

THE GULF COAST

Camellian

Winter 2021

Volume 47 No. 1



photo by Mark Crawford

C japonica 'Rosalynn Carter'

A Publication of the Gulf Coast Camellia Society

The Gulf Coast Camellian

Volume 47 No. 1 Winter 2021

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From the Cover



C japonica 'Rosalynn Carter'

4.5" x 2.5" rose form double to formal double, originated by Clarence and Lillian Gordy, Ocala, FL and registered in 2017 by the American Camellia Society, Fort Valley, GA.

President's Message

Joe Holmes

St. Francisville, Louisiana

In anticipation of having to write my first President's Message, I decided to go back to previous incoming Presidents' Messages to get some idea of what was generally covered. After reviewing three past presidents' efforts, I found they were remarkably similar.

Generally, the messages covered: personal introductions; thanks to previous officers and editor; recap of Annual Meeting; anticipation of the upcoming camellia season; encouragement to submit articles for *The Gulf Coast Camellian*; and a plug to continue learning and sharing info about camellia

culture. So, with these themes as typical messages, here goes.

Hello, my name is Joe Holmes and I am honored to be your new GCCS President. My wife is Laura, who recently changed her name to Larlo after her hurricane namesake devastated southwestern Louisiana. We both are from Baton Rouge, went to LSU, worked in Louisiana State Government, and retired

in 2009. In 2001, we moved from BR to outside St. Francisville, LA (not much of a change – from a metropolitan area of 492,000 to the “suburbs” of a town of 1592!) I have been a member of the BRCS for about 20 years, a member of GCCS and the ACS for more than 10, and a

member of ICS since 2013. I have 200+ camellias, of which about 100 are in the ground – mine and my neighbors'. I have run out of suitable planting space! Somehow, I cannot control myself when around varieties I just must have! So, now you have met me.

Next, I want to thank our past president, Dennis Hart

who has been such a dynamic, involved president, recruiting over 100 new members. He attended local club meetings and shows for almost every club in the gulf coast and networked with their officers. I have huge shoes to fill! Thank you, Dennis, for your outstanding job. Also, many thanks to Ann and Mike Ruth for their accounting, dues, and roster-keeping during the past two + years and



Joe with a 'Takanini' bloom - one of his two so far on September 27th. (The other is 'Sparkling Burgundy'.)

of course for keeping the Facebook page up to date. For his secretarial work, support, and efforts not only for the GCCS but to the camellia world, thank you Jim Campbell. Thanks to James Dwyer for all his work with the GCCS Webpage. I am glad to let you know that Mike and Ann and Jim will remain in their positions for the next regime and that Bruce Clement from the Ozone Club replaces me as VP. Our state Vice Presidents serve such a vital role keeping in touch with the local clubs. Thanks to all who are stepping down and to those who are remaining. For Alabama, Vickie Baugh is being replaced by Mike Jinx; for Florida, Dick Hooton is being replaced by Alan McMillan; for Mississippi, Lisa Miller is being replaced by Bill Perkins. The remaining VPs include: Jim Smelly (Mississippi); Mark Crawford (Georgia); Eddie Martin (Louisiana); and Hal Vanis (Texas). Thanks to all of you for serving the GCCS, and welcome to you new officers.

A special recognition and a huge thank you is due Kenn and Ruby Campbell, editor and contributing authors! Ruby's and Kenn's articles and Kenn's editorship make *The Gulf Coast Camellian* the outstanding publication it is. Again, thank you for serving the GCCS.

Generally, at this point there is a recap of the Annual Meeting which usually had occurred just prior to this season's issue. Thanks to COVID-19, the annual meeting planned for St. Francisville, LA, was postponed until October 2021. Take a second look at the pictures of my small-town attractions which appeared in the previous two issues to see what you missed. Please plan on attending the Annual Meeting in St. Francisville in October 2021.

During my two years as president, I plan to continue Dennis's practice of trying to attend at least one meeting of all

the camellia clubs which are part of the GCCS. I will be contacting you current presidents to verify meeting schedules and possible chances to attend one of your meetings.

Finally, please contribute articles for *The Gulf Coast Camellian*. You will make Kenn's job so much easier and enjoyable. Nothing is too trivial or short. Consider pictures from your club work events, meetings, outings; pictures and/or news about the prize blooms in your garden; interesting camellia gardens you visit; old camellias found while road tripping in the countryside. In short, please be a contributor as well as a reader.

So, as the camellia year gets underway, remember to attend meetings, take blooms to shows, and attend as many shows as you can, even if you do not enter blooms. Shows are a lot of fun for both attendees and exhibitors. You get to see old friends and new blooms and you will probably learn something about the joy of being a camellian!

I am honored to be your new president and I hope we will meet during my tenure. If you have comments, suggestions, or just want to talk, I can be contacted at 225-721-2084 or at josephcjr@bellsouth.net.



C. japonica 'Takanini' NZ 1989

Something About Seedlings – Part 2

By John Grimm, Metairie, LA

To all that knew her, my wife Stephanie was special indeed – caring, loving, a friend to all and interested in nearly everything. Camellias, collecting, preserving, growing and showing became the activity that bound us together; the activity that would keep us going after retirement with an endless "something to do". She worried that once I retired I wouldn't know what to do and would languish. Our first seedling, 'Atkins' Gift' would have been named 'Atkins' Gift to Stephanie' had more than 3 words been allowed. So seedlings were an important part of our camellia life early on. Stephanie would gather seeds from 'Shikibu,' a prolific seeder, as well as others and tend them in our first cold frame.

Naming varieties for wives seems natural for camellia men; naming varieties for Stephanie was my imperative.

But let's get back to the basics. Seedlings are amazing we all know;

obtaining the seeds is really easy if you know what to look for. The pods appear in late summer and look like green cherries, small pears or apples – some will have shades of red (just like an apple) or brown and some are even fuzzy. Even others are misshaped nearly like a question mark or crooked gourd. The smallest are usually the seeds of sasanquas

(or species like tea plants) and they are nearly as plentiful as their flowers. The fuzzy ones usually have some *reticulata* parentage (even if found on a *sasanqua* or *japonica*). But it's not the outside that counts.

The pod is mostly pulp – like apple seeds are deep inside an edible fruit protective covering, camellia seeds lie inside that pulpy pod. The seed pods will dry out in July

through September and drop their seeds naturally on the ground. Once I see that pods start opening naturally, I pick all the pods I desire and open the seed pods myself, harvesting a myriad of seeds for



Camellia seed come in various sizes and colors.



growing. I don't take the chance of them falling to the ground and washing away or drying out. The seeds are a dark red brown to black and can be small and perfectly rounded, or more cycle shaped. Some pods will have a single seed while others up to 7 seeds (that's the maximum I have ever found). If the seeds are still white, they were immature and will not develop; they were picked and opened too early. By waiting until the first seeds are opening by themselves, most all the seed inside are ready for germination. If not planted immediately, store in a baggy in the refrigerator. The seeds dry out easily and won't germinate.

