THE GULF COAST Camellian

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C. reticulata 'Sherrida Crawford'

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## The Gulf Coast Camellian

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### Contents

From the Cover	page 2
President's Message	page 3
Carl Peter Thunberg and the Pillnitz Camellia	page 4
A Camellian's Diary	page 8
The Leon and Lois Silver Educational Camelliariepa	age 11
Donors to the GCCS Trust Fund 2019 pa	age 12
5 Reasons Why You Should Have Attended the GCCS Confpa	age 13
Grafting Camelliaspa	age 14
Around the Gulf Coastpa	age 16
A Major Camellia Relocation ProjectPa	age 18
Camellia Wabisukepa	age 22
In the Winter Gardenpa	age 26
Camellia Quizpa	age 27
Editor's Notes	age 28
Camellia Websitespa	age 29
About the Gulf Coast Camellia Societypa	age 30
GCCS Officerspa	age 31
Back Cover - 'Early Autumn'pa	age 32

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# From the Cover .....



### Camellia reticulata 'Sherrida Crawford'

Light pink with white anthers and white filaments. Large semidouble to rose form double. Vigorus upright growth. Mid-season to late. (Reticulata hybrid 'Susanne Withers' x reticulata hybrid 'Jean Pursel'). 2010 Hulyn Smith, Valdosta, GA



New Orleans, Louisiana

We have finally arrived in camellia season. Hallelujah! All of the hard work that you have put into growing your camellias will now pay off with gorgeous blooms.

Our Gulf Coast Camellia Society conference in Brookhaven, Mississippi, on October 7th and 8th was a big success. The afternoon party at Betty Ann Perkins' home, the tour of the Great Mississippi Tea Company plantation, the final dinner at The Mallard Inn, and keynote speaker Gary Bachman were some of the highlights of the conference. Thank you to Bill Perkins for organizing the events and the speakers, thanks to those who brought plants and items for the auctions, and thanks to everyone who attended the conference and helped out with the activities.

I am trying to visit all of the clubs and meet the club members. On Monday, November 4th, I attended the Ozone Camellia Club in Slidell, Louisiana. The club is busy planning for their camellia show and camellia festival on Saturday, December 7th. Thank you to President Bruce Clement for including me in the meeting and to all the club members.

On Sunday, November 10th, I attended the Coushatta Camellia Society meeting in Conroe, Texas. This year is the 50th Anniversary of the club. It was great to meet the club members including President Frank Ohrt, Dudley Boudreaux, Hal Vanis and Tommy Weeks. And a special thank you to Edward and Linda Estrada for graciously hosting me over the weekend.



Dudley Boudreaux, Tommy Weeks, Dennis Hart, and Hal Vanis at the Coushatta Camellia Society Meeting.



Edward and Linda Estrada welcome GCCS President Dennis Hart to the Coushatta Camellia Society 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration.

Please send your camellia articles and pictures to Kenn Campbell for The Camellian, to Jim Dwyer for the GCCS website, and to Ann Ruth for Facebook. We are always looking for new articles.

In summary, the camellia shows in our Gulf Coast region have already started so if you can go, attend the shows and take some of your camellia blooms. You will enjoy it. And remember– keep learning more about camellias, recruit some new members, and have fun!

### Carl Peter Thunberg and the Pillnitz Camellia

By Ruby G. Campbell, Baton Rouge, LA



Carl Peter Thunberg (1743-1828), Swedish naturalist, was a student of Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778) also a Swedist botanist known today for his scientific classification system. Thunberg was encouraged by his famous teacher to go to

Amsterdam and Leiden to study the plants in their collections. There he met botanist and physician Johannes Burmans and his son



Carl Peter Thunberg

Nicolas who himself had been a pupil of Linnaeus. Having heard of Thunberg's



Carl Linnaeus

inquisitive mind and of Linnaeus' high opinion of him. Johannes Burman convinced Thunberg to travel to either the West or the East Indies collect to plants and

animal specimens for their botanic garden at Leiden which was lacking exotic exhibits. Ever fascinated by the secretive and mainly unknown East Indies, Thunberg was eager to travel to the Cape of Good Hope and apply his knowledge. With the help of Burman, Thunberg entered the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, V.O.C.) as a surgeon on board the *Schoonzicht*. As the East Indies were under Dutch control, the only way to enter the colonies was via the V.O.C. Thunberg sailed in December 1771 and arrived in Cape Town, South Africa, in March 1772.

During his three-year stay, Thunberg managed to perfect his Dutch and delve deeper into the scientific knowledge, culture and societal structure of the native people of western South Africa, the Khoikhoi, or "Hottentotten" as called by the Dutch. Since the main purpose of his journey was to collect specimens for the gardens in Leiden, Thunberg regularly undertook field trips and journeys into the interior of South Africa returning with a significant number of plants.

On the second day of March 1775, Thunberg left the Cape for Batavia (Jakarta, Indonesia), arriving on 18 May, and departing for Japan two days later. He arrived at the Dutch establishment of the V.O.C. at Dejima, a small artificial island in the Bay of Nagasaki, Japan, connected to the city by a single small bridge. However, just like the Dutch merchants, Thunberg was hardly allowed to leave the island. These severe restrictions of movement had been imposed by the Japanese *shogun*, Tokugawa Ieyasu, in 1639 when he was angered by the missionary attempts of the Portuguese. The only locals who were allowed regular contact with the Dutch were the interpreters of Nagasaki and the relevant authorities of the city.

