THE GULF COAST Camellian

Spring 2020 Volume 46 No. 2

C. japonica 'Sweet Auburn'.

A Publication of the Gulf Coast Camellia Society

The Gulf Coast Camellian

Volume 46 No. 2 Spring 2020

Contents

From the Cover ……

Camellia japonica 'Sweet Auburn'

Very large 5.5" x 3" to 3.5:". First bloomed in mid-1950s. Originator unknown but registered in 2014 and propagated by the Auburn-Opelika Men's Camellia Club of Auburn, Alabama. See page 17 for variegated form.

President's Message

Dennis Hart
New Orleans, Louisiana

Greetings to all camellia lovers! I hope some of your camellia bushes are still blooming. The weather was more challenging this season compared to other seasons. I also hope you were able to attend some of the camellia shows this fall and winter. Thank you to everybody who plans, organizes, attends, and brings flowers to the shows!

I am still trying to visit as many of the clubs and club members as possible.

On Saturday, November 23rd, the Mississippi Gulf Coast Camellia Society kicked off the camellia show season at the Lyman Community Center in Gulfport. Thanks to President Ann Miller and Show Chairman Steve Manis for another great start to the season.

On Sunday, December 1st, I attended the monthly meeting of the Camellia Club of South Alabama at the lovely home of Vaughn and Linda Drinkard in Mobile. This was a fun holiday event with a lively plant auction too. Thank you to President Brenda Litchfield for inviting me.

C. jap. 'Joy Kendrick' 1985, Tammia Nsy, Slidell, LA
A winner for Dennis Hart at the New Orleans Show.

The Baton Rouge Camellia Society held their annual Christmas party on Tuesday evening December 10th at the charming home of Susan and Carl Hultgren. Celebrating the holidays were Joe and Laura Holmes, Ken and Kay Clark, Art and Eva Hoover, Lynn Vicknair, Rebecca Christian and many others.

On Saturday, January 4th the Northshore Camellia Society once again held their show at the historic Southern Hotel in Covington. The weather was beautiful and so were the blooms. Thanks to President Hunter Charbonnet and to all the club members for another great show.

The Southeast Alabama Camellia Club held their monthly meeting on Tuesday, January 14th at the Dothan Area Botanical Gardens. This is a great location for a meeting and to see the delightful gardens including the camellia garden. Thank you to President Allen Bourland, Program Chairman Max McKinney, and to all the club members for a warm welcome.

On Saturday, January 25th the Camellia Club of New Orleans for the second year had their show at Delgado Community College next to City Park in New Orleans. The weather was delightful with lots of visitors and camellia plants sold. Thank you to Show Chairman Nick Piazza, President John Grimm, and Plant Sales Chairmen Rick Poche and Andy Houdek for putting together another great show.

If you are driving south through Florida on I-75 to get to Orlando or the Tampa Bay area, you will pass Gainesville. The Wilmot Botanical Gardens are located two miles off the interstate on the University of Florida campus in the medical center area. These gardens are well worth visiting during camellia season. On January 20th Doctor Craig Tisher gave us a tour of the gardens and its many camellias. Doctor Tisher is in the process of moving more camellias from the private gardens of Clarence and Lillian Gordy in Ocala to Wilmot. See the article about this relocation effort in the Winter, 2020 edition of *The Camellian*. GCCS provided financial support for this project.

The Brookhaven Camellia Society show was held on Saturday, February 1st at The Event Center in Brookhaven. This was the site of our GCCS annual conference in October, 2019. The Judges Dinner

Brookhaven Judges Lunch at Woodleigh

was held Friday evening at a lovely home in the country not far from town. And a delightful Judges Lunch took place at Woodleigh in Brookhaven, the home of Betty Ann Perkins. A big thank you to President Bill Perkins for organizing the show and all the events.

In summary, keep learning more about camellias, recruit some new members, and have fun!

GCCS Honorary Award of Excellence

The Gulf Coast Camellia Society (GCCS) will present its first Honorary Award of Excellence at its annual conference in Saint Francisville, Louisiana in October, 2020. This award was approved by the GCCS Board at the annual meeting in Brookhaven on October 7, 2019. An email will be sent this April, 2020 to all GCCS members requesting nominations and all nominating forms must be returned by May 15, 2020. Lifetime contributions to GCCS and to local camellia clubs, community clubs, and national and international societies will be considered. The selection committee members include Vickie Baugh, Jim Campbell, Dennis

Hart, Patti Perkins, and Lynn Vicknair. Please email any questions to:
Vickie Baugh vmb_baugh@ bellsouth.net or
Dennis Hart dhart98@aol.com

A Camellian's Diary

By Caroline Dickson, Poplarville, MS

What's in a name?Not winning at the camellia show.

We had to disqualify the most beautiful full peony dark red bloom for not being "Professor Sargent" at the Pensacola Camellia Show in December 2019. The judge team examined the bloom closely and decided it was not named correctly. There were no outer guard petals. The color was darker red than expected. The petals were each larger than expected. The petals were dense in conformation with no stamens visible.

I used to carry a list of "Big Red Ball" conformation camellias written in the back of my Nomenclature book. The list included 'Professor Charles Sargent,' 'Fire Falls,' 'Grand Marshall,' 'Imperator' (American), 'Big Daddy' (Imperator France).