Camellia Heaven has provided lots of seeds for growing. And then, there are many wild seedlings that began growing



Volunteer seedlings

under the mature plants. These spilled from the drying, cracking pods and landed in the mulch or fallen leaves. This new home provides a spot for the seeds to stay damp and some shade and an opportunity to sprout. Some pods and their seeds find their way to the strangest places, sometimes thanks to squirrels and other critters that plant them as a future food source. Two Japonica seedlings are growing next to my pergola despite no Japonicas being in that immediate vicinity – only tea plants and the species *brevistyla*. Somehow they migrated to the locations where they are currently happily growing. They will have to be removed, however, and

replanted elsewhere. Streams or other flowing waters can also move seeds far from their parent plants. The strangest location I've ever seen for a seed to germinate was at Rosedown, an historic garden and home site in St. Francisville, La. The American Camellia Society visited there as part of their yearly convention. While walking around, there was a camellia growing out of an oak tree – the immediate shock was how could a camellia be successfully grafted to an oak? On closer review, it was clear that a camellia seed had imbedded itself in a V-shaped branching of the oak and grown in the moist soil and organic matter that had gathered there. It had attained a good size and formed a union of bark that made it look like a graft. Seedlings can turn up anywhere – what fun.

Camellia Heaven's seedlings include both those growing there wildly and those acquired. The most memorable is a mauve formal double with often incurved petals and vegetative striping. It is most nearly perfect, when its petals line up exactly right, it looks like a mauve striped star. We frequently brought blooms of it to the Tangipahoa Master Gardner Association Camellia Stroll at the Hody Wilson Garden in Hammond. Visitors were not permitted to pick blooms from the trees there, so to distinguish blooms that might have been picked, we brought things that did not exist in the garden. The blooms were given to children that needed something to do as their parents enjoyed the blooms, so they were a reward for picking up pine cones that had fallen and were potential tripping hazards. Those blooms were a favorite. Some asked for it to be grown for them and we planned the name Star of Heaven as its name. When Stephanie died, I decided its name would be 'Stephanie's Heavenly Star.' Because of requests for it, 'Stephanie's

Heavenly Star' is now in test by a commercial nursery and if all goes well (propagation success and growth meeting their benchmarks), it will be made available at local camellia shows, the camellia stroll, and at nurseries to which they sell. Their initial test of 30 went well for rooting and another 60-90 are being stuck this year.

The fascination with seedlings that grew at Camellia Heaven lead to the acquisition of seedlings from other sources; some nurseries and gardens sold their seedlings as memories of the visit and/or naming or grafting. Over the years, Camellia Heaven became the home to many of these acquired with the rights to name them as we pleased as well as those of hybridizers or seedling growers wanting their creations to have a home at the preserve. Many unnamed seedlings exist at Camellia Heaven that cannot be shared at this time. Several other camellias were given to me to name for Stephanie by friends. Five camellias were named (or will be) that were Bobby Green seedlings. The original mother plant that Bobby released as Five Inch Flower was acquired with naming rights. It was 9 feet

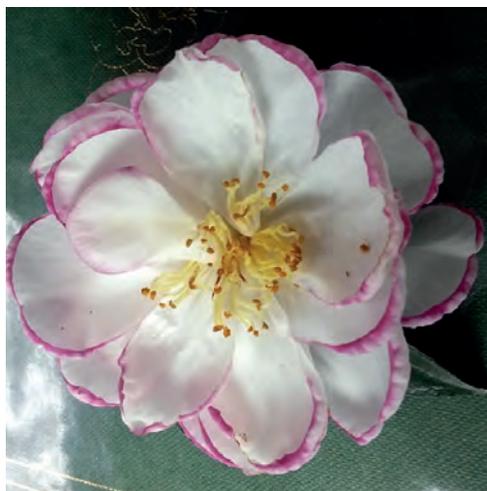
tall and when it arrived at Camellia Heaven, two of us had to stand on the back of the tractor to balance its weight. It is a sasanqua that produces a 5 inch bloom, atypical of sasanquas. It was named 'Stephanie's Super Nova' (pictured). 'Stephanie's Crimson Star,' a red formal double with pointy petals and 'Stephanie's



C. japonica 'Stephanie's Crimson Star'



C. hybrid 'Stephanie's Tiny Star'



5" bloom of C. sasanqua 'Stephanie's Super Nova'

Tiny Star,' an award winning hybrid, were also named in 2019; a fourth, to be named 'Stephie' (her nickname as a child) was a peony version of 'Stephanie Golden' and 'Bobby's Stephanie Pink,' which he did

not intend to grow further, will be registered as 'Stephanie's Soft Pink' (thank you Bobby). The 'Stephie' which Bobby gave me has yet to bloom at Camellia Heaven and remains a plant to be named in the future. Johnny Despeaux, a friend who acquired a large collection that Stephanie and I helped tag and who also got hooked on seedlings (planted 10,000 seeds several years – he has a number of interesting seedlings that have already bloomed) offered me a choice of two seedlings I had seen on his property to be named for Stephanie. For 'Stephanie Cassagne Grimm,' I selected a mauve, undeveloped semi-double. A real stunner, it has won as best seedling at the New Orleans camellia show. A variegated version, through grafting, is an interesting addition as well. 'Stephanie's Crimson Star' was planned to be named 'Stephanie C. Grimm;' however, another friend, Sharon Smith (daughter of camellia grower W.L. Smith), offered a seedling I had selected from their seedling field (now mostly destroyed). I had planned to name it for one of their family members (that will be a future story in the American Camellia Society Journal), but she said name it for Stephanie. A frosted, single Japonica, which has also been named best seedling, it will be registered when pictures are available showing its unique frosted appearance. I did manage to slip in a Reticulata seedling for myself; it was acquired from the seedling patch of the Wheeler nursery (Central Georgia Nurseries) in Macon, Georgia; they grew and sold hundreds of seedlings. 'John L. Grimm' is a big, pink semi-double. Another camellia, a yellowish/cream colored formal double, was given to me to name for myself. 'John Lloyd Grimm,' has also found its way to the nomenclature thanks to Dr. Richard Strobach. More about his fabulous collection, the original

Patin garden, which boasts not only a huge selection of camellias collected from countrywide and lovingly restored by the Strobachs, but also has a myriad a seedlings I am helping him to name. More about them and others I have helped get their creations named in the next issue. Boy are seedlings fun!!!