Shortly after his arrival on Deshima, Thunberg was appointed head surgeon of the trading post having obtained a Doctor of Medicine degree in absentia from Uppsala while at the Cape. In order to continue to collect specimens of Japanese plants, Thunberg began to systematically set up networks with the interpreters by sending them small notes containing medical knowledge and receiving botani-



In Japan, Thunberg collected plant specimens

cal knowledge or rare Japanese coins in return. Quickly, the news spread that a well educated Dutch physician was in town who seemed able to help the local doctors cure the Dutch disease, another name for syphilis. As a result, the appropriate authorities granted him more and more visits to the city and finally even allowed him one-day trips into the vicinity of Nagasaki where he had the chance to collect specimens by himself. Because of his scientific reputation, Thunberg was given the opportunity in 1776 to accompany the Dutch ambassador M. Feith to the shogun's court in Edo, today's Tokyo. During that journey, Thunberg was given the chance of collect a great number of plant and animal specimens and likewise to talk to the Japanese locals in the villages they passed along the way. It was during this time that Thunberg collected the notes for his two scientific masterpieces: the *Flora Japonica* (1784) and the *Fauna Japonica* completed by Philipp Franz von Siehold in 1833.



While in Japan Thunberg collected notes for his book Flora Japonica.

Thunberg left Japan in November 1776. Stopping in Java and Sri Lanka, he reached Amsterdam in October 1778 and finally settled down in Uppsala in the spring of 1779. Thunberg's main botanical collection is housed at the Museum of Evolution at Uppsala University, Uppsala (Sweden), where it is kept in a separate room together with other historical collections. It is comprised of around 28000 specimens, including the Japanese ones. Thunberg sent Japanese specimens to selected colleagues in Europe during his travels or after his return home to Uppsala. Significant amounts of Japanese specimens, around 50 or more, are nowadays found in the herbaria at the Swedish Museum of Natural History in Stockholm (Sweden), Botanical Museum in Lund (Sweden), Naturalis in Leiden (the Netherlands), and at the Conservatoire et Jardin botaniques in Geneva (Switzerland). Scattered Japanese specimens are found in several more herbaria around Europe.

According to legend, when the Swedish botanist Carl Peter Thunberg returned from Japan to the London Kew Gardens in 1776, he brought with him four fragile specimens of a plant that was much-hyped among Europeans those days: the Japanese camellia. This rare and highly desired flowering plant was the highlight of the most precious royal collections and botanical gardens at the time, so much so that Kew Gardens helped strengthen political ties by sending three of the young shrubs to royal gardens in Vienna, Hanover, and Pillnitz, the former



Pillnitz Palace near Dresden, Germany

summer residence of the Saxon royal court on the banks of the Elbe (near Dresden).

As the story goes, the Pillnitz camellia is the only one of this fabled group of plants that survived the last two centuries, as European botanists were not sufficiently aware of how to care for these sensitive trees. In 1801, the camellia was re-planted in the gardens at Pillnitz Castle, where it still grows today. But the squat little tree, which measures about 30 feet in height today, did not always have an easy life.

The harsh winter in the Dresden region, where temperatures reach as low as -4 degrees Fahrenheit (-20 degrees Celcius), required the garden workers' full attention and effort. The plant survived the first winters by being covered and wrapped with straw, blankets, and mats, but later, further precautions had to be taken. To protect the camellia from the cold, wind, and snow, a wooden house was



A wooden greenhouse was built around the camellia plant each fall and removed in the spring.

erected around the tree each fall and removed in spring.

This procedure was repeated for around a hundred years, until the wooden structure caught fire and almost burned down the whole plant. The fire-fighting water managed to stop the flames, but froze and formed a sort of ice dome around the entire tree. Nobody believed that the tree would survive this stressful event, but the following spring the camellia started to bloom brighter than ever before.

In 1992, the delicate camellia finally received an appropriate accommodation that replaced the wooden constructions of



A movable, heated greenhouse on rails was erected for the Pillnitz camellia in 1992.

former days. A heated, mobile glasshouse over 40 feet (13 meters) tall was erected to shelter the shrub from October to May. The massive glass building is, technically speaking, the world's widest broad-gauge railway, as it can be moved back and forth on a set of tracks between summer and winter. Inside the glass and steel construction, a computer automatically regulates the temperature, ventilation, and air humidity of the precious plant's winter palace. Each year from February to April, the plant's blossoming season, these efforts are rewarded, as some 35,000 bell-shaped carmine flowers cover the historic camellia.

The castle park is open year-round from 6 a.m. to nightfall. Visitors can admire the Camellia from two floors all around the inside of the glasshouse. Offsets of the fabled plant are sold every year during that time – a small, but very special piece to take home from Pillnitz

Latest genetic research cannot prove this Thunberg legend, but have unfortunately not yet been able to clarify its genuine origin. But this fact is for sure: in 1801 Court Gardener Terscheck planted the Camellia in the place where it is still today. It is estimated to be 230 years old.





Each spring some 35,000 flowers cover the historic camellia.



## A Camellian's Diary

By Caroline Dickson, Poplarville, MS



# What's in a Camellia name? At the Camellia Show, everything. Winning.

As early as 1996, the SCCS *Camellia Nomenclature* printed a clarification statement about Hemalis and Vernalis. The statement refers to scientific evidence that Hemalis and Vernalis are not separate species, but are non-retic hybrids.

Alton Lefebre was show chair for Mississippi Gulf Coast Camellia Society so he added a club rule that Vernalis was to be entered as a non-retic hybrid. Surprise! The species category stopped being won by 'Star above Star' at the Gulfport Show. No other regional show adopted the rule, so 'Star above Star' continued a winning streak as a species entry.

After 2010, SCC *Nomenclature* book moved 'Betty Ridley' from reticulata to non-retic hybrid. 'Betty Ridley' dominated as a winner in camellia shows before January when entered as a reticulata before the reclassification. It has not won as regularly as a non-retic hybrid.