There is usually at least one erroneously named gorgeous bloom at each show and sometimes they are mine. One of my biggest mistakes is on the entry card format that has the check list without the name line just under the ACS logo. The second place to write the name on these cards is not visible and the first is covered when the card is closed. I do my entry card in pencil incase they get wet. I can recycle the card but have forgotten to erase the prior entry name from the side that is "on the back" during the data entry.

The next mistake is from cards filled out in advance of the show. I simply pick up the wrong card in the midst of the rush to get blooms placed.

I regret that the entered bloom was mis-named so the team put a question mark on the card and continued to judge the assigned section. The bloom was not identified before contention started by any other judge.

C. japonica 'Professor Charles S. Sargent'

C. japonica "Imperator'

C. japonica 'Grand Marshall'

Noninvasive Camellias

As Camellians we try to participate in well rounded garden practices endorsed by our gardening friends from other organizations. There are volumes written about landscape plants that escaped to be a problem in localized areas. For South Mississippi, privet is the most prolific escaped plant. Privet remains a popular landscape plant that offers large multiple blooms on each stem in the spring. Unfortunately, the blooms form multiple seeds that root easily.

When asked if Camellias are invasive, the answer can be "not if properly selected". This would mean that the gardener would have sterile formal doubles in their Garden which by definition do not form seeds. In the Nomenclature book, the term "formal double" is used and has no description of stamens.

The Nomenclature book has been corrected over the years to take out "formal double to semidouble" as a description of a flower that does not show stamens early in the season, but will show stamens late in the bloom season. Like any other flower, the semidoubles have reproductive ability to form seeds.

There are prolific numbers of formal double Camellia flowers. Some of the favorites are 'Alba Plena,' 'Pink Perfection,' 'October Affair,' 'Black Tie,' 'Prince Eugene Napoleon,' 'Sea Foam,' 'Nuccio's Bella Rosa,' 'Nuccio's Cameo,' 'Nuccio's Gem,' 'Nuccio's Pearl,' 'Joy Kendrick,' 'Campari,' 'Chansonette,' 'Brooke,' 'Buttermint,' 'Brother Rose,' 'Tudor Baby' and 'Bella Romana' to include a few regularly available in nurseries.

C. japonica 'Pink Perfection' formal double.

At the other end of the spectrum are prolific seed producers that are commercially important for seeds to be pressed to extract oil. Camellia oleifera flowers are miniature white and fragrant. The plant will grow to 22 feet as a small tree. It may be available from a nursery marketed as fragrant.

Camellia oleifera

There are some semidouble Camellias that have been in landscape use that set seeds so rarely that the pod will attract special attention. Species vernalis rarely produces mature fertile seeds and has had interest from the nursery industry by rescue of immature seed tissue. An example of vernalis is 'Egao'. My fifteen year old 'Egao' will have a thousand blooms over the season, but only one seed pod by mid-summer.

C. vernalis 'Egao'

What do Camellians do with new science information about a named Camellia?

GCCS helped fund graduate research at North Carolina State by Dr. T Ranney and Will Hembree. The expanded published results reviewed systems to identify plants that extend back hundreds of years. Yet, here we are seventy years from the beginning of DNA research still asking about Camellia divisions at local shows.

Two flow cytology results identified a nucleus weight equal to only the mother, explained as an excited ovary spontaneously cloned maternal tissue. What are we going to do with 'Scarlet Temptation' which appears in the Reticulata section of the Nomenclature Book? The flower is described as bright rose red single. Parents are reported to be non-retic Hybrid 'William's Lavender' crossed with reticulata 'Purple Crown'. Neither of which is solid red.

'William's Lavender' is a relatively old introduction with a vague parent report of "Saluenensis x Japonica" registered in 1950 by Fruitland Nursery. The Atlantic Coast Camellia encyclopedia adds that the seed was imported from England for William's Lavender. It is listed as a parent for numerous popular hybrids.

'William's Lavender'
(photo Bradford King)

Parent 'Purple Crown' is listed in the Reticulata section. It also has an older introduction date of 1948. The Chinese name is 'Zipao' for the plant imported to Descano Gardens for Mr. Peer. The flower is described as Dark Purple Red with pin stripes of white and red and has 2=6x=90 chromosomes reported in 1956.

Will 'Scarlet Temptation' be listed as another name for 'Purple Crown' or recognized as a sport of 'Purple Crown' due to the different color?

The other nucleus that suggested maternal tissue only was "Starry Pillar" which appears on the Nuccio web site sasanqua section as a chance seeding with estimated parents. It does not appear in the SCC Nomenclature book which only means no registration request has been filed.

Each of these flowers started with vague information to receive a new name. This is found through older books where "chance seedling" or grown from seed from another source is reported to have been a new cultivar.

Hybrids studied by flow cytology that deviated from predicted genetic material were reported:

'Artic Dawn' 2005 Ackerman – 'November Pink'(h) x Oleifera 'Lu Shan Snow'

'Fire N Ice' 1992 Ackerman - 'Tricolor Siebold'(j) x Oleifera

'Ice Follies' 1992 Ackerman – 'November Pink'(h) x Oleifera 'Lu Shan Snow'

'Pink Icicle' 1996 Ackerman – 'November Pink'(h) x Oleifera 'Lu Shan Snow'

'Red Fellow' 2000 Ackerman – 'Tricolor Red Siebold'(j) x Oleifera 'Plain Jane'

'Spring Cardinal' 1999 Ackerman x 'Tricolor Red Siebold'(j) x Oleifera 'Plain Jane'

'Spring Circus' 1995 Ackerman – 'Tricolor Red Siebold'(j) x Oleifera 'Plain Jane'

Information problems with reported parents include that 'Tricolor Siebold' dates back to the early 1800s by multiple names in multiple countries.

