



*Tulio Festival, Skagit Valley, Washington*



*Butchart Gardens, Victoria, B.C.*





### *Camellia Plants in Butchart Garden*



visited twice but both times were in September. April was a completely different experience. Daffodil and flowering cherries were in full bloom along with the early blooming tulips. The real surprise were all the camellias in the garden in full bloom. Since I had only been there in September and didn't realize there were any camellias in the landscape. Camellias are scattered throughout the gardens but none of them are labeled. I recognized 'Taylor's Perfection' but most of the others were unfamiliar to me. After touring the garden, I visited the information center where all the blooming plants found in the garden that day are on display with names. Butchart is an exhibition garden and there are no names on the plants in the garden. They have all the camellias named on their computer data base that you can look up. The accompanying photos do not have names so you can try camellia ID and give them your best guess.

I did not expect to see so many camellias in full bloom during this trip and feel this article might inspire you to make this trip in the future for a great tulip and camellia experience.



# The Brookhaven Camellia Society Will Host The Gulf Coast Camellia Society Fall Meeting

By Bill Perkins, Brookhaven, MS

The Brookhaven Camellia Society is proud that Brookhaven has been chosen for the venue of the 2019 annual conference of the GCCS. We see many of the GCCS members at our annual show each year and are delighted for so many more GCCS members to experience Brookhaven and its environs with us Monday and Tuesday **October 7th and 8th** for the conference.



The Event Center at “The Homestead at Brookhaven Nurseries” will be the main location for our conference meetings. The former Brookhaven Nurseries owned and operated by Frank Burns for 70 years has been converted into a special events venue since it closed a few years ago. The greenhouses have been removed, the stately home of the Burns family refurbished to become “The Homestead Guest House”, and a new multi-purpose “Event Center” built on the grounds behind The Guest House. The Brookhaven Camellia Society held monthly meetings there at The Guest House in 2017 until our ever expanding membership quickly outgrew the space inside the house for speakers. Now that The Event Center is up and running we

have an occasional meeting there and hold our annual Camellia Show there the 1st Saturday of February. We may be outgrowing The Event Center, too, but it will be the venue for our 2020 show February 1st. It worked very well for us at this year’s show but with 838 blooms in competition it was let’s say “busy”. We now have a better idea how to optimize the space for 2020 after that inaugural show this year.

“The Homestead” is located at 946 U. S. Highway 51 South inside the Brookhaven city limits with easy convenient access from Exit 38 of I-55 for Highway 84 and south Brookhaven. The intersection of U.S. 84 and U.S. 51 is within sight of the entrance to The Homestead and only a couple of minutes from I-55.

**Registration** begins at The Event Center at noon Monday the 7th.

**Dinner at Mitchell’s** Monday Evening at 7 including wine bar. Mitchell's is located at 1203 Hampton Drive which as the address denotes is almost adjacent to the Hampton Inn across Brookway Blvd. from the Holiday Inn Express.

**Tour The Great Mississippi Tea Company’s** plantation at 2 Tuesday afternoon. This is one of the few commercial tea operations in the USA. It was established in 2012 and reached commercial production last year with buyers for their teas currently in London and Texas. It is located about 15 minutes from The Homestead at 2572 East Lincoln Road. The plan is to leave together from The Homestead about



1:45 allowing plenty of time to arrive before 2 and get organized for the tour. The tour is expected to complete by 4 to 4:30. The cost is \$20 per person.

The owners have expanded their operations by planting an additional 7 acres at the Brookhaven plantation and have



*The Great Mississippi Tea Company Plantation*

acquired land on the Big Island of Hawaii where they have recently planted their initial crop. It has been a learning curve with some initial setbacks but like with most plants there are some dos and don'ts as well as some things learned only by experience. Tea, although a cousin of camellias, requires its own special attention and needs to attain a high end product appreciated by the connoisseurs of Mayfair as they sip their afternoon cup with scones.



*Black Magnolia Tea*

That has been the target for the Great Mississippi Tea Company from its conception. Please see their web site for the history of the property of the Brookhaven plantation and the company.

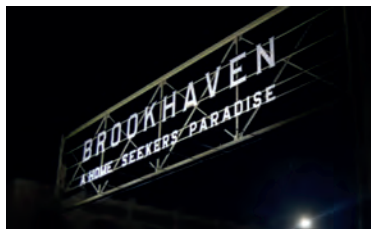
### **The President's Banquet at The Mallard at Lake Dixie Springs**

Dinner with a cash bar Tuesday will

begin at 7 at The Mallard at Lake Dixie Springs about 15 minutes south of Brookhaven at 3131 US Highway 51, Summit, MS 38064 telephone 601 276 7575. The original Mallard was built when the resort lake was constructed in 1939. The current Mallard is the third generation spacious and modern overlooking the lake on a hillside.