I have heard a lot of explanations of how 'Betty Ridley' appeared as a reticulata with a common thread of "reported" parents. Page 167 of the 1974 ACS Yearbook describes the new registration as "a 7 year old hybrid of japonica 'Marie Bracey' crossed with 'Felice Harris'." Page 222 of the 1961 details of the registration of 'Felice Harris' as "a 6 year old putative hybrid, camellia Oleifera var. 'Narumigata' crossed with C. reticulata" (no specific name but scarce supply of reticulata in 1960). 'Felice Harris' appears in the 2017 SCCS Camellia Nomenclature as a Non-retic hybrid of saluenensis crossed with a Japonica (No name). A picture of 'Felice Harris' is on the Atlantic Coast



NR hyb. 'Betty Ridley' (jap. 'Marie Bracey' x NR hyb, 'Felice Harris) 1973 Dr. W. F. Homeyer, Macon, GA.



C. jap. 'Marie Bracey' 1953 Mrs. H. T. Brice, Valdosta, GA.



NR hyb. 'Felice Harris' (salunensis x japonica) 1960 Howard Asper, Escondido,

Camellia Society website with the different description.

Although the *Nomenclature* book did not move 'Betty Ridley' to Non-reticulata Hybrid until 2014, Sterling Macoboy identified 'Betty Ridley' as a non-reticulata hybrid in the *Illustrated Encyclopedia* of *Camellias* in 1997.

While looking up the original reference to 'Narumi-gata' I discovered a quote by Jennifer Trehane in *"The Gardener's Encyclopedia"* 2007. On page 101, she identifies 'Narumigata' C sasanqua. Japan, 1898 as "Similar to and often confused with variable C. oleifera which blooms later."

# *Water requirements for camellia shows: reality and rituals.*

Not every camellia needs water in the cup for display at a single day show. This is a ritual held over from the days of two day shows. Last year, there were several shows where gallon jugs of water were hoarded by early arrivals. The jugs were hidden under jackets, between boxes, and just refused for sharing. I joined other participants in bringing my own water only to have people try to take it.

Fact: A large camellia cut in advance of the show will take up one teaspoon to one tablespoon of water in storage per day. The competitive growers use souffle cups with lids for long storage times instead of tubes. Small holes in the lid allow stem insertion. One day storage in tubes may be successful or just recheck need for water additions daily.

Fact: Certain varieties of Japonica stay perfect for 12 hours without water. We have all been to events with camellias placed on tables with no water source. Varieties that come to mind are 'Alba Plena,' 'Pink Perfection,' 'Showtime,' 'Bernice Boddy,' 'Professor Sargent,' and 'Royal Velvet.' You can do a test on your own varieties to see which ones make it from cutting to end of show in 8 hours.

Sasanquas, hybrids and species will need to be evaluated individually for water needs. The few sasanquas I have taken to shows have had a damp paper towel or water tube for transport. My large NRH 'Charlean' and 'Julia' were cut on the morning of the show, transported without water, and set out without water. 'Charlean' won without water in the cup. 'Julia' looked fine at 10 hours. Transport includes a fiber fill cushion in a moisture retaining storage box.

Water spilling on the entry cards and tables is an unnecessary event for the show. Emptying the water is an unnecessary step in the cleanup of the show that can be reserved for only the most fragile of blooms.



NR Hyb. 'Charlean' (c. jap. 'Donckelari' x hyb 'Donation') 1961 by William Stewart, Savannah, GA



NR hyb, 'Julie' (HR hyb 'Robbie: x c. jap. Dr. Tinsley') 1961 by V. James, Aptos, CA

#### The winter temperature roller coaster in South Mississippi effects on camellias grown outside.

I am waking up to 26 degrees as the "first freeze" in Poplarville, MS on November 13, 2019 to begin the 2019-2020 Camellia show season. I have not covered plants. The temperature has risen to 33 degrees by 9 am.

Water freezing means that nutrient flow within the plant will be slowed or completely stopped for the period that air temperatures are below freezing. The camellia "belt" has traditionally been along the warmer coasts of the USA. Not all camellias cultivars will continue to live after freezing temperatures. Not all camellias will bloom after 25 degrees.

The SCCS Nomenclature book has list of recommended "cold hardy Camellias" that represents many years of data collection. Research is ongoing at North Carolina State and other locations to develop new cold hardy camellias. The sign in section of the American Camellia Society has a program about "Cold Hardy Camellias" but the Fact Sheets have been discontinued.

# What should I expect to happen to my Camellias?

Camellia Japonica 'Daikagura' has fully open blooms that will turn brown within the next 12 hours. The unopened blooms will continue to open without damage even down to nine degrees and repeat bloom into March. This is my own observation since the plant is 15 years old and not listed on the SCCS cold hardy list. 'High Hat' is the sport of 'Daikagura' and has replicated the performance of the parent.

Camellia 'Vernalis Egao' will also have currently open blooms turn brown, but will be quickly replaced with undamaged blooms within a few days after 26



C. jap. 'Daikagura' Japan 1891



C. jap. 'High Hat' sport of 'Daikagura' 1945 Coolidge

degrees. 'Egao' is not on any cold hardy list either. My observation is lack of blooms after 15 degrees.

'Alba Plena' is not open yet. I expect it to open within a couple of weeks. The critical point for 'Alba Plena' to drop buds has been identified as 25 degrees by Mr. Levi of South Carolina and was not reached this morning.

The practical application of this description of freeze damage is what to do before a show. These cultivars would need to be cut early if the freeze is 72 hours before the show. If the freeze is 5 to 7 days before the show, the plant can be expected to open undamaged blooms by the time of the show.



# The Leon and Lois Silver Educational Camelliarie

By Celeste M. Richard Executive Director, American Camellia Society

A historic decision was made by the American Camellia Society's Board of Directors on October 14, 2019. The Leon and Lois Silver Educational Camelliarie just received its final approval to be built. In approximately six months, Massee Lane Gardens will have a new educational structure to boast.