Oleifera has different characters in different countries so specific names were given to plants that Dr. Ackerman identified as parents of hybrids. Oleifera is reported through history with various numbers of chromosomes as 60, 90, and 120.

'November Pink' dates to 1951 with vague description of parents as Saluenensis x Japonica from England.

These flowering plants have been studied for cold hardiness which is still valid information.

Actual DNA sequence research is time intensive and expensive. Ornamental Camellia research is ongoing. To donate to Camellia Research at the Mountain Horticultural Crops and Extension Center, make a check payable to the NC State Horticulture Foundation and mail to Dr. Thomas Ranney, 455 Research Drive, Mills River, N.C. 28759.

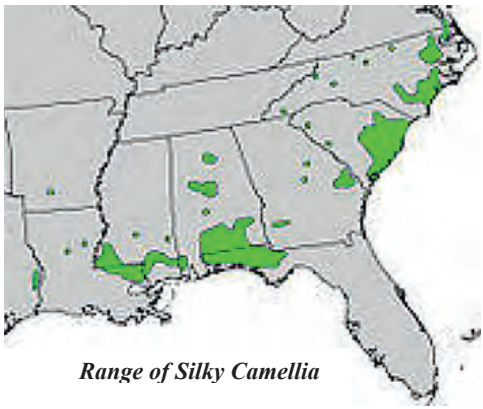
THE SILKY CAMELLIA

By Ruby G. Campbell, Baton Rouge, LA

While in the midst of surfing the Internet, an item from the U. S. Forest Service about a "silky camellia" popped up. A Silky Camellia? What is this? Surely the US Department of Agriculture was not referring to one of Coco Chanel's creations! No, this is a plant native to the Gulf Coast region extending from Southeastern Virginia, down the Atlantic Coast, and across the Gulf South including Louisiana, and some parts of Arkansas, and Texas.

How has this plant escaped being found by this writer and the editor of this journal who spent many hours wandering through fields, and streams, and byways across this area searching for native plants, rocks, fossils, etc.? We have found stands of wild muscadines along Bayou Sara in the Felicianas where we also buried a watermelon in the sand of the cool waters of the stream for a treat on our return trip. We have come upon the Bigleaf Magnolia (*magnolia macrophylla*) along the roadways in this area before US Highway 61 became a wide thoroughfare. We have enjoyed the patches of redbud and dogwood along the Natchez Trace, and the multi-hued reds, salmon and yellows of the swamp maples (*acer rubrum var. drummondii*) in the Atchafalaya Basin. We've even had the pure joy of discovering a huge franklinia (*franklinia alatamaha*) in the back yard of a North Carolina resident. Ok, so it wasn't growing in the wild, but it was still fascinating!

The Silky Camellia



Range of Silky Camellia

Franklinia (franklinia alatamaha)

Bigleaf Magnolia (magnolia macrophylla)

Swamp Maple (acer rubrum var. drummondii)

Stewartia malacodendron, the silky camellia

But, at no time did we ever stumble across a silky camellia. Fact is, we'd never even heard of it. And now that the rambling days of these two octogenarians (one to be a nonagenarian by the time this is printed) are over, we will have to settle for reading about it. And that's not so bad, for it eliminates the mosquitos and red bugs, the heat and scratches from brambles, and the fear of meeting with any sort of snake.

Scientifically known as *Stewartia malacodendron*, the silky camellia is not a true a camellia, but a distant relative of the Japanese camellia of the tea family, *Theaceae*. This shrub or small tree grows up to 10-15 feet high. Its height may be the reason this writer never saw the plant: she was always looking down wary of snakes!

The U. S. Forest Service further describes the shrub as having branches which spread horizontally "such that the leaves and twigs appear to be in one plane. The dark green oval leaves which turn buttery yellow to orange and red in the fall are 2-4 inches long and 1-2 inches wide and the large and showy petals of the blooms are on short stalks that lift them above the leaves. The elongated silky-pubescent buds open into saucer-shaped blooms 2-3 inches across and consist of five white petals crimped at the margins and wider at the tip with a center of forty to fifty dark purple stamens and bluish anthers."

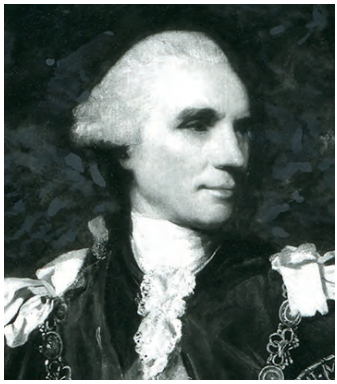
While the plant does grow in the Gulf South as an "understory" plant in wooded bluffs, ravine slopes and creek banks, the silky camellia does not form large stands, but generally occurs in small localized groups of three to ten plants.

As with many native plants, the silky camellia does not transplant very well, Those who have attempted to cultivate them have found it difficult to maintain and reproduce. They seem to be short-lived and "finicky" as to site location, but it is a plant we would have tried to grow along with our Grancy Graybeard, Big Leaf Magnolia and Franklinia with probably the same results.