'Jack Grimm'



Container Camellias for Those With Limited Space

By: Hyman Norsworthy

(This article first appeared in the *Camellian* Vol.31 No. 1 Summer 2005)

There are many garden enthusiasts who would like to grow a few camellias, but do not have adequate garden space. This dilemma is easily overcome by growing a few plants in containers; camellias are well-suited to container culture. Those residing in town houses, apartments with balconies and garden homes with patios are prime candidates for this type of culture. Care of the plants is much less involved than typical patio plants and the plants can provide blooms most of the winter months as well as attractive evergreen plants in between blooming.

Most all varieties of camellias are suitable for container culture. Varieties ranging in bloom size from miniature to very large and spanning the bloom period from early to late all do well in containers. A few that do well in containers for me are: 'Pink Perfection', 'Little Slam' and its mutants, 'Dixie Knight Supreme', 'Edna Bass', 'Helen Bower', 'Magic City', 'Margaret Davis', 'Ville de Nantes', 'Melissa Anne' and any of the 'Tomorrow' family. This list is by no means exclusive; many others do well in containers.

Camellias grown in containers require a little more care than in-ground plants. The potting *soil* must be loose so that water drains from the top of the soil within a few minutes. Due to the need for increased watering frequency nutrients are depleted and increased frequency of fertilization is necessary. Container plants are fed often

but only with small amounts with each feeding. A good fertilizer for container camellias is a 50/50 mix of cottonseed meal and STA-GREEN 4-7-7. A small amount of this mix is applied each month. One to three teaspoons of the mix depending on the size of the plant, is applied each month. Other than the watering and fertilizing differences, container culture of camellias is very much the same as in-ground culture. Pruning, disbudding, spraying when needed are all the same.

When the camellia has been in the container for several years, it may become rootbound and have used up most of the *soil*. Re-pot into a larger pot with fresh soil when that happens. If it is in its final size container, then remove from the container, cut off about 2 inches of the root ball and replace in the container with fresh *soil*. Your plant should be fine for several more years before repeating the process. A yearly

pruning can be used to maintain shape and size.

We, as camellia growers, should encourage friends with limited space to try growing camellias in containers. Results can be very rewarding; for the friend as well as us who helped. So, make a trip with them to the nearest source and come home with a few camellias plants. Help them plant them and tell them how to care for them and both of you will be glad to enjoy the results.



C. jap. 'Dixie Knight Supreme'



And They're Off!

By Joe & Laura Holmes, St. Francisville, LA

In early October, we went on an RV camping trip to Northern Kentucky. One of our day excursions was to Louisville to the Kentucky Derby Museum at Churchill Downs. The museum was a treasure trove of every Derby fact you can imagine. Ever wonder who won the Kentucky Derby the year you were born? At the museum, you will not only find out, but also will likely be able to watch a newsreel of the actual race! Joe watched Jet Pilot, ridden by Louisiana jockey Eric Guerin, win in Joe's birth year.



Kentucky Derby Museum entrance at Churchill Downs, Louisville, KY

Another highlight of the museum is a 360-degree movie which puts you in the middle of the grandstand during Derby Day. (The American equivalent of “C’mon, Dover, move your bloomin’ arse!” comes in loud and clear!) After playing in the museum (placing fake bets and winning fake money, being the jockey atop a mechanical horse, and playing horse trivia), we toured the grandstands and Millionaire Row’s viewing areas. Laura stood in the same spot as Queen Elizabeth II – outside in the grandstand –

HRM sporting a light green and coral straw chapeau to watch the 2007 Derby.

Armed with a full “nose” of horse racing lore, we returned to St. Francisville, LA to experience this season’s “Run for the Camellias.” With the Derby experience fresh in our minds and a frosty cold Mint Julip in a stirrup cup in hand (not really, bless our hearts!), we decided to recap the Wins, Places, Shows, and Also Rans in our garden.

For this year’s Sasanquas and Species Cup, the winner by two furlongs (read two weeks!) was ‘Sparkling Burgundy,’ crushing the finish line on September 12, 2020. ‘Alabama Beauty’ (known around these parts as ‘Tiger Bait’), off her pace, placed on October 10th. Show went to ‘Yuletide’ who ran a decent race, passing the pole less than a furlong later, on October 16th. Also Rans included ‘Aphrodite,’ ‘Kanjiro,’ and, as I write this on Hurricane Zeta day (Yes, Virginia, another one!), ‘Leslie Ann’ is nosing the finish line.

In the main event, the Japonicas Cup, the clear winner by 1½ furlongs, was ‘Takanini’ on September 20, 2020. ‘Dona Herzilia de Freitas Magalhães’ charged up the backstretch strong, placing on September 29th, despite the additional weight of her name. ‘Brooke,’ the long shot took to the rails and passed other favorites to show on October 21st. Also Ran, fighting the sloppy track (5” of rain two days before) was ‘Edna Bass Var.,’ who finally passed the pole on October 25th.

We anxiously await the second running of the Japonicas Cup – separate Reticss and Hybrids heats! We have tickets in hand and a box seat on Thousandaire Row.

Sasanqua and Species Cup 2020



WIN Sep 12
c. sasan. 'Sparkling Burgundy'



PLACE Oct 10
c. sasanqua 'Alabama Beauty'



SHOW Oct 16
c. sasanqua 'Yuletide'



ALSO RAN
c. sasanqua 'Aphrodite'



ALSO RAN
c. sasanqua 'Kanjiro'



ALSO RAN
c. sasanqua 'Leslie Ann'

Japonica Cup 2020

WIN Sep 20
c. japonica
'Takanini'



PLACE Sep 29
c. japonica
'Dona Herzilia
de Frietas
Magalhaes'



SHOW Oct 21
c. japonica
'Brooke'



ALSO RAN
Oct 25
c. japonica
'Edna Bass V.'



"Camellia Firsts"

by

Ruby G. Campbell, Baton Rouge, LA



The story of camellias started around 2737 BC. It is said that while the servant of Chinese emperor, Shen Nung, was boiling water to drink, leaves blew in from a tree overhead. An herbalist, Shen Nung took a chance and sampled the infusion. What he experienced was the first recorded caffeine “buzz” in human history. The tree whose leaves provided this boost of energy was *Camellia sinensis*, quickly revered for its medicinal qualities.



Camellia sinensis, the tea plant.

Thus began the first use and cultivation of camellias which was to become a major economic component in China and Japan. Tea became established as the national drink of China during the Tang dynasty (618-906 A.D.). Buddhist monks traveling through China brought seeds, plants and rituals back to Japan, where the tea ceremony became a vital aspect of Japanese culture. Oil from the seeds of another species, *Camellia oleifera*, was used in cooking.