Mr. Leon Silver left a sizable bequest to the American Camellia Society upon his death in 2007 at age 95. Silver wanted a structure built in honor of his late wife, Lois Silver. The American Camellia Society will be honoring Mr. Silver's wishes, but we will be memorializing both husband and wife.

The Leon and Lois Educational Camelliarie will be a multipurpose building that will rotate both semi-permanent displays and camellia plants throughout each season. We want to connect people with nature and so we envision large beautiful camellias blooming all fall and winter for our visitors to see no matter what weather graces the gardens.

The gift that the Silver's left to us has been our most sizable to date in all of our history but it also came at a time when the economy had hit rock bottom. In many member's opinion, and certainly mine as well, the Silver bequest saved our organization. It also allowed the Society to complete additional fundraising necessary to raise our Endowment Fund to a more appropriate operational level.

The ACS Board of Directors has shown a strong level of commitment to this project over the years. In fact, in June 2019, the Board also approved a separate memorial



Mr. Leon Silver



Leon Frederick and Lois Elizabeth Silver



Elevation drawing of The Leon and Educational Camelliarie

fund to honor the Silvers and to aid in offsetting some of the building site development work needed prior to construction. The memorial fund goal is \$100,000 with almost \$60,000 raised in just four short months. The Gulf Coast Camellia Society's board of directors generously approved a donation of \$4,000.00 to this special fund at their October meeting in Brookhaven, Mississippi. If you are interested in helping us complete this goal, please contact me directly at crichard@americancamellias.org or toll free at 1-877-422-6355.

The Leon and Lois Silver Educational Camelliarie is set to be completed in spring of 2020. I can't wait to add this very special memorial structure to Massee Lane Gardens, the historic headquarters to the American Camellia Society. Plan your visit today, we can't wait to see you!

### Doners to the Gulf Coast Camellia Society Trust Fund 2019

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## 5 Reasons Why YOU Should Have Attended the GCCS Conference!

By Bette Hooton, Pensacola, FL

The Gulf Coast Camellia Society is a club for fun, for friendship, and for talking the talk about camellias. There are no camellia shows, but GCCS is there to help any local club that needs assistance. The only event for the year is the GCCS Conference which alternates locations every October. It is the kickoff for the camellia season toasted with wine and scotch, lots of laughter, lots of hugs, and a few lies about how great one's blooms are this year. Size does matter! And so the reasons:

**Number 1.** This past October, the 2 day event was held in Brookhaven, MS. And Bill Perkins, Brookhaven's own Cecil B. DeMille, hosted this party. Dick and I arrived on Sunday afternoon (because we are in charge of the Silent and Plant Auctions), as did several other folks. Bill's schedule kept us all on the go for 2 solid days. Inn at Whitworth is a wonderful hotel, a restored bank building which still has its original walk-in vault, with a delicious breakfast and beautiful rooms.

**Number 2.** Oh, you did not come because you don't know anybody? Alan



Gloria and Alan McMillan from Pensacola arrived early to help with staging.



and Gloria McMillan drove in on Monday (their first time), for Registration. Then Gloria helped me get the 35 items for the Silent Auction checked in while Alan helped with the plants to be auctioned. 4PM and Dear Bill said we were headed to his mama's for libations and food. Dinner at 6 and we were ready—by this time, the McMillan's had many new friends. (Atlantic Coast Conference in SC in September is another fun party with more nice people ready to accept and love all who love the camellia.)

**Number 3.** I have always believed that the attachments to people you meet in life are so important. Most everybody knows that I know zip about camellias, but I do love the friends I have made from Gulf Coast, from PCC, from Baton Rouge, Covington, NOLA. Such nice people and so good to Dick and me. But you know, you have to want to come and meet new folks and enjoy what they have to offer.

Number 4. Each quirky town or area where we have this party has something to offer its visitors. GCCS was in Pensacola in 2018, in Bay St Louis (2016), Baton Rouge's (2017) perfect weather allowed us to explore LSU, and Brookhaven's quaintness and its shops (and Bakeries!) made my eyes light up.

And Number 5. A success? Yes lots of money was made for GCCS and GCCS gave lots of money away.

As we drove back to P'cola, I realized that I was exhausted, and I asked Dick, "Are you tired?" He grinned and said, "Feels good, doesn't it!" And it did.



## **Grafting Camellias**

#### by Eddie Martin, Belle Chasse, LA

**S**omething of a science? Well maybe. I am no expert as I have only been grafting/learning for three years. All processes are very similar. What changes is the procedure, methods or tricks people employ to accomplish their grafted camellia. My mentor in this endeavor is Jim Campbell, so his procedure is the one I follow.

First gather the tools: a small hammer, razor blade, sharp knife, a cutting device, or small saw, a small screw driver and spray bottle for applying a fungicide. Also necessary are grafting tape, Styrofoam cups (two sizes 16 oz. and 40 oz.), play sand and wire for holding cups against wind etc. and pencils, Sharpie (or permanent paint) markers and tags for names and dates. I use a pvc hand held cutting tool cushioned against the understock with a bottom of the Styrofoam cup.

Next acquire your understock. Sasanqua grown in trade gallon field cans is the most common choice. Sasanqua is most used because of its vigorous root system and disease resistance. Anything camellia related could be used for example old japonicas, recycled understock, or grafting onto established trees. The best suggestion I have is to use anything until you find a preference but at all cost avoid root bound understock.

Collecting scion wood is the next step. Scion wood is collected in January shortly before grafting starts. Most camellia folks will share scions of what they have if deemed in good health and large enough to cut wood off of. Scion cuttings should come from last spring flushes but not too woody and also contain 1 or 2 growth buds or eyes as they are called. After cutting, write the name of the scion on a leaf with a ball point pen and place in a plastic bag with a damp paper towel for moisture. Place bag in your refrigerator utill you start grafting hopefully sooner than later.