Stewartia was named in honor of John Stuart, 3rd Earl of Bute (1713-92), a patron of botany who was closely involved with the gardens at Kew from 1737 until 1772. In 1784, Bute published his nine volume *Botanical Tables* and dedicated them to Queen Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, wife of King George III of Great Britain and Ireland, herself an amateur botanist who took great interest in Kew Gardens. Bute described the work as "composed solely for the Amusement of the Fair Sex under the Protection" of the Queen. Not only did this publication with its accompanying dedication increase Queen Charlotte's patronage of botanical studies, but it also signaled her support for botany as a subject suitable for feminine study.

The species name, *malacondendeon*, comes from the Greek words *malakos* meaning "soft," and *dendron* meaning "tree." The common name "silky camellia" refers to the texture of the petals. What excitement finding such a tree would have been!

Flowers on a branch of Stewartia



John Stuart, 3rd Earl of Bute

Queen Charlotte wife of King George III

Earl of Bute's text dedicated to Queen

Northshore Camellia Club Sees Beauty in the Bloom

From the St. Tammany Farmer,
By Sarah Bonnette, Contributing writer
Photos by staff photographer Grant Therkildsen

Hunter Charbonnet realized his interest in growing camellias had reached a new level when he arose in the middle of the night to spray the nocturnal beetles feasting on his bushes' leaves. His actions drew the attention of a St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's deputy who was patrolling the neighborhood. The deputy thought Charbonnet had been drinking or quarreling with his wife.

"I decided to show him the bugs and what I was spraying and give him a little education from the little bit I knew at the time," he said. When Charbonnet told him he grew camellias as a hobby, the deputy offered a piece of advice. "He said 'I don't know anything about camellias, but I know if you get a different hobby, you'd get a lot better sleep at night.' He got in his car and drove off," Charbonnet said. "I figured if I'm out in the middle of the night dealing with my camellias, it's no longer a hobby. It's a passion."

The Northshore Camellia Club held its 12th annual show at the Southern Hotel in Covington, LA

Charbonnet is one of 75 members of the Northshore Camellia Club who share that passion. Founded by a group of local growers in 2005, the club's mission is to "promote the interest in and understanding of the various camellia species, especially those grown within our area," said Charbonnet, who's served as the club's president for the past five years.

Being part of the club gives growers "interaction with people who have actual experiences and can share their stories about what works and what doesn't work, what's a great flower and what's not a good flower, what grows well and what doesn't," he said.

The club provides educational experiences through field trips and during its members meetings held the third Sunday of the month from September to May. The meetings take place at the Riverwood Subdivision clubhouse near Covington.

The group also maintains a Facebook page and website as part of its outreach and performs community service. For example, group members have planted camellia bushes at the Alexander Milne Developmental Services building in Covington and have given talks at various

garden clubs. "The information we're trying to pass on is the proper care, propagation, cultivation and history of camellias," Charbonnet said. And one way the club shares information is through exhibiting flowers at camellia shows.

Most recently, the Northshore Camellia Club's 12th annual show took place Jan. 4 at the Southern Hotel in downtown Covington. Exhibitors from across the Gulf Region brought hundreds of blooms to be judged on four criteria: form, color, size and condition. The judging standards depend on the particular variety being evaluated, and dozens of awards were presented. Novice growers also participated in the show, displaying their blooms and identifying unknown varieties with the help of club members. "We make it easy because we want them to enjoy participating and learning more about the camellias while they're there," Charbonnet said.

Hunter Charbonnet, president of the Northshore Camellia Club, with Stacey Scott, Novice Winner of Best St. Tammany Pink Bloom with her 'Marie Bracey'

New to the show this year was a category specifically for St. Tammany Parish growers who own less than 25 plants. "They also could bring their flowers in and compete and try to get up to the head table as well," Charbonnet said. "It's another way to draw people into seeing how many different varieties there are. Most of what you see in that show you can't find in the local nurseries."

C. japonica 'Marie Brecey'

While there are numerous species of camellias, there are three types of the landscape shrub: sasanqua, japonica and reticulata. Each blooms at a different time

Dozens of blooms line a table at the Northshore Camellia Club show.

during the typical blooming season, which runs from November to early March, depending on the weather. The bushes are known as the "Queen of Winter" because they are just about the only shrub blooming in the dead of winter. "It adds color to a very dreary time of year," Charbonnet said. "And they're great for displaying.

A c. japonica 'Mrs. D. W. Davis Descanso' won best Very Large for James Smelley.

Wayne and Barbara Naquin examine a bloom.

Charbonnet's history with the flowering bush goes back further than his late-night spraying experience. His father grew camellias at his office and brought them home, along with the blue and red ribbons he won at camellia shows. "He never took me to a show, but I just remember him bringing flowers home. And I really liked the flowers," Charbonnet said.

His father-in-law also enjoyed propagating new ones at his home in Slidell, Charbonnet said. "He didn't have a lot of varieties, but he had about 25 plants of the same three varieties."

When Charbonnet and his wife moved to the north shore in 1992, they decided to add more camellias to their garden. They'd pick up varieties they couldn't find locally when passing nurseries taking their kids to and from college.

"It got to the point where my driveway was so crowded I couldn't even park the car anymore," he said.

Charbonnet's favorite camellia variety "depends on the next show I go to, because there's always a flower there that's a good-looking flower that I don't have. It's why I have over 550 different varieties now," he said.