It would take centuries for Europeans to discover the joys of drinking tea and ultimately change the world as their addiction grew. Europeans were skeptical of the “China Drink,” so traders turned to

royals and aristocracy to help popularize the warm beverage. The marriage of Charles II to Catherine of Braganza of Portugal ultimately shaped the history of tea drinking in Britain as her love of the drink established it as a fashionable beverage, first at court and then among the wealthy classes. The first 100 pounds of imported tea arrived in Britain in 1664 and by the mid-1700s, tea was the drink of choice by the masses and remains, second only to water, as the world’s most popular beverage.

Commercial tea cultivation in the United States was first attempted in 1744 in colonial Georgia, when tea seeds were sent to the Trust Garden in Savannah. The first recorded successful cultivation of the tea plant in the colonies is recorded as growing on Skidaway Island near Savannah in 1772.² But most early attempts at growing tea commercially in the US were short-lived. Botanist Robert Fortune’s attempts to establish a US government-sponsored tea plantation in the 1850s suffered when Chinese officials sent him off with thousands of seed from the ornamental species, *Camellia japonica* and *Camellia sasanqua*.

Not until 1888, when Dr. Charles Shepard founded the Pinehurst Tea Plantation in Summerville, South Carolina, did American-grown tea become a reality. Dr. Shepard created award winning teas until his death in 1915.

After his death, the Pinehurst Tea Plantation closed and Dr. Shepard's tea plants grew wild for the next forty-five years until 1963 when The Lipton Tea Company, worried about the instability of the third world countries that produce tea,

paid to have the surviving tea plants at Pinehurst moved to a former potato farm on Wadmalaw Island in Charleston County, South Carolina. Lipton operated an experimental tea farm until it was sold in 1987 to Mack Fleming and Bill Hall, who converted the experimental farm into a working tea garden. The Charleston Tea Plantation sold American Classic Tea, the first tea ever to be made with 100% tea grown in America. American Classic Tea has been the official tea of the White House since 1987. In 2003, the plantation was sold to Bigelow Tea Company at a court auction for \$1.28 million and was temporarily closed for renovation in order to attract tourists and boost its revenues. The garden reopened in January 2006 and gives free tours to the public.² In order to maintain political correctness, on June 9th, 2020, the name of this tea farm changed from the Charleston Tea Plantation to the Charleston Tea Garden.

Dictionary of Camellias, the first published reference to *c. reticulatas* was in the year 590 in a text about herbs. Col. Tom Durrant has dated the cultivation of *c. reticulata* to the 9 century in its native Yunnan Province in southwestern China. In the wild they are confined to the mixed mountain forests and often grow to a height of fifty feet. In 1820, Captain Richard Rawes of the East Indiaman



Captain Richard Rawes



Charleston Tea Garden



C. reticulata 'Captain Rawes'

The first camellias listed in the camellia nomenclature³ are two *reticulatas* that were introduced in 1621: *Baozhu Cha* or 'Noble Pearl' and *Damaniao* or 'Cornelian,' the latter having a red and white bloom. When red predominates it is called 'Hongmanao' or 'Red Cornelian'; when white predominates it is called 'Baimaniao' or 'White Cornelian.' But according to Stirling Macoboy's *Colour*

Warren Hastings imported the first *reticulata* to England which was later named 'Captain Rawes.' It was the only known *reticulata* cultivated in Europe for over one hundred years.

The first *japonica* listed in the nomenclature, 'Purity,' 'Neige d'Oree,'

plus other synonyms was introduced sixty years later in 1681 from Japan where it was known as 'Shiragiku' – that is, “white chrysanthemum.” The medium-sized fluted, formal double flowers (sometimes called “rose-form”) are pure white,

have a single ring of petals dominated by large pollen rich stamens. The name Higo refers to the ancient homeland, now called



C. japonica 'Purity'

shading to cream at their base. Camellia authority Stirling Macoboy has noted that they look like gardenias, but without the fragrance. He prefers the French name 'Neige Doree' which means “gilded snow,” finding it more pleasing and evocative than the other names.

It was the Japanese who first popularized ornamental camellias. Higo camellias, which resemble the flower of *Prunus mume* (common name Japanese plum or Japanese apricot), were cultivated in the age of the Samurais. The unique flowers



Prunus mume
Japanese plum



Higo 'Jitsugetsusei'

Kumamoto, situated in the southwestern tip of Japan. There are more than 300 varieties of Higo camellias in cultivation today, each with a unique history dating back over a thousand years.

The Japanese also introduced many classic varieties that are still popular today, including 'Otome' (often sold as 'Pink Perfection') and 'Akashigata' which is commonly referred to as 'Lady Clare'



C. japonica 'Lady Clare'

in the U.S. It was the beauty of these varieties that caught the eye of Engelbert Keampter, chief surgeon for the Dutch East India Company, who is credited with introducing ornamental camellias to Europe in 1692.

The first camellia introduced in Europe is said to have occurred in Portugal, but this has not been confirmed by direct evidence. However, because the Dutch East India Company had overtaken the Portuguese trading routes and quickly grew to dominate global trade, it is easy to see that this could possibly be true. Nevertheless, England is considered the first European country to have had camellias imported in order to obtain the tea plant for their markets.

In 1702, James Petiver (c1665-1718), a London apothecary, a fellow of the Royal Society, as well as London's informal Temple Coffee House Botany Club, famous for his specimen collections, described a red-flowered plant named 'Thea Chinensis.' The English were told that this was a tea plant, however, it appears they too had been duped and had been given an ornamental species instead!

Because of the rarity and cost of the camellia, they could be grown only by the elite and wealthy. They were cultivated exclusively in conservatories for more than one hundred years and were spread through the royal courts of Europe. George III had one planted in Pillnitz, Germany, near Dresden, where it still lives today protected by a huge greenhouse. Empress Josephine, consort of Napoleon, also had a fondness for camellias in her conservatory. The English Garden created in 1786 in Italy for Queen Maria Carolina Hapsburg, Queen of Naples and wife of King Ferdinand IV of Naples and III of Sicily,

included camellias, which were planted there for the first time.

It was discovered, however, that camellias were much hardier than originally thought and were planted outside in coastal regions, creating a booming cut-flower industry. On the first day of January 1888, 120,000 camellia "buttonholes" grown in Nantes, France, were sold at the Halls of Paris. Fashionistas like Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel were charmed by their beauty and adopted the camellia bloom as symbol of everlasting love and devotion. To this day,



c. japonica 'Alba Plena'

Chanel showcases the pure white formal double flower of 'Alba Plena' in its designs.