Now for the fun part. Assemble all tools, understock, scions, sand, cups, plastic tags, wire and markers. Also pen and paper to make a list of what you have grafted.

Using the pvc cutter or small saw, cut the understock between 1-3" above the root ball. Next split the



Basic tools

Collect scions. Cut just below new growth and store in plastic bags.





Trim scion to 2 or 3 inches And cut taper about 1 inch long on opposite sides. Trim leaves to reduce transpiration.

Select clean straight understock and cut off about 3 inches above soil line.





Split understock and hold open with a smell wedge.



Dip scion in rooting harmone and insert in slit. Be sure to line up dark green cambium layer on both sides.



Wrap scion with tape or rubber band to hold in place, put 1" sand in pot and spray with fungicide.



Place small piece of cup over graft and fill with sand. Spray with fungicide.



Place large cup over graft, seal with sand and anchor.

understock with the knife and hammer. Be careful and try to keep the split about 1" to 1.5" deep. Preparing the scion, cut to length 2-4" keeping 2 or 3 leaves that should be cut in half to limit transpiration. Shape the scion by cutting two angles to create a "V". The scion now has double angled cuts, pie shaped in the diameter and tapered on the vertical axis. Insert the screw driver into the split and gently pry it open. Next insert and carefully line up the cambium layers. The cambium layer is the green circle of trunk just inside the outer bark. Some grafters place the scion at a slight angle to make sure the cambium layers cross, but I prefer to keep the layers even. When satisfied, spray a fungicide (either Captan or Cleary 3336) to drench scion and grafted area. You are now ready to finish your graft and this is where there are minor differences between all grafters. The method I learned from Jim Campbell is to double cup the graft. Using a 16 oz. Styrofoam cup remove the bottom then cut in half creating two circular pieces. Place large end over the scion gently so as not to disturb the scion or break leaves. Now for the tricky part. Fill the cup with sand to cover the freshly cut understock being careful not to disturb the freshly placed scion. Spray again with the fungicide on the leaves and top of sanded area. Lastly place the large 40 oz. over the new graft use wire in the shape of an upside down "U" to secure in place, sealing with a layer of sand around the outer edge. Write the name and date of the graft on your plastic tag and place in pot.

Place the pot in a shaded area, water lightly and be patient. Don't peek under the cups for 4 or better 6 weeks. I know it's hard, especially for first timers. Jim Campbell would wait till a flush, the breaking of the growth bud and emergence of leaves. At this time cut a small hole in the outer cup enlarging it as the scion grows. As the grafts get larger remove the cups gently and allow growth to continue. By July your grafts should be large enough and hardened off enough to pot up into larger containers. I prefer 2 gallon for my first jump up.

Now you can clone any beautiful camellia flower you desire to add to your collection. Don't worry about failure, my first solo attempt this year produced 3 healthy plants out of 7 attempts. I will be at it again this year as I have purchased 100 understock. Get started and by all means have FUN.



Winners of the Camellia Club of Mobile photo contest were Carolyn Oyler (camellia bloom and camellia in landscape), Norma Savage (camellia in an arrangement), and Jim Dwyer (camellia with people).







Banquet speaker Dr. Gary Bachman presents a pair of pruning shears to Chris Jinks at the GCCS Annual Meeting.



Bonnie Trippe and Jim Smelley at the GCCS meeting, in Brookhaven.



C. reticulata James and Ela



The Camellia Club of Mobile. April 2019



Jim Smelley' 2013 by ine Smelley, Moss Point,

GULF COAST



Colorful umbrella in the silent auction at the GCCS annual meeting.



gardens Savannah coastal camellia garden bloom in mid September 2019. A volunteer present stated the bush was Camellia Azalea growing outside in dense shade with a height of five feet. - Caroline Dickson

## A Major Camellia Relocation Project

By: C. Craig Tisher, Director, Wilmot Botanical Gardens, Gainesville, FL

The Wilmot Botanical Gardens originally established as the Wilmot Garden is a 48-acre area located on the medical campus of the University of Florida. The gardens were planted in the early 1950's to honor Royal James "Roy" Wilmot, a nationally and internationally recognized authority on the propagation and classification of camellias. Wilmot, a UF ornamental horticulturist was a founding member and first secretary of the American Camellia Society, and the society's first yearbook editor. Following his passing in May 1950, friends and colleagues from around the world donated over 300 rare and unusual camellias to create the gardens which were dedicated to his memory in 1954. At one time these public gardens contained more than 500 camellias.

For over 30 years the gardens thrived and served as a popular place on campus for plant enthusiasts and families to enjoy the floral and botanical beauty. Regrettably, interest in maintaining the gardens waned and their very existence was threatened with expansion of the facilities on the medical campus.

In 2006, a major volunteer effort was initiated to restore the gardens to their previous beauty. Those efforts have been consistent with our stated mission to preserve and enhance these historic gardens as a verdant space and living laboratory dedicated to improving the quality of life of its' visitors through plant interactions, education and research. To that end paved walking paths have been installed to improve access, a classroom administration building renovated, and more recently a modern, completely accessible green-



C. Craig Tisher, Director, Wilmot Botanical Gardens, Gainesville, Florida

house constructed. Regrettably, of the 500 camellias that were originally present in the gardens, just 80 were recovered during the restoration initiative. Approximately 150 new camellias have been planted over the past 10 years.