In other words, it's a passion. "Passions have certain rules that are quite different from hobbies. Passions are not necessarily relaxing. They don't leave you alone. They insert themselves whether you have time for them or not. They assist you, but at the same time drive you crazy. And they exert a high price from us, but we never seem to mind," Charbonnet said.

The Baton Rouge Camellia Society Show

By Laura Holmes, St. Francisville, LA

The Baton Rouge Camellia Society (BRCS) held its 49th Annual Camellia Show on February 8 and 9, 2020, in the Rural Life Museum at the Burden Museum and Gardens in Baton Rouge. Bloom numbers were lower than usual with only 701 blooms exhibited (usual number exceeds 1000). Many exhibitors blamed the scarcity of blooms on the unusually early and extreme cold snap on November 13, 2019, in the Baton Rouge area. Temperatures were in the low 20s for one night. Previously, the temperatures had been in the 80s and returned to that within days after the freeze. Most attendees reported massive bud drop shortly after the freeze and continued bud drop in the weeks following. To exacerbate the shortage of potential blooms to enter in the show, the return of warm temperatures following the freeze event accompanied by wet and humid conditions contributed to the explosion of early petal blight. In my garden in St. Francisville, buds that didn't drop seemed to open with petal blight! Clearly this has not been a great camellia show season weather-wise in south Louisiana.

Additionally, the low bloom count resulted from several judges/exhibitors who regularly

Judges hard at work.

C. jap. 'J. Bird' 1999 by Jay Ellis Jr.,, FL Exhibited by Paul Huerkamp, Pearl River, MS

C. jap. 'Overlook White' 1961 by K. Sawada, Overlook Nsy, Mobile, AL Exhibited by Al and Vickie Baugh, Mobile, AL

Paul Huerkamp, Gordon Rabalais, Larry Bates and Joe Holmes

Kay Clark mans the GCCS table.

C. jap. 'Royal Velvet'1987, Nuccio's, CA Exhibited by Mike Ruth, Baton Rouge, LA

C. jap. 'Tammia' 1971, Tammia Nsy, Slidell, LA Exhibited by Jane Halley, Picayune, MS

Sweepstakes Award

Porcelain awards hand-painted by Ann Ruth

attend our show not being able to attend this year. Two regular attendees who normally enter over 100 blooms each were absent. Hopefully, they will be back next year.

But there are always ants moving rubber tree plants (or camellias)! Despite the weather's curve balls, entrants provided some spectacular blooms. Winning blooms included a Tray of 3 –'Royal Velvet Var.', Best White – 'Sea Foam', and 'Grand Prix', 'Frank Houser Var.', and the best Princess Masako I've seen.

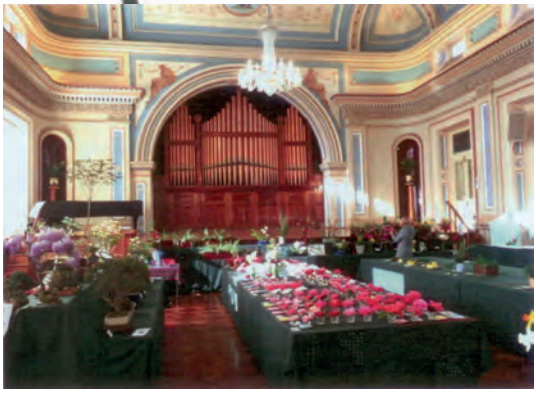
There were other bright spots in the show and associated camellia plant sale. This year, for the first time, our awards were hand-painted porcelain plates, bowls and platter. BRCS member Ann Ruth painted each piece with a camellia bloom (which she identified on the back). Ann spent the past year painting and firing the 20+ awards. Bloom entrants and the public were wowed by these awards and many wanted to purchase them. Get busy, Ann – quit your day job! Winners who did not get a hand-painted porcelain were awarded their choice of a camellia plant grown by the BRCS.

The other success of the BRCS show included selling over 300 camellia plants and having 320 of the public attend the viewings on Saturday and Sunday.

Dennis and Lyn Hart's sons Matthew and Alex. Matthew is holding his son, baby Beau,.

Sign at Jim Smelley's Greenhouse, Moss Point, MS

AROUND THE



What a beautiful place to have a camellia show. The Hobart Horticultural Society Spring 2019 Show in the Town Hall, Hobart, Tasmania.

Hunter and Meg Charbonnet's Christmas Tree

'Sweet Auburn Var.' Registered 2014 by Auburn-Opelika Men's Camellia Club.

Grafting Day by the Mobile Camellia Society at Jim Smelley's Nsy. in Moss Point, MS

GULF COAST

Black Magic

'Peggy's Blush Pensacola Show.

' Dr Frankenfurter' a cleverly photoshopped sasanqua from Australia.

PENSACOLA Camellia Club
Valentine's celebration at UWF Camellia Garden.

Photos by Norman Vickers

Here are some photos taken at the Valentine's Day celebration at University of West Florida Camellia Garden.

It was great to hear the $25,000 anonymous donation to the upkeep of the gardens by the Pensacola Camellia Club and also to learn that UWF Camellia Garden has been named as part of the ACS Camellia Trail. See new sign designating same.

Skip Vogelsang tells history of the garden.

Listening to UFW President Martha Saunders

Martha Saunders

Paul Bruno, Dick Hooton and Martha Saunders

Martha Saunders, Ph. D. is President of UWF and has been most cooperative and helpful in recent developments at UWF Camellia Garden. It was appropriate on Valentine's Day for the announcement of the gift of $25,000 toward development of the UWF Camellia Garden as well as the announcement about the inclusion of UWF Camellia Garden on the ACS Camellia Trail.