The first camellias to arrive in the American colonies in 1792 from England were 'Variegata' and 'Alba Plena.' Camellias became a flower of high society here as well, grown by only the wealthiest families with vast estates and conservatories. Many of these varieties were imported from France, Portugal and Italy and reflected the styles of the time: candy striped petals, formal double patterns and large flowers. Cultivars like 'Bella Romana' and 'Ville de Nantes'

continued on page 19



*Skip Vogelsang and Melinda Taylor
unwrap air layers for potting..*



Preparing the air layers.

AROUND THE

Pensacola Camellia Club members gathered on Saturday, October 24, 2020 at their Club's Shade House to plant camellia air layers harvested from area gardens. Over 270 camellias were potted in total.



Lee Vanderpool's job was to fill pots with soil. After preparing 270+ pots, he has a reason to smile.



Potting one up.



C. reticulata 'Emma Gaeta Var.



Dick Hooton and Debbie Brown look over the newly planted camellia air layers.

GULF COAST



John Davy gives two thumbs up on a job accomplished.



Christi Hankins cuts down old fabric ties in preparation for the installation of new shade house material. Though due for replacement, the cloth took a significant hit from Hurricane Sally.

Plant a Confederate Rose to Provide Shade for Camellias

By Dennia Hart, New Orleans, LA



Do you need some shade for your camellias? If so, you may want to consider planting a Confederate Rose next to them to provide some afternoon shade.

In the summer of 2019, I had a problem with some of the camellias I had planted at my mother-in-law's house. They were getting more afternoon sun than they needed and their leaves were getting sunburned. The 'Edna Bass,' 'Daikagura,' and especially the 'Irrational Exuberance' camellias I planted were all suffering from the sun. So I bought some shade cloth and pitched tents over them to protect them from the sun.

In the spring of 2020, rather than covering the camellias again with shade cloth, I planted a Confederate Rose near them to provide shade for the camellias.

The Confederate Rose (*Hibiscus mutabilis*) is also known as the Dixie Rosemallow, Cotton Rose, or Cotton Rosemallow. It is a plant long cultivated for its showy flowers. Originally native to Southeast China and adjoining countries, it is now found on all continents except Antarctica. These plants have a very fast growth rate and can reach heights of 15 feet or more. They grow well in full sun or partial shade and prefer rich, well-drained soil but will tolerate poor drainage. The flowers are usually peony shaped but a single petal shape is also common. The plant is easily propagated from cuttings. At our GCCS Conference in Brookhaven, Mississippi last October, our keynote speaker Dr. Gary Bachman described the Confederate Rose as one of his favorite "ass along" plants.

When I planted the Confederate Rose near my camellias in April, 2020 it was 3 feet tall. By the beginning of September it was 15 feet tall. To say it is a fast grower is an understatement.



Confederate Rose seedling 3' tall

Through the summer of 2020 my three camellias planted near it had plenty of shade and very few sunburned leaves.



Mature Confederate Rose at 15'

Besides being a fast grower, the Confederate Rose has beautiful flowers. And one of the unique things about the flowers is that they change color: from white, to pink, and then to dark pink or red. This can happen in one day or over several days depending on the temperature.

In summary, if you need some shade from the sun for your camellias and you are looking for a fast-growing plant with attractive and unusual blooms, then a Confederate Rose could be your answer.



Confederate Rose flowers open white and change to pink , then to red.



"Camellia Firsts" *continued from page 15*

were highly prized and sold for outrageous sums of money.

In the post Civil War era southern plantation owners turned to ornamental camellias as a means of earning income. Under the guidance of Reverend John Drayton, Magnolia Plantation in Charlestown, South Carolina, would recover from the Civil War by developing the grounds as a public garden and nursery in 1870. Over the following decades Magnolia introduced 150 cultivars and assembled the largest collection of camellias in the U.S.

The first sasanqua, 'Kenkyô,' was introduced in 1695 as per the camellia nomenclature. It has masses of attractive white flowers (sometimes pale pink in bud) in late autumn and winter. The medium sized, single flowers have long, fluted, heart-shaped petals that have a crinkly appearance. The sasanqua is often overlooked in favor of the larger flowered *c. japonica*, but it is a valuable part of the garden landscape. Numerous varieties range in color from snow white to the lightest of pinks progressing to rose and brilliant reds. Sasanquas bloom from late summer into winter with mostly single or semi-double blooms, some delicately

fragrant. While the flowers drop their petals in just a few days making them ill-suited for cut flowers, the profusion of blooms on the plant make a spectacular display.

Camellia x williamsii were the first camellia hybrids, a cross of *c. japonica* and *c. saluenensis* made by J. C. Williams (1861-1839) of Caerhays Estate, Cornwall, England. They first appear in the nomenclature in 1933 with 'Citation,' a pale pink semi-double. 'C.F. Coates' was introduced in 1935. This rose-pink single flower has unique glossy leaves divided into a fishtail of two or three lobes at the tip. The following year, 'Salutation' was introduced as a *saluenensis x reticulata* (Capt Rawes) hybrid having a delicate pink, very large, single to semi-double bloom. The *williamsii* hybrids are very popular in England and Scotland because of their cold-hardiness.

1. Phillips, Gene. "Tea in America" (PDF). *The Camellia Journal*: (September–December 2007) 14–17.

2. Walcott, Susan M. (May 1999). "Tea Production in South Carolina" (PDF). *Southeastern Geographer*. Vol. 39 No. 1, pp. 61–74.

3. <https://www.camellias.pics/index-nomenc-date.php?langue=gb> citing Thomas J. Savige "The International Camellia Register". Fine Arts Press, Sydney, Australia. 1993 Edition in two volumes.

Growing Camellias in the "Cone of Uncertainty"

Hurricane Sally's Impact on Pensacola Camellia Club Gardens

By Lauren Mate, Pensacola, FL

When Hurricane Sally made that last minute turn towards the Florida-Alabama border on Tuesday, September 16, it caught almost everyone by surprise. This destructive storm became the first hurricane to make landfall in Alabama since Ivan in 2004 and coincidentally it did so on its 16th anniversary.

Hurricane Sally reached Category 2 status early that morning, before making landfall at its peak intensity at 04:45 a.m. Central near Gulf Shores, Alabama. Maximum sustained winds were 105 mph, but there were reports of 123 mph gusts. The area between Mobile and Pensacola, took the brunt of the storm with widespread wind damage, storm surge flooding, and 20-30 inches of rainfall, depending on where you lived.

John and I had already decided to stay at our home in Cantonment, Florida, and we watched the hurricane move through our part of the county from our living room couch. The strength of the winds and relentless rain made it quite an event to witness. We certainly had concerns since we have a large old oak and a sweet gum tree very close to our home. Fortunately, the trees held.