Since 2010, five specialty gardens have been created within the botanical garden. These include a Japanese maple tree garden, a bromeliad garden, and the Hippocratic and Lifestyles gardens, the latter containing plant materials chosen to attract butterflies and pollinators. The Chapman Healing Garden with a central water feature was added in 2017 The latter contains a wide variety of plants and trees including several types of azaleas, plum trees, a fringe tree, a swamp chestnut oak tree, Japanese maple trees, several camellias, and numerous water plants. Highly visible signage has been added throughout the gardens to make it possible for visitors to identify the vast majority of plants and trees. Today, the Wilmot Botanical Gardens is considered by many



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

to be the most beautiful greenspace on the entire UF campus.

In the fall of 2017 we were made aware of a large collection of camellias that might be available for purchase and subsequent relocation. The source was a private garden initially established in the early 1980's as a hobby by Clarence and Lillian Gordy on a 6.8-acre property located northwest of Ocala, Florida. The Gordys had amassed a collection of greater than 2,000 plants representing in excess of 800 varieties of camellias. At one time their camellia garden was recognized as one of the largest and most beautiful in the entire southeast. Over the years more than 70 cultivars have been new derived from this collection. many of which are now considered to be rare and unique. Upon the deaths of Clarence and Lillian Gordy in 2013 and 2015, respectively, the property was divided and sold. The University was able to purchase a portion of the camellias on one-half of the property before they were to be destroyed by the new owners. Thus, our effort has sought not only to enhance the camellia collection in the Wilmot Botanical Gardens, but also to preserve a portion of this irreplaceable collection.

The relocation effort was initiated in the late fall of 2018. Although our original goal was to add 160 of the Gordy camellias to our botanical garden, additional space was made available recently in the gardens for this project, thus allowing us to increase our current goal to a total of 200 camellias. Our original plan called for the work to be conducted over a two-year period during the months of November through March of 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 to enhance the likelihood of survival of the transplanted camellias.

The size of the specimens requires that each camellia be dug with a tree spade, wrapped in burlap, placed in wire baskets and subjected to temporary irrigation before the 45 mile trip from Ocala to the UF campus in Gainesville, Florida. A highly experienced and reliable company, Instant Shade Trees of Ocala, Florida, is the vendor we selected to perform this work.

Upon arrival at UF in groups of 30-40 camellias, each is offloaded by university personnel at a holding area located in the UF/IFAS Environmental Horticulture Landscape Unit. located approximately 1-mile from the Wilmot Botanical Gardens. The holding area is part of a 38-acre parcel of land previously used as an experimental tree farm. The cost of off-loading and maintaining the camellias at the holding area and the subsequent planting at predetermined sites in the Wilmot Botanical Gardens is borne by the university. Each camellia is placed under irrigation immediately after planting.

During the initial year of work, we planted 110 camellias in our gardens (see Fig. 1). Four of the largest camellias were dug with an 80-inch tree spade and transported directly to our site for planting (see Fig. 2). To date just 10 of the 110 transplanted camellias have failed to survive. The remaining appear to be thriving. All of the sasanqua camellias are in their early stages of blooming and the remaining camellias are loaded with



C. japonica 'Allie Gordy' 2012, Gordy



C. japonica 'Pink Chiffon' 2005, Gordy



C. japonica 'Blue Ridge Sunset' 2005, Gordy



C. japonica 'Alcyone Ostberg' 2005, Gordy



C. japonica 'Miss Lillian' 2001, Gordy



C. japonica 'Happy Times' 2005, Gordy

buds and most have considerable new growth.

Nine of the camellias, each of which was originally propagated as a new cultivar by the Gordys, have been grouped together to form the sixth and newest garden, "The Gordy Camellia Garden" in the Wilmot Botanical Gardens (see Fig. 3). A plaque recognizing this contribution posthumously by the Gordys will be erected on the site. The nine camellias we selected for this garden include Allie Gordy, Pink Chiffon, Blue Ridge Sunset, Alcyone Ostberg, Happy Times, Gordy's Pretty Lady, Snow Swirl, Laura Claire and Miss Lillian.

Several individuals have contributed to the success of this project who deserve recognition. They include Jim Leslie of Instant Shade Trees of Ocala, Florida who has taken a special interest in the project. Those at UF include Dr. Charles I. Lane, Senior Vice-President and Chief Operating Officer, Ms. Donna Bloomfield, Grounds Superintendent, Mr. Chris Harchick, Senior Agricultural Assistant, Dr. Dean Kopsell, Chair, Department of Environmental Horticulture, Mr. Carl Vining, Coordinator of Research Programs, Mr. Steve Pritchett and a host of personnel from the UF Grounds Department.

Initial funding received for this project includes support from the University of Florida, a gift from the Gainesville Camellia Society and a grant from the Vaughn-Jordan Foundation. Many thanks to the Gulf Coast Camellia Society for providing a recent gift for support of the project.

We are grateful to all of the individuals and organizations for their contributions to this project and look forward to entering the second year of this major effort.

# Camellia Wabisuke

By Kenn Campbell, Baton Rouge, LA

he Wabisuke (pronounced "wa-biskay") Camellias of Japan, is a group name for a collection of hybrids of ancient In Japan they have very low origin. fertility or are totally infertile. It has always been listed in the Camellia Nomenclature book as a species, but a wild plant has never been found and it is now considered by most botanists as a hybrid of C. japonica and some other Chinese species. The flowers are single, small and tubular, although some cultivars seem to open more fully in warmer climates. Curiously, most have stamens without, or with very few, pollen sacs (anthers). They produce plants of simple beauty in the garden.

Wabisuke camellias have long been associated with the Japanese Tea Ceremony. The word Wabisuke is supposed to have originated at the peak era of the tea ceremony, and the flower has often been in the tea room regardless of the ages. The plant 'Wabisuke' is generally thought to have been named in honor of a tea master, Wabisuke Kasahara, who served under Sen no Rikyu (1522-1591), the most influential name in the history of the tea ceremony.