Howard J. Reddy is VP of University Advancement at UWF. He's worked closely with the PCC toward the development of the UWF Camellia Garden, a co-operative effort of UWF, The UWF Employees Association and the Pensacola Camellia Club.

Roger Vinson, Skip Vogelsang and Howard Reddy

John Mate and Dick Hooton

Brookhaven Camellia Society Show 2020

By Bill Perkins

The Brookhaven Camellia Society held its 57th show at "The Homestead at Brookhaven Nurseries" February 2nd with nearly 700 blooms entered. That's about 200 blooms fewer than last year simply due to weather conditions. We heard that some other shows of the region experienced much the same. Probably the long early freeze at the very beginning of November damaged or destroyed the young tender buds since many buds turned brown and fell to the ground soon after without even producing a bloom. And that early freeze which sent the mercury down into the lower 20sF caused many of the buds that survived to produce only blemished blooms. And as always there were a few more frosts and freezes although brief. I have never seen gardens here during winter so void of color. However, there were enough plants here and nearby that endured producing brilliant blooms to enter. No protected were brought so we didn't have that category. Another category unique to Brookhaven is the "Tom Perkins" which originated here. No one had even one to enter this year so that was another category missing. We can't remember a year this occurred. Mother Nature has her moments!

(Below)
C. nr hyb. 'Tom Perkins' 1944, F, Becker II, Brookhaven, MS

Woodleigh", the home of Betty Ann Perkins and former home of Tom Perkins.

Dining Room at "Woodleigh"

C. jap. 'Tom Herrin' 1961 F. Becker II, Pensacola, FL

In spite of this circumstance the event went very well beginning with a bountiful and delicious feast for the Judges Dinner at a member's home near Brookhaven the evening before the show. We expanded this tradition to include as many BSC members as could make it as well as inviting sponsors and even Lincoln County Master Gardeners. With such a fine venue this occasion allows us to visit and get to know our judges in an elegant yet casual setting before the show.

After the judging was complete the judges and some out of town guests joined us for the Judges Lunch at nearby "Woodleigh", the home of Betty Ann Perkins and former home of Tom "Brother" Perkins. While there, many judges took advantage of the nice sunny day collecting scions from the more than 60 camellias on the grounds of "Woodleigh" and even our gracious neighbors where there was a glorious "Tom Herrin" loaded with blooms. This hardy camellia is so resilient it defies climate issues here. Cuttings were taken also from the many Higos there at "Woodleigh". We are considering having a category for these in our future shows. Tom Perkins brought many to the States from China and Japan during his years as President of the ICS. We always encourage sharing so hopefully others will enjoy these soon in their gardens and nurseries!

Camellia costei H. Lev.

From Trees and Shrubs Outline

Genus: *Camellia*
Species: costei
Synonyms: C. *dubia* Sealy, C. *subacutissima* Hung T. Chang

C. costei lx a shrub or tree 1.5-5 m. high Branchlets yellowish grey, shortly pubescent. Leaves papery or thin and leathery, 5-8 x 1.5 -3.5 cm, elliptic to oblong, upper surface dark green with minute hairs, particularly along the midrib, lower surface pale green and strigose, six to eight secondary veins on each side of the midrib, margins minutely serrate, apex acuminate to caudate; petiole 0.2-0.5 cm long, pubescent. Flowers axillary, solitary; pedicel 0.2-0.5 cm long. Bracteoles four to five, 0.05-0.15 cm long, outside densely pubescent; calyx five-lobed, outside densely pubescent; petals five (to seven), white or pale purplish red in bud, obovate, 1-2.5 cm long, apex emarginate; stamens numerous, 1.2-1.8 cm long; ovary glabrous. Capsule subglobose, 1-1.5 cm diameter, green to purplish red, surmounted by the elongated style, usually with a single seed. Flowering February to March, fruiting September to October (China). Ming & Bartholomew 2007.
Distribution: CHINA: northern Guangxi, Guizhou, western Hubei, western Hunan, Sichuan, Yunnan.
Habitat: Forest between 400 and 1500(-2000) m above sea level.
USDA Hardiness Zone: 8.

Although its slightly scented flowers are rather small, they are freely produced in early spring and make *Camellia costei* a worthy garden plant. The neat narrow foliage is also attractive, especially as the new growth is reddish on emergence (Camellia Forest Nursery 2007-2008). It is cultivated in southern California, where it seems to do well, and is offered by Camellia Forest Nursery, North Carolina.

This c. costei growing in my yard in Baton Rouge is making a good comeback after being flattened by a broken tree in a recent hurricane. - Kenn Campbell

Perlite and Vermiculite

We have all seen recommendations for use of perlite and vermiculite in various soil mixes and have probably used it many times. But what is perlite and vermiculite and why is it used and what's the difference? Perhaps you're aware that both help influence soil retention, but you're confused about which is right for your needs. You can't use the two interchangeably. There are important differences between perlite and vermiculite, and to make your garden flourish, you need to understand which is better for your particular needs.

When looking for a quick answer, the bottom line is that vermiculite mixes into the soil to help retain water. Perlite, on the other hand, adds drainage to the soil. There's much more to it than that, though, so read on for all the essential details.