When the winds and rain subsided enough to walk our property, reality set in. We had several large trees down on the driveway and heavy limbs everywhere. Our mature sasanquas took the largest hit, losing many branches loaded with flower buds. John and I have a young camellia garden, compared to most, and several of our japonicas took a partial hit from falling limbs, however we did lose a few completely, the most significant being our Raspberry Sherbet graft.

I chatted with other Pensacola growers and most did well. They also had tree limbs and branches down in their gardens, but miraculously they landed in between plants or only did minor damage. After the storm, Skip Volgelsang made a visit to our University of West Florida Camellia Garden and reported it was fine, with only one plant seriously damaged and it was due for replacement this fall.

Our members in Alabama were less fortunate, as Hurricane Sally brought devastation to residential properties in Baldwin County. Al and Vickie Baugh lost multiple 120 year old pines towering 75 feet. Understory trees and camellias were also destroyed.

We are very sad about the camellia losses caused by Hurricane Sally, because we know how much care and attention they are given throughout the year. The Gulf Coast is one of the best areas to grow camellias, but there is also a risk of loss when you are too often in the hurricane cone of uncertainty.



'Lily Pons' Camellia Japonica (U.S. 1955 - Goletto)

by Terri R. Peterson

Every registered camellia of any of the various species has a name. And behind that name is a story. It may be that of a cherished loved one; a whimsical creation based on the appearance or personal history of that particular bloom; an honored friend; national hero; or favored celebrity in any of many fields - politics, medicine, gardeners, entertainers.

The exquisite c. japonica, 'Lily Pons,' was named in honor of the famed operatic coloratura soprano, professionally known as Lily Pons. One of the most beloved sopranos in the United States, she was loved as much for her personality as for her voice.

Born Alice Joséphine Pons, 12 April 1898 in Draguignan, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, France, (near Cannes), she was the daughter of Auguste Pons and his wife, Maria Naso. When Lily was 3 years old, her father made headlines when he attempted to drive a Sizaire-Naudin automobile from Paris to

Peking. He got lost in the Urals, starved in Tibet, and was eventually towed into Peking!

Lily started studying piano when she was 5, and entered the Paris Conservatoire

at age 13. As a teenager, she performed before local audiences throughout France, playing the piano and occasionally singing.

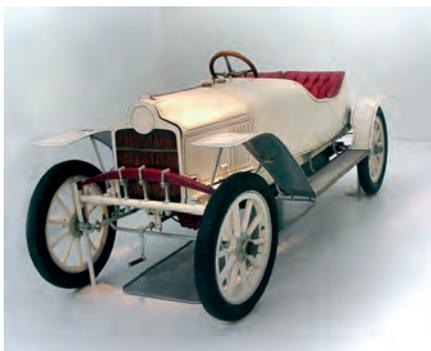
She interrupted her education at the beginning of the World War in 1914, when she moved to Cannes with her mother and younger sister. She played piano and sang for convalescing French soldiers

and French troops at special events. She then joined a comedy troupe at the Theatre des Varietes in France. She was given ingenue roles until she sang the part of a nightingale in a tower. Captivated audiences demanded to know the name of the person behind the rare voice, and soon the nickname, "The French Nightingale," was bestowed upon her.



C. japonica, 'Lily Pons,' listed in the Nomenclature as a "white, medium, single to semi-double with very long, narrow, delicate, trough-like petals surrounding a cluster of long stamens that have a pale greenish cast at base, 1955 - Goletto."

Mr. Barney Goletto, Milwaukie, Oregon, was one of the pioneers in the camellia industry in the Northwest U.S. This 73-year-old (in 1955) nurseryman had been working with camellias since 1924.



When opera singer and entrepreneur, Albert di Gorostiaga, heard her sing, he convinced her that singing was where her true talent lay. She began studying with him at the Paris Conservatory. She made her debut in 1917 in a concert at Paris and continued studying with him 10 more years. Meanwhile she married (November 1923) August Mesritz, a successful publisher, who agreed to fund her singing career.

Lily made her operatic debut in Delibes' difficult *Lakmé* at the Mulhouse Municipal Opera in Alsace in 1928. She was the first soprano who could reach the high "F" written by composer Delibes.

"The Bell Song" from this opera became her signature piece. Lily appeared in many provincial French opera houses where she was building up her repertoire with roles as Gilda in *Rigoletto*; Violetta in *La Traviata*, Olympia in *The Tales of Hoffmann*; and Rosina in *The Barber of Seville*.

She came to the attention of Italian tenor, Giovanni Zenatello and his wife Maria Gay, who assisted her in obtaining an audition with the New York Metropolitan Opera. In 1931, she made her debut as Gaetano Donizetti's Lucia di Lammermoor, the role she was to be associated with throughout her career. Her performance was a sensation, and Lily Pons became a star that night. She remained with the Metropolitan for 27 seasons and is credited with saving the Met from

bankruptcy during the Depression. She also became a member of the San Francisco Opera and the Chicago City Opera, and sang in guest appearances throughout the world.

Soprano voices are often classified according to their agility: a dramatic soprano has a rich, powerful quality; a lyric soprano, a lighter, singing tone; and a coloratura soprano possesses a high range (to the second C above middle C and higher) and extreme agility. Lily Pons specialized in the coloratura soprano position. She concentrated her appearances on a few well chosen roles that fit her style

and temperament perfectly. Because of her ease in the extreme upper register and the weakness of her lower notes, she decided to sing the "mad scene" from Lucia di Lammermoor a whole step higher than the published score (the key of the original French edition).

She was a very small woman, about five feet tall and very slight, known for her 22

inch waist. She personified the essence of the prima donna: always made up perfectly in gowns created by the finest fashion designers. Even when she was at the front lines entertaining the military during WWII, she insisted that she look her best in order to lift the spirits of the soldiers. Although she appeared fragile, she was always in total control of her life and her career. Because of her youthful beauty, she lied about her age in all interviews saying



Lily Pons in title-role of "Lucia di Lammermoor"

that she was born in 1904. The ruse was not discovered until after her retirement.

Her international success eventually crossed over into Hollywood where plush operettas were all the rage. Lily starred in three romantic musical comedies after which she quietly retired from the screen: “I Dream Too Much” opposite Henry Fonda (1935); “That Girl from Paris” (1936) co-starring Jackie Oakie and Gene Raymond, husband of rival Jeanette MacDonald; and “Hitting a New High” (1937) with Oakie and John Howard – all vehicle films produced especially for her to display her talents.

In 1938, Lily Pons married Russian-American conductor, Andre Kostelanetz, (having been divorced from Mesritz), and a beautiful collaboration began. For over three decades, they would appear together in Concert. During this time, Lily became of the highest paid performers in history and recorded for RCA Records. Although this marriage also ended in divorce (1958), they continued a professional relationship, appearing together on several occasions.