The President's Banquet will be in The Chapel, the restaurant's special event venue. The Chapel was formerly the First Methodist Church in the nearby village of Bogue Chitto built in 1879. Ted Malta, the owner of the new Mallard had the vision to acquire the church, which had not been used in years after a modern one had replaced it, and to move and incorporate it into the new Mallard. It has become a gem for weddings and special events such as our conference. There are also 3 very nice accommodations at The Mallard, 2 suites attached to the restaurant and another lakeside that may be used for overnight stays.

Dr. Gary Bachman, better known as "The Southern Gardener", will be the key speaker at the President's Banquet. He and his team of a producer and videographer for his nationally known horticulture television and radio program "Southern Gardening" may be including the banquet in the program that they will be shooting that week at the nearby MSU Research Center near Gallman and Crystal Springs. This possibility could make it more interesting for them as well as the GCCS.



# In the Autumn Garden

By Art Landry, Baton Rouge, LA



**A**utumn and winter are the best times to plant a new camellia. The ideal place to plant a camellia is under a canopy of tall pines, which provide dappled shade all day, and a sandy loam soil. Unfortunately most of us don't have that luxury and must make special provisions for planting our camellias.

If your soil is heavy clay like most of the soil in the Baton Rouge area, do not dig a hole in heavy clay as it will hold water like a bowl. A camellia will not survive planted in a clay hole.

The best plan is to use raised bed planting techniques for individual plants or groupings.

For individual plants, plant on top of the ground and build the soil up to the root ball with an amended soil mix and a well draining topsoil, river silt or 'flowerbed mix' (a mixture of bark, sand and topsoil sold by most dirt suppliers) as in Fig. 1.

For multiple plants build up a bed raised at least a foot or more with topsoil, silt, flowerbed mix or what ever well draining fill dirt you can find. After it has settled you can plant your camellias there in the normal manner.

Raised planter beds (Fig. 2) work well

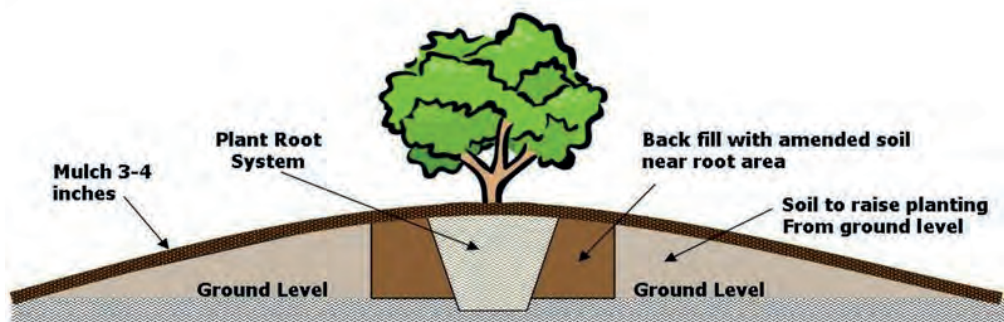
also in areas where your soil may not provide adequate drainage. Build them from rot resistant wood, treated lumber, brick or concrete blocks.



*Fig.2 Raised Planter Bed.*

If your natural soil is well drained, you can use the normal method of planting. Remove the natural soil to a depth of no more than half the root ball and place in wheel barrow. Mix the removed soil with a generous amount of sharp sand, pine bark, compost or other humus material and build up so the top of the root ball is at least 6" above the natural ground.

Cover with a 4" mulch of leaves or pine straw to prevent erosion. Water well every week without rain. Do not fertilize the first year. Fertilize lightly the second year.



*Fig. 1 Method of planting a camellia in heavy clay soils.*

# Camellia Quiz

Name these camellias that are “Good Enough to Eat.” Answers on page 28.



#1

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#2

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#3

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#4

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#5

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#6

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# Editor's Notes

By Kenn Campbell, Baton Rouge, LA  
kennbc@cox.net



## The Campbellii Grafts



In the Autumn 2018 *Camellian* I reported on the grafting of the c. japonica 'Campbellii' introduced in 1835 by Walter Frederick Campbell, Esq., Woodhall, Lanarkshire, Scotland. I had been looking for it about 10 years and Florence Crowder finally found it last year in Northern Italy. The grafts made in February 2018 were repotted the following winter and are growing nicely, but no buds yet. This coming grafting season, I will graft scions from these on established understock in the ground in hopes of getting a bloom the following year.

*C. japonica*  
'Campbellii'



## Sasanqua Seedlings



Every year I plant a few sasanqua seeds to provide understock down the line. The above seedlings are from seed planted the same day late last summer. The pots were filled with a potting mix, the seed were harvested, husked and laid close together on top, then covered with about 1" of peat moss. They were set in the shade of my pear tree that I use as a 'shade house,' and covered with a wire basket to keep the squirrels out. They were then left alone all winter and summer.

