



**CAMELLIA COLUMNS  
APRIL 2019**

A publication of the Virginia Camellia  
Society  
P.O.Box 15574 Chesapeake, Virginia  
23328

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**A Message from the President**

Dear Camellia Friends,

So much has happened since our last newsletter. In March, I was able to attend my first ACS National Convention in Mobile, Alabama. It was an amazing experience. Sally Simon once shared with me that camellia people were lots of fun. She was certainly correct. I truly enjoyed the opportunity to visit beautiful gardens, meet new camellia loving friends, attend workshops, view an incredible camellia show, and see an area where camellias thrive. I am now even more excited that we will be hosting this event in 2020. Peggy Troyer and the convention committee are meeting, planning, nailing down details, and budgeting it all out. It promises to be a fantastic event.

Our Virginia Camellia Society Facebook page has experienced phenomenal growth. We now have well over 500 followers and more are being added daily. Several other camellia societies have linked to our page and we are able to share news, photos, camellia care tips, etc. I would be remiss if I did not thank the other admins who

actively post content for our page. Mike Chelednik (who spends lots of time in gardens and nurseries in VA and NC) posts beautiful bloom photos from his adventures and from his own garden. He includes history, bloom size, and growth habit information. Dale Shelley keeps us up to date with photos and notes on what is happening at Camellia Cove at the Chesapeake Arboretum and also shares local master gardener information for workshops and learning opportunities. Sandra Godwin shares photos of blooms and helps me post reminders for upcoming VCS advents. As they say, "Teamwork makes the dream work." If you haven't liked and followed the Facebook page, please consider doing so. It's a great way to stay current as our website is not updated as frequently. However, that too, is a work in progress.

Thank you, Maria, for your patience and your willingness to do the VCS Newsletter for the last few years. It is a major task and you do it well.

Our annual picnic will be held on Saturday, May 18th from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. at my home. As always, we will have plenty of Pollard's Chicken. Members are asked to pay \$5 for each person attending (this covers the chicken) and to bring a side dish to share. Paper products, tea, lemonade, and bottled water will be provided. Please bring a lawn chair and your appetite. You may email me at [malia.l.huddle@gmail.com](mailto:malia.l.huddle@gmail.com) or call me at 436-6457 to R.S.V.P. and to get the address and directions. I look forward to hosting and being able to share some great food, conversation, and fellowship with you.

Sincerely,  
Malia Huddle  
VCS President

**VCS Welcomes Our  
Newest Members**

Gary Baker  
Norfolk, VA

Michelle Burt  
Moyock, NC

Betsy Cromwell  
Virginia Beach

Marty & Robin Cross  
Midland, VA

Ramya Doraisamy  
Midlothian, VA

Enie Fick  
Virginia Beach

David Fowlkes  
Burkeville, VA

Dr. Cheryl Lewis  
Elizabeth City, NC

Joe McSweeney  
Virginia Beach

Debora Mosher  
Norfolk, VA

Christina Verderosa  
Newport News, VA

Lynn Wajda  
Cape Charles, VA

Cathy & Carlos Williams  
Chesapeake, VA

Christina Verderosa  
Newport News, VA

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**VCS Board Elections**

It's that time again! We will be electing three members who will each serve a three year term on the VCS Board of Directors. We will also be filling a one-year and a two-year seat due to the resignations of Tom and Carol Kent. We are appreciative of the time and talent they were able to share with us during their time on the board. Please be on the lookout for your ballot as you should be receiving it within the next few days.

**VCS Spring Camellia Show 2019**

The 2019 Spring Camellia Show was a success with 428 blooms being entered and 937 attendees during the day. Our Best Novice Bloom award went to Stephen Sheriff for his Taylor's Perfection. Congratulations Stephen.

To see all the Camellia show results for the 2018-2019 season across the Atlantic Coast and Gulf Conferences:

[https://camellia5.azureedge.net/assets/VCS%20Showresults%203\\_9\\_19%20for%20ACS%20tmckenna.pdf](https://camellia5.azureedge.net/assets/VCS%20Showresults%203_9_19%20for%20ACS%20tmckenna.pdf)

**VCS Camellia Airlayer Workshop**

Despite the cooler weather temps and threat of rain, seventeen able-bodied volunteers turned out to place 188 airlayers in the Hofheimer Camellia Garden and enjoy pizza once their work was done. Their efforts and dedication are greatly appreciated.