#### ORIGIN

In the *Journal of the Japanese Society for Horticultural Science* 2010 vol 79 issue 1 is an article entitled "Maternal Origin of 'Tarokaja' and Other Wabisuke Camellia Cultivars Indicated by Chloroplast DNA Variation" by Natsu Tanikawa, Takashi Onozaki, Masayoshi Nakayama, and Michio Shibata. This group of Japanese plant scientists studied one of the earliest known wabisuke cultivars, 'Tarokaja,' to determine its origin. Following are some brief quotes from their report.

"The wabisuke camellia 'Tarokaja' is a very old cultivar of unknown origin. Based on morphological properties, it is thought to be an interspecific hybrid between *Camellia japonica* and an unidentified species from continental China. We analyzed chloroplast DNA



The wabisuke camellia 'Tarokaja'



C. pitardii var. pitardii

from members of the genus *Camellia* to trace the maternal origin of 'Tarokaja'." Based on their analyses, they concluded that "the maternal origin of 'Tarokaja' is a Chinese native species *C. pitardii* var. *Pitardii*."

"Wabisuke camellia cultivars are classified into two groups. One group of wabisuke camellia cultivars is thought to derived from between be crosses 'Tarokaja' and C. japonica. Since most of them had a 'Tarokaja'-type single-base in the *atpI-atpH* region, it was confirmed that these wabisuke cultivars are descended from 'Tarokaja'. It is likely that 'Himewabisuke', 'Kocho-wabisuke', and 'Sukiya', which had a C. japonica-type single-base, are progeny descended from 'Tarokaja' with C. japonica as the maternal ancestor.



cv. 'Kocho-wabisuke' in Japan



cv. 'Sukiya' in Japan

"Another group of wabisuke camellia cultivars is thought to be derived from *C. japonica* by mutation, and all but one of these had a *C. japonica*-type single-base. These camellias generally have red flowers, a glabrous ovary, and a leaf shape that are similar to those of C. japonica."

"Over the past 100 years, various Chinese species have been proposed as the origin of 'Tarokaja' and other wabisuke camellias. These include C. reticulata Lindl., C. cuspidata (Kochs) Wright, C. rosaeflora Hook., C. sinensis (L.) O. Kuntze, C. saluenensis Stapf ex Bean, C. kissi Wall., and C. pitardii Cohen Stuart var. pitardii (Kirino, 1986; Kitamura, 1970; Makino, 1910; Nakai, 1950; Tanaka et al., 2001). Based on morphological properties it seems most likely that 'Tarokaja' is an interspecific hybrid between C. japonica and C. pitardii var. pitardii (Kirino, 1986; Tanaka et al., 2001)."

#### SUKIYA

As noted above, wabisuke camellia 'Sukiya' is descended from 'Tarokaja' with *C. japonica* as the maternal ancestor. 'Tarokaja,' is an interspecific hybrid between C. japonica and C. pitardii var. pitardii. This means that it and all wabisuke camellias should be listed under "non-reticulata hybrids," but at present they are usually considered a 'group.'



wabisuki camellia 'Sukiya' in Baton Rouge

I have a 'Sukiya' growing in a grove of about 45 camellias that my father grafted in about 1954 while I was away in the Navy. The scion of 'Sukiya' was from Vi Stone who had gotten it on one of her trips to Japan. Thanks to hurricanes, it is now growing in full sun most of the day. It is now about 10 feet tall with dense growth and deep green foliage.



'Sukiya' in bloom



'Sukiya' seed pods



'Sukiya' seedlings

According to the literature, wabisuke camellias are supposed to have none to very few seeds. However, my 'Sukiya' didn't get the word and has been producing a bumper crop of seeds every year after it became a mature plant and got full sun (since the early 1990s). They would fall into the mulch and sprout. At first, I would just chop them down. Then I started digging and potting them up for understock. This turned out to be a lot of trouble and no advantage to rooted cuttings or sasangua seedlings, so I neglected that chore. Soon these seedlings were 3 or 4 feet high. When they bloomed they were mostly small single blooms which I cut out of the bed. Occasionally one would have an outstanding bloom and I would tag it. Some I have grafted. They have all the characteristics of a japonica even though they are technically n.r. hybrids. So far, since 2007, I have tagged 13 blooms from this plant. All are in the 4" to 5" range. I have lost some to the neighbor's yardman (axe and Round-up), some I transplanted that didn't fare well, but I still have many of them. These were all open pollinated as I had no desire to become a hybridizer.

#### SOME SUKIYA SEEDLINGS



Wabisuki camellia 'Sukiya' the maternal parent



'Sukiya' seedling 2-07 (died)



'Sukiya' seedling 1-12



'Sukiya' seedling 1-13



'Sukiya' seedling 1-14



'Sukiya' seedling 1-16



'Sukiya' seedling 1-19

## In the Wimter Garden

By Art Landry, Baton Rouge, LA



Winter is the time enjoy the fruits of your labors throughout the Spring, Summer and Autumn and get ready for the winter chores including grafting, planting, spraying and mulching. Don't overlook the pleasure that you can share by giving camellia plants or books as Christmas presents.

Grooming: Remember to groom your plants to prevent damage by the elements to your best buds. Pin back leaves and branches with spring type clothespins. Bright ones are easy to spot. Be sure to prune the branch tip after a gibbed bloom is spent to encourage dormant growth buds further down the stem to develop Do minor pruning while you are cutting flowers from the bush. If the branch is a weak one or has no growth bud on it, then cut it off back at the main branch or the trunk. Don't leave a branch with leaves on it without growth buds; it is likely to die back anyway. You are better off to prune it away at the time you cut the flower.