I recently pulled them out from under the other plants to see how they were doing. I was surprised to see the seedlings in the clay pot were about twice the size of the ones in plastic pots and many more in the clay pot had sprouted. Guess I will use clay pots for seed from now on. (Yes I still have a few that I use for amaryllis.) These will be potted up into one or two gallon plastic pots (easier to handle) in October and will be ready to graft in a couple of years.



## Camellia Quiz Answers

1. 'Cupcake' 2006, Nuccio's, CA
2. 'La Peppermint' USA
3. 'Raspberry Ripples' 1989 NZ
4. 'Strawberry Limeade' 2012, Reed, MS
5. 'Candy Apple' 1991, Nuccio's CA
6. 'Cherries Jubilee' 1983, Nuccio's CA

# *Camellia Websites*

## **American Camellia Society**

[www.americancamellias.org](http://www.americancamellias.org)

## **Atlantic Coast Camellia Society**

[www.atlanticcoastcamelliasociety.org](http://www.atlanticcoastcamelliasociety.org)

## **Baton Rouge Camellia Society**

[www.facebook.com/brcamellias](http://www.facebook.com/brcamellias)

## **Birmingham Camellia Society**

[www.birminghamcamellias.com](http://www.birminghamcamellias.com)

## **Brookhaven Camellia Society**

[www.homerrichardson.com/camellia](http://www.homerrichardson.com/camellia)

## **Camellia Society of North Florida**

[www.atlanticcoastcamelliasociety.com/Camellia\\_Society\\_North\\_Fla.html](http://www.atlanticcoastcamelliasociety.com/Camellia_Society_North_Fla.html)

## **Coushatta Camellia Society, Conroe, TX**

[www.coushattacamelliasociety.org](http://www.coushattacamelliasociety.org)

## **Fort Walton Beach Camellia Society**

[www.facebook.com/FWBCamelliaSociety](http://www.facebook.com/FWBCamelliaSociety)

## **Gainesville (Florida) Camellia Society**

[www.atlanticcoastcamelliasociety.org/Gainesville%20CS.html](http://www.atlanticcoastcamelliasociety.org/Gainesville%20CS.html)

## **Gulf Coast Camellia Society**

[www.gulfcoastcamelliasociety.com](http://www.gulfcoastcamelliasociety.com)

[www.facebook.com/gulfcoastcamelliasociety](http://www.facebook.com/gulfcoastcamelliasociety)

## **Mississippi Gulf Coast Camellia Society**

[www.facebook.com/Mississippi\\_Gulf\\_Coast\\_Camellia\\_Society](http://www.facebook.com/Mississippi_Gulf_Coast_Camellia_Society)

## **Mobile Camellia Society**

[www.mobilecamellia.org](http://www.mobilecamellia.org)

## **Northshore Camellia Society**

[www.northshorecamelliasociety.org](http://www.northshorecamelliasociety.org)

## **Pensacola Camellia Club**

[www.pensacolacamellioclub.com](http://www.pensacolacamellioclub.com)

## **Valdosta Camellia Society**

[www.atlanticcoastcamelliasociety.org/assets/pdf/Valdosta](http://www.atlanticcoastcamelliasociety.org/assets/pdf/Valdosta)

(Aw heck - just google it)



*C. japonica* 'Sarah Lee Cannon' 1997  
by M. S. Cannon, Covington, LA



*C. reticulata* 'Ali Hunt' 2013 by Hulyn Smith,  
Valdosta, GA



*C. japonica* 'Elizath Dowd Mistique' 2013 by  
James and Elaine Smelley, Moss Point, MS



*C. japonica* 'Don Mac' 1956 by Sylvia Donahoe,  
Pensacola, FL

# Gulf Coast Camellia Society

## Invitation to Join

The Gulf Coast Camellia Society was organized in 1962 for the purpose of extending appreciation and enjoyment of camellias. The Society strives to provide information to its members about all aspects of the care and culture of camellia plants as well as the exhibiting and showing of camellia blooms. The Society also serves as a forum for members to share and exchange information and experiences with other members.

Annual dues for membership in the Gulf Coast Camellia Society are \$10.00 for individuals and \$12.00 for couples. Membership runs from October through September each year. Life Membership is available at \$200 for individual and \$240 for couples. Included with membership are four issues of *The Gulf Coast Camellian* which contains articles on all aspects of camellia culture as well as serving as an exchange of news and information between and for members. *The Camellian* also contains reports of the Society's operations, minutes of meetings, financial reports, show news, and other subjects of interest to our members.

To join, send your name, address, phone number, and e-mail address, along with your payment to ***Gulf Coast Camellia Society, in care of Michael Ruth, 726 High Plains Ave., Baton Rouge, LA 70810***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_



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*C. sasanqua* 'Navajo,' the 2017 Peer Award winner, originally came from Japan, but the label was lost and it was renamed 'Navajo' by Nuccio's, Altadena, CA