Perlite: Wikipedia defines expanded perlite as an amorphous volcanic glass that has a relatively high water content, typically formed by the hydration of obsidian. It occurs naturally and has the unusual property of greatly expanding when heated sufficiently. Perlite softens when it reaches temperatures of 850–900 °C (1,560–1,650 °F). Water trapped in the structure of the material vaporizes and escapes, and this causes the expansion of the material to 7–16 times its original volume. The expanded material is a brilliant white, due to the reflectivity of the trapped bubbles.

Perlite usually comes in three size grades, fine, medium and coarse.

Coarse perlite is used more often in deeper soil cultivations such as raised beds or if the soil has strong water holding characteristics – clay soils etc.

Perlite boulders with fireweed in foreground.

Medium Grade Perlite

Medium grade perlite is used more in larger potting applications or window boxes.

Fine grade is only used with seed starting mixes or cutting mixes.

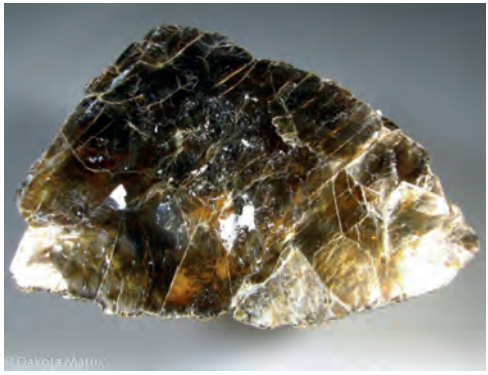
There are no hard and fast rules about which grade should be used. When unsure, a medium grade will usually be OK for most applications.

The main use for perlite around the garden is for drainage. Because perlite is an expanded glass material it will not compact. When you added to soil or compost, it keeps the soil structure from closing up and becoming dense.

Dense compacted soil will hold water within its structure and prevent the free movement of water through it, thereby stopping drainage. As mentioned before perlite can also help to hold vital nutrients within its cavities for growing plants.

Perlite can be added to potted plants, raised beds or mixed in with the soil in the ground. Perlite is a very useful and can be used in all applications around your garden and home. It allows the roots of the plants to grow uninhibited and provides a clear path for water air and nutrients to get easy access as the soil is not compacted, worms and other insects can enhance the soil further.

Vermiculite: From Wikipedia - Vermiculite is a hydrous phyllosilicate mineral**.** It undergoes significant expansion when heated. Exfoliation occurs when the mineral is heated sufficiently, and the effect is routinely produced in commercial furnaces.



Vermiculite Ore

Vermiculite is formed by weathering or hydrothermal alteration of biotite or phlogopite. Large commercial vermiculite mines currently exist in Russia, South Africa, China, and Brazil.

Vermiculite was first described in 1824 for an occurrence in Millbury, Massachusetts. Its name is from Latin *vermiculare,* 'to breed worms,' for the manner in which it exfoliates when heated.

Vermiculite interacts with the

Exfoliated Vermiculite

potassium, calcium, and magnesium in the soil. It also can raise the pH level of your plants, even though vermiculite has a pH of 7.0.

When water is added to vermiculite, the flakes grow and expand, resembling a worm-like shape that absorbs like a sponge. When planting something that loves water, add a scoop of vermiculite to the potting soil. The plants will be in heaven because vermiculite absorbs 3-4 times its volume!

Vermiculite is a permanent soil conditioner. That means, unlike compost, it does not break down in the soil. When water is added, or it rains, vermiculite will continue to hold water in the soil until the soil dries out.

Here are some reasons to use perlite:

* Eliminate surface crusting and puddles in clay soils.
* Maintain a steady soil temperature.
* Improve drainage.
*Allow more oxygen flow into the soil.

Here are some ideas for using vermiculite in your garden:
* Use it in potting containers, lawns, or in composts to retain moisture.
* Add it to mushroom growing substrate.
* Incorporate it into the soil to make it less dense. Use it as a cover layer to help seeds germinate.
* Help cuttings retain moisture and plant foods by adding it to the soil.
* When combined with peat moss or compost, it helps to encourage faster root growth, providing better stability for young roots.

Vermiculite vs. Perlite: Remember that these amendments are not interchangeable. Each performs a different yet important function. Understanding these differences allows you to help your plants flourish. There are some significant differences when it comes to vermiculite vs perlite, so you have to pick the right one for your needs.

Drainage: Vermiculite mixes with the soil and helps to retain water. On the other hand, perlite adds drainage to the soil to reduce how much water is in the soil.

Remember that both of these amendments can hold water, but they do so differently. Many gardeners prefer perlite because those little white balls help the soil to drain faster and better than vermiculite.

Gardeners often added vermiculite to seed starting mixtures because it protects seedlings from fungus, which kills new seedlings. It helps to retain water in those tiny little pods that gardeners use to start seeds. On the other hand, while perlite can be used to help start seedlings, it's better used when you move those seedlings into larger pots in order to help with additional drainage.

pH: Perlite has an alkaline pH level between 7.0 and 7.5. If you use perlite in excess, it can cause minor nutrient issues. Vermiculite has a pH level between 6.5 and 7.2, making it a more neutral additive and therefore better for some plants.

Longevity: Unlike vermiculite, perlite is considered permanent because it doesn't deteriorate. It's clean, odorless, non-toxic, sterile, and will never mold or rot.

Aeration: Vermiculite is a poor soil aerator because it absorbs so much more water. Not ideal for some plants because it might cause root rot in plants that don't like wet roots. Perlite enhances aeration by releasing excess amounts of water.