Unlike the shallowness of film, radio was an enduring favorite for Lily. And once again she entertained World War II troops in China, Burma, India, Russia, Germany, Italy, Africa, and the Persian Gulf. She did not travel with a huge entourage, often bringing only her pilot and an evening gown or two because she visited some of the most dangerous places on the front. While many of the thousands of service men and women she entertained were not opera enthusiasts, they always remembered the tiny singer who braved the elements to raise their spirits in some of the world’s most godforsaken places. Her willingness to put her own life in jeopardy and endure great hardships made her a hero to many allied soldiers.

Lily Pons had little loyalty to Europe where she felt her talent had been overlooked. Instead, she had a great

fondness for her American audience. Having an innate sense for publicity, she had lunch with the monkeys at the Bronx Zoo, and she adopted an ocelot, named Ita, as a pet. They were attached to each other, but when Ita began to snarl at visitors, it was deemed dangerous and was thus donated to the New York Zoo. She was glamorous, which intrigued the public. She was the Madonna of her day. Little girls begged for dolls modeled after Lily Pons, and adults named everything from towns to locomotives in her honor. When she learned that a town in Maryland named itself after her, she contrived to have all her Christmas cards posted from Lilypons, Maryland. Americans were fond of this exotic star, and she was fond of them, too. In 1940, Lily Pons became an American citizen.

Despite her so-called lack of loyalty to Europe, many French citizens never forgot tiny Lily Pons standing on a balcony of the Paris Opera before a quarter of a million people, many of them soldiers whom she had entertained, sing the “Marseillaise” when France was liberated in 1945. Nor did her native France forget her. The “French Nightingale” was made an honorary consul of France (1934); received the gold medal of the City of Paris (1937); was given the Legion of Honor (1938); and was bestowed the Order of the Cross of Lorraine by Charles de Gaulle.

Lily Pons took her final opera curtain call as Lucia di Lammermoor opposite young, rising Placido Domingo’s Edgardo in 1962. She continued sporadically in concert until 31 May 1972, with her last public performance: a New York Philharmonic Promenade concert under the baton of her former husband, Andre Kostelanetz. She died of pancreatic cancer four years later on February 13, 1976, at the age of 77. She was buried in a family grave in Cannes.



GCCS DONORS to *CAMELLIAN* ENDOWMENT FUND

At the annual meeting in 1993, the Board of Directors of the Gulf Coast Camellia Society approved a fund raising campaign. The purpose of the campaign was to establish an Endowment Fund to make possible the publication of the *Camellian* in full color. Only income from the Fund is used for annual operating expenses. We are a tax exempt organization under IRS section 501(c)3 and your contributions are tax deductible. The Fund helps us to produce and distribute the *Camellian* and still keep the dues very low.

Our membership has been very supportive of our Fund and it had

grown enough by 2008 that we could produce the *Camellian* in full color. This made a huge difference in the appearance of our magazine. The cost of printing, paper and postage continues to rise, so it is important that we continue to grow the fund to keep up with the rising costs. It currently costs about \$6 per copy to print and mail it.

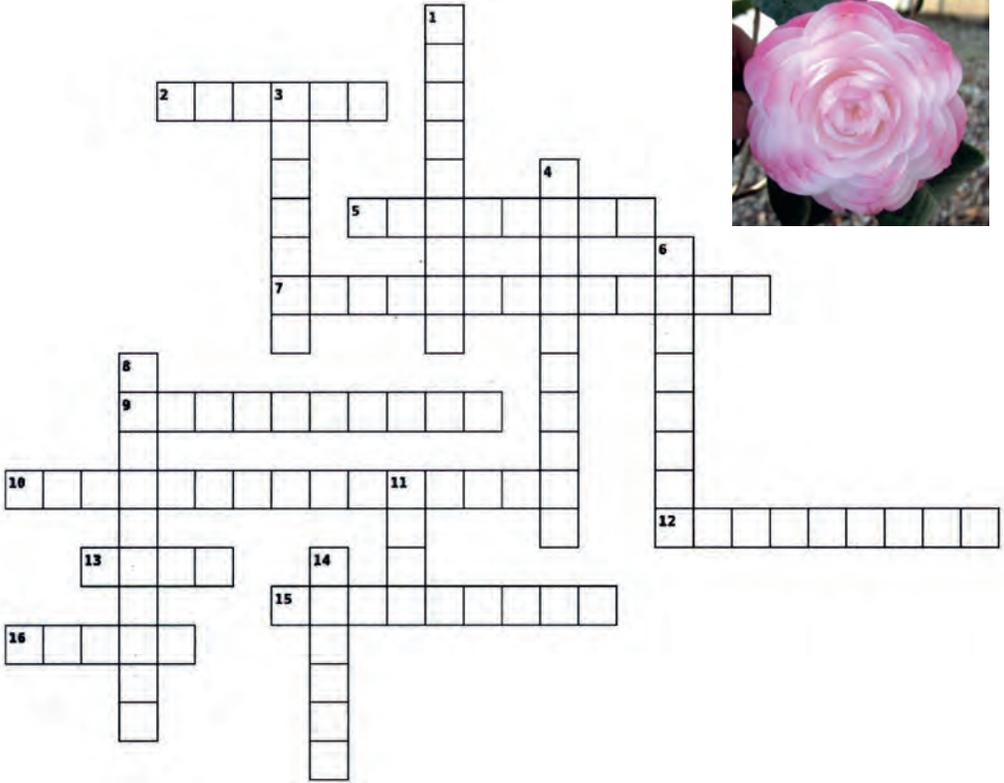
Contributions to the GCCS Endowment Fund can be made to Treasurer Mike Ruth at any time during the year. Your support will be greatly appreciated.

Thanks to the following donors to *Camellian* Fund for 2019 -2020:

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Trent & Kay James	

Camellia Crossword 3

All clues are from the Autumn 2020 issue of the Camellian.



Across

2. handy tool for securing scion to rootstock
5. unusual feature at Magnolia Hill center, MBG
7. c. japonica often used as rootstock
9. Grimm's first registered camellia
10. c. japonica named after a French dessert
12. 1935 McIlhenny intro. named for French General
13. affects tides and grafting
15. japonica started a "run" in Brookhaven
16. Pulitzer Prize winning author from Jackson, MS

Down

1. "hope for the future" for camellia growers
3. Japanese word for camellia
4. early item used for shading grafted plants
6. NOLA member celebrated his 100th birthday
8. cut this when transplanting seedlings
11. 3 yr old Kay removed these from dad's camellia bush
14. needed to legally transact Society business

Camellia Puzzell 3 Answers

Down
 1. Seedlings 3. Tsubaki BeanHamper 6. JoeHorti 8. Taproottip 11. Buds 14. Quorum

Across
 2. Zipfies 5. Chickens 7. KumagaiNagoya. 9. AtkinsGift 10. CherriesJubilee 12. Lafayette 13. Moon 15. GuestStar 16. Wely

In the Winter Garden

What are your camellia plant's leaves trying to tell you?