❑ Watering: The plants need ample moisture to bloom, so water every week if rainfall is sparse. Container grown plants need watering more frequently than ones grown in the ground depending on the soil mix in the container. Check and water, if needed, 2-3 times a week. Check pH of container grown plants. The local water supply may be very alkaline (like here in Baton Rouge) and cause the pots to have a neutral or alkaline pH. Test with a moisture meter and adjust as needed.

**Planting:** Planting and transplanting of plants can take place in December and continue through February. See Autumn 2019 issue for more planting instructions.

□ Spraying: If you have a plant with a scale problem, you can spray with oil emulsion such as Dormant Oil or Ultrafine Oil spray. Another good product is Neem Oil, also sold as a rose spray. Look for the active ingredient to be Neem Oil. (For example, Neem Oil is now the active ingredient in "Triple Action" spray by Fertilome which also contains a miticide and a fungicide.) Use oil sprays during mild weather periods to avoid damage to leaves. Always use as directed by manufacturer.

☐ Mulching: Collect mulching materials (leaves, pine straw, etc) from your yard and from friends and neighbors who discard them. Some people even rake and bag them and out them out by the street. Chopping leaves with the lawnmower will avoid matting. Spread a generous amount around your plants. Covering leaves with pine straw will hold them in place and look good, too. The mulch helps retain moisture, keeps the roots cool in the summer, helps protect them from freezing in the winter and restores humus to the soil all year long.

Grafting: Grafting can be started in January, but most grafting in this area is done in February. It can also be done in March if dormant scions are still available. If you are inexperienced at grafting contact your local camellia club about a demonstration or hands-on assistance in learning.

Attend Shows: Attend camellia shows in your area and take flowers if you can. And you may find a new one that you just have to have.



# Camellia Quiz

Name these camellias that all begin with "M." Answers on page 28.





#2





#4



#5





# Editor's Notes

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



Alas, it is late November and I have had only one - ONE camellia to bloom. Even my 'Nigh Hat' which is a reliable early bloomer has not shown color. The 23F freeze we had a couple of weeks ago killed the opem blooms on the sasanquas, but they are all open again. But still only one camellia blooms. Guess what that bloom is. Strangely enough it is a 10 month old graft (grafted 2-13-19 - 1st quarter of the moon) of 'Lundy's Legacy' on a very small understock..

So, the best grafting days for 2020 are a couple of days on either side of the 1st qtr, of the moon - Jan. 3rd and Feb. 1st . Second best is a couple of days before or after the last qtr. of the moon - Jan. 18th and Feb, 16th.



### Gulf Coast Camellia Society Financial Statement 7/1/2018 to 6/30/2019

Checking Balance 7	7/1/2018	11,274
Deposits		16,429
Dues:		2,312
Donations:		1,509
2017 Meeting Expe	enses	-11,749
Camellian Expense	S	-5,295
Meeting Refunds		-235
Mailing Expenses n	not related to meeting	-128
LA. Sec. of State	-	-15
Checking Balance 6	5/30/2019	10,306
Portfolio Balance 7	/1/2018	110,491
Appreciation	(last year= 18,270)	7,344
Grants	(last year = 6,000)	-4,000
Portfolio Balance 6	5/30/2019	113,835
Total Net Worth 6/3	30/2019	\$124,141
	(last year = 121,765)	,

### Camellia Quiz Answers

1. 'Melissa Anne' 1995, Audioun, MS 2. 'Mary Fischer' 1980 Kramer, CA 3. 'Mark Alan Var' 1958, shby, SC 4. 'Mississiooi Beauty' 1956, Chiles, MS 5. 'Meridith Green' 2008, Smith, GA 6. 'Mathotiana' 1840s, Magnolia, SC

## Camellia Websites

American Camellia Society www.americancamellias.org

Atlantic Coast Camellia Society www.atlanticcoastcamelliasociety.org

Baton Rouge Camellia Society www.facebook.com/brcamellias

Birmingham Camellia Society www.birminghamcamellias.com

Brookhaven Camellia Society www.homerrichardson.com/camellia

Camellia Society of North Florida www.atlanticcoastcamelliasociety.com/Camellia Society North Fla.html

> Coushatta Camellia Society, Conroe, TX www.coushattacamelliasociety.org

> Fort Walton Beach Camellia Society www.facebook.com/FWBCamelliaSociety

#### Gainesville (Florida) Camellia Society www.atlanticcoastcamelliasociety.org/Gainesville%20CS.html

Gulf Coast Camellia Society www.gulfcoastcamelliasociety.com www.facebook.com/gulfcoastcamelliasociety

Mississippi Gulf Coast Camellia Society www.facebook.com/Mississippi\_Gulf\_Coast\_Camellia\_Society

> Mobile Camellia Society www.mobilecamellia.org

Northshore Camellia Society www.northshorecamelliasociety.org

Pensacola Camellia Club www.pensacolacamelliaclub.com

Valdosta Camellia Society www.atlanticcoastcamelliasociety.org/assets/pdf/Valdosta (Aw heck - just google it)



C. japonica 'Angela Lansbury' 1995 by Dr. W. F. Homeyer, Jr., Macon, GA



C. japonica 'Brother Rose' 1976 by Vi Stone, Baton Rouge, LA



C. japonica 'Alice Creighton' 2003 by Walter Creighton, Semmes. A:



C. japonica 'Brooke' 1990 by E. And J. Adkins, Shalimar, 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 Ann Ruth, 726 High Plains Ave., Baton Rouge, LA 70810* 

Name:	

E-mail:

Address:	 	
Telephone:		

## The Gulf Coast Camellia Society Officers and Board Members 2018 - 2019

33	
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C. japonica 'Early Autumn.' Medium formal double. Average upright growth. Introduced in 2001 by C. M. and Lillian Gordy, Ocala. FL