Water Retention: Vermiculite retains a lot of water, expanding up to 3-4 times its size when saturated. Perlite improves water retention while increasing drainage. It also raises the humidity level around plants.

Perlite lets water drain too quickly, so not ideal for seeds or seedlings that need damp soil.

Perlite and vermiculite both improve your soil, bur they do it in different ways, Perlite can help water drain out of your soil, while vermiculite retains water. Pick the medium to use based on the needs of the plants you are growing.

{This article was eatracted fron Wikipedia and an article by Bethany Hayes}

In the Spring Garden

By Art Landry, Baton rouge, LA

Spring is a busy time in the Camellia garden. It is time to prune, spray, and fertilize smaller plants that need it. It's also the time to do air layers, and do a general cleanup of the plants, such as removing all old blooms and buds, weak limbs, etc.

Most growers use a thick mulch of leaves, bark, or pine straw each year around established plants. Selective pruning of weak or infested limbs should be practiced by all growers. Some members have found that a pruning program on established plants can be used instead of fertilizer. Removal of about 10-20% of the branches will stimulate the plant into re-establishing the balance between roots and branches, putting out vigorous new growth to replace the pruned branches. Pruning can also be used to control the size and height of the plant so that they will remain a desirable size and shape. You will be rewarded with a healthy, vigorous plant with superior blooms.

Those plants not yet large enough to prune back extensively will benefit from a simple fertilizer program of an application now and another light feeding in summer. You can use a commercial Camellia fertilizer (or: "Nursery Special" or "Growers Supreme" or "Osmocote Plus" with time release nitrogen and containing trace elements.) Use as directed on package. You want a fertilizer with slow release nitrogen and trace elements. The nitrogen is released over time and reduces the chance of over fertilizing or "burning". The trace elements are essential to good growth and vigor.

Those who grow camellias in containers have their own program of fertilization involving feeding every month to replace nutrients lost with each watering. Time release fertilizers with trace elements such as those cited above will help reduce the work and frequency involved. March and April are good times to spray to control scale and other pests.

Malathion usually controls red spider mites and aphids, which often appear on plants at this time. Neem Oil can be used to control scale, mites and other pests at the same time. Dormant Oil or "Ultrafine Oil" still work fine for scale and are non-toxic. Systemic insecticides are available and effective. Hi-Yield Systemic Insect Spray and Fertilome Tree & Shrub Systemic Insect Drench are two products used by local growers.

Dieback can be a problem all year long in our area, but the greatest exposure to the infection seems to be in the spring when the old leaves fall off or limbs are pruned or otherwise damaged. Prune away all infected limbs down below the canker or wound on the limb or trunk and treat with a fungicide like captan or benomyl. Pruning paint is optional. Dry benomyl added to water-soluble pruning paint seems to work well when painted on the treated area. Sterilize your pruning tools often using fungicide or chlorine bleach solution to keep them clean while you do the pruning.

Camellia Quiz

Name these camellias that were named for states. Answers on page 28.

#1

#2

#3

#4

#5

#6

Editor's Notes

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

The hard freeze in early November seems to have effected very many of the camellias in our Region. The freeze in the low 20s came without any cool down period and the plants were not yet dormant. Here in Baton Rouge it went from 70F to 24F in one day. The flower buds on very many plants froze, turned brown and fell off. On some plants where the buds were not killed, they opened late with freeze damage. Thankfully, a few plants had normal blooms late in the season. It was not a very good blooming season.

It reminded me of what happened here in the early 1960s. There were hard freezes in back to back years that completely wiped out the camellia shows. The members of the old Baton Rouge Camellia Society were so discouraged that they disbanded the club and sent the funds remaining in the treasury to the ACS. It was 10 years before a new Society was formed. A number of clubs around the area suffered the same fate and never recovered.

Let us remember that these freezes will occasionally happen and find other activities other than shows to keep up interest and not let our societies disband.

One solution to the problem would be to plant early blooming and cold hardy varieties. Here are some that bloomed well for me after the freeze.

C. jap. 'Magnolesflora'

C. jap. ;Marie Bracey'

C. jap. 'Black Macic'

Camellia Quiz Answers

1. '*Alabama Beauty' Tom Dodd, AL* 2. *'Carolina Beauty' 1959, Holmes, NC* 3. *'California' 1888, Japan to US, Cate, CA*
4. '*Mississippi Beauty' 1956, Chiles, MS* 5. '*Alaska' 1949, Carleton, CA* 6. 'Georgia National Fair' *1995, Gerbing, GA*

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 'Candlelight' 1991 by Dr. Gilbert Fisher, Union Springs, AL

C. japonica 'Bobbye Dennis' 1986 by Vi Stone, Baton Rouge, LA

C. japonica 'Crazy Sue' 1995 by W. Smith, Gainsville, FL

C. japonica 'Ben Parker' 1990 by B. Parker, Foxworth, MS

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: _____

Address: _____

_____

_____

Telephone:_____

E-mail: _____

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The Gulf Coast Camellia Society is a non-profit corporation chartered 12/14/1962 in the State of Louisiana (charter no. 03207330n).

The Gulf Coast Camellian is published quarterly
by the Gulf Coast Camellia Society, Inc.
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Printed by Vivid Ink Graphics. Baton Rouge, LA

Photo Courtesy Don and Carolyn Oyler