This chart from the Queensland Camellia Society at Camellia Glenn, Australia, has been around awhile, but it a good guide to help identify problems with your camellias.

Deficiency Chart of Micronutrients

Boron: Discoloration of leaf buds. Breaking and dropping of buds

Sulphur: Leaves light green. Veins pale green. No spots.

Manganese: Leaves pale in color. Veins and venules dark green and reticulated

Zinc: Leaves pale, narrow and short. Veins dark green. Dark spots on leaves and edges.

Magnesium: Paleness from leaf edges. No spots. Edges have cup shaped folds. Leaves die and drop in extreme deficiency.

Phosphorus: Plant short and dark green. In extreme deficiencies turn brown or black. Bronze colour under the leaf.

Calcium: Plant dark green. Tender leaves pale. Drying starts from the tips. Eventually leaf buds die.

Iron: Leaves pale. No spots. Major veins green.

Copper: Pale pink between the veins. Wilt and drop.

Molybdenum: Leaves light green/ lemon yellow/orange. Spots on whole leaf except veins. Sticky secretions from under the leaf.

Potassium: Small spots on the tips, edges of pale leaves. Spots turn rusty. Folds at tips.

Nitrogen: Stunted growth. Extremely pale color. Upright leaves with light green/yellowish. Appear burnt in extreme deficiency.

**THE COLOUR REPRESENTED ARE INDICATIVE.
THEY MAY VARY FROM PLANT TO PLANT**

Editor's Notes

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



My Shade House Blew Down

When four hurricanes hit Louisiana this year, Baton Rouge was lucky. We got only glancing blows and received very little damage. However, Hurricane Delta came the closest and toppled the pear tree that served as a 'shade house' for my grafts, understock and amaryllis. The



Hurricane Delta blew my old pear tree down.

pear tree, which was planted in the mid-1960s, had provided pears and shade for many years. We would eat fresh pears and Ruby would can enough pear halves and pear preserves to last a year. The rest we would give away.

All went well for the first few years. As we were still sort of 'out in the country,' I could protect my pears, pecans, etc., from the squirrels with my shotgun. But soon 'progress' overtook us, and we were annexed into the City of Baton Rouge. One of the advantages of this was that we had a street address instead of a Rural

Route address. Another advantage was that we no longer had to burn our yard waste and a large fee was added to our utility bill to pay for hauling it away. And the next pear season, after shooting a couple of greedy squirrels, a nice city policeman called upon me to tell me that I could no longer shoot the squirrels as it was illegal to discharge a firearm in the City Limits. He offered no aid or solution to controlling the squirrels. I had never realized that my little .410 shotgun with #9 shot was such a menace to humanity. So the 'limb rats' came from miles around to cut the pears (and pecans) off the tree when they were about the size of golf balls. Then they would take one bite from the little pear and leave the rest on the ground. The results - we have had no pears in the last thirty years. Ah well, that's progress.

Several years later, I came home from work and noticed squirrels in my camellia bushes eating the buds. I was furious. I went to the store and bought a pellet air-rifle (technically not a firearm). I gave it to my son, who was in high school at that time, and told him to shoot every squirrel he saw. He thought that was great sport and killed 35 the first week. Sadly he soon tired of the game and gave it up.

But my pear tree still did its job of providing shade for my horticultural endeavors. Sadly, about 5 years ago, the pear tree was struck by lightning

and had been in a slow decline ever since. About half of it was dead, but it still had enough branches to provide the needed shade. It didn't take much of a blow from 'Delta' to turn the old tree over right on top of my grafts. Fortunately a large limb buried itself in the ground and kept the trunk from crushing the camellias. Some grafts had a few broken branches and two had to be repotted due to broken pots, but they were generally in pretty good shape.

the street for the City to haul away. It took them about three weeks to get around to it, but they finally earned their fee that month. So now I have the choice of building a proper shade house or planting a Confederate Rose (as suggested by Dennis Hart in this issue). I think I will try the Confederate Rose first. Save me some seed, Dennis.

[*Editor's note: This boring essay is the result of not having enough material submitted and having to fill two pages at the last minute.*]



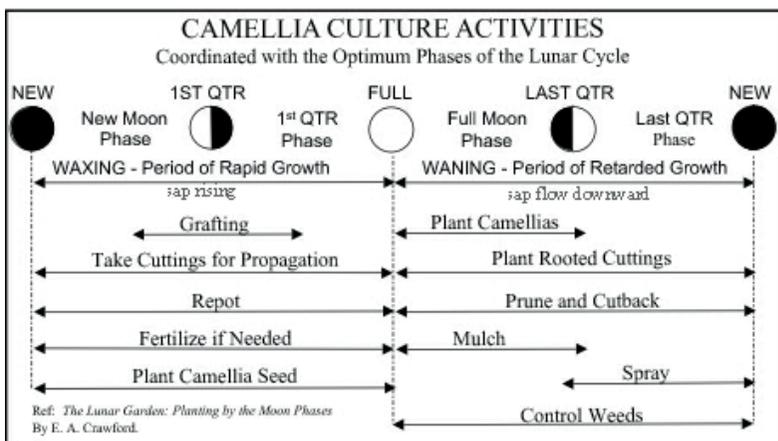
After clean-up

The next week I moved all the potted plants out from under the fallen tree. My son came over with his chainsaw and his wife and in a couple of days we had it all cut up. Ruby prepared lunch for us while we chopped away at the old tree. Then we hauled it all to

Best Grafting Days for 2021

The best grafting days for 2021 are two or three days before and after the first quarter of the moon - 20 January and 19 February. The second best are before and after the last quarter of the moon - 6 January, 4 February, and 6 March. Avoid the full moon and the new moon. When grafting in March, I usually remove the terminal buds and graft only 'blind eyes' to avoid scions that have begun to 'move' which is sometimes not visible.

Camellia Culture by the Moon



Gulf Coast Camellia Society

Invitation to Join



C. japonica 'Gus Menard' 1962, by Ernest Judice, New Orleans, LA



C. japonica 'Elegans Supreme' 1960, W. F. Bray, Pensacola, FL



C. japonica 'Emmett Pfingstl' 1950, Pfingstl Nursery, Montgomery, FL



C. japonica 'Chep Morrison' 1955, Thomas Clower, Gulfport, MS

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: _____

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Camellia synaptica: Large single white with golden stamens and nice fragrance. Blooms mid-season to late. Vigorous upright growth. Origin South Central to Southeast China.
(photo from Mark Crawford)