On Saturday, August 17th from 9:00 a.m. to noon, we will return to the Norfolk Botanical Garden and meet at the Hofheimer Camellia Garden to harvest and pot the airlayers. Members and friends are invited to join us for this activity.

## ACS 2020 Convention Planning Committee Update

Save the date of **March 13-17, 2020** for the American Camellia Society Annual Conference. The Virginia Camellia Society is hosting the 2020 American Camellia Society Annual Conference on **March 13-17, 2020**.

The ACS 2020 Convention Planning Committee, led by Peggy Troyer, is continuing to create an exciting, educational, and fun event that highlights our local area, history and our beautiful gardens. More details will be provided as they are finalized.

The committee is seeking donations and sponsorships for different events.



Our ACS Convention logo was created by professional artist and art educator, Farryl Essig. It features two gorgeous camellia blooms, Miss Sally and Capt. Doug Simon, both of which were registered by our very own Doug Simon. Our ACS Convention Committee is pleased to honor the many years of service and dedication that Doug & Sally have given to our organization by featuring these blooms on our logo as we prepare to host the upcoming national convention.

## Pruning Camellias

In general gardening terms, pruning is probably the most misunderstood gardening chore, and certainly, the chore that is most likely neglected. When we specifically look at pruning with regards to camellias, this misunderstanding and negligence can be magnified.

Pruning has been described as a "combination of art and science." Pruning a specific plant to look a specific way, involves art in creating a unique definition for a specific plant, and it involves science in understanding the physical growing habits of the plant to be pruned.

The most important reason for pruning camellias is to improve the overall health of the plant. Many times, camellias that have not been pruned in a few years will develop dead or degenerative twigs. Removing the dead and dying limbs will minimize the possibility of diseases such as "dieback" and will also allow the plant to re-concentrate its energies.

In many instances, camellias that have been neglected for a number of years will become infested with insects such as scale. Severely pruning such infested camellias will not only re-invigorate the plant, but will also reduce insect problems and minimize corrective treatments necessary to eliminate such problems.

Another reason for pruning camellias is to re-define the plant's definition within the landscape. Many times, a plant may outgrow its intended size in the landscape, and must be pruned to re-define its purpose. Pruning should always be associated with re-invigorating a plant by allowing it to focus its energies on producing more vigorous branches, foliage, and flowers.

Specific plant objectives require specific pruning techniques. If a camellia is being trained as an espalier, it would need to be pruned differently than if it were being grown as a tree form. Screenings and hedges of camellias would need to be pruned for their specific purpose within the landscape.

It is also important to understand the specific growing characteristic of a certain camellia when pruning that particular plant. For example, certain camellia varieties such as 'Seafoam' are extremely vigorous growers, and should not be pruned to maintain the plant as small shrub.

When pruning established camellias where no labeling is present on a variety to identify it, you need to look at the general growth patterns of the plant to be pruned. These observations should give you a good idea of how the plant tends to grow, and also how you should prune the plant.

When pruning large camellias, pruning can be a general shaping or shearing of the plants or it can be a severe pruning that significantly reduces the size of the plant. In most instances, camellias outlive the gardeners that planted them, and even though they are considered to be slow growing plants, they can become too large for specific areas of the garden.

Many times, gardeners inherit a wealth of camellias in their gardens when they purchase a previously owned residence. Although these camellias may have been lovingly cared for by the previous owner, it may be necessary to severely prune these plants to restore vigor or to create a different definition in the landscape for the new owner of the property.

Severe pruning should be done just after the plant has finished blooming. In some instances where the required pruning

would be drastic, the pruning may be done towards the end of February even if the plant has not finished blooming. Severe pruning of camellias is generally thought to involve the removal of one third to one half of the existing plant. However, in some instances, this severe pruning could be even more drastic. In most cases, the plant should have no problem recovering from such a major pruning, and the pruned plant should quickly begin to grow with vigor.

If severe, pruning is necessary, it must be realized that the plant will shift its focus in the short-run from setting flower buds to growing vigorously, and it is very likely that the camellia will have few if any bloom buds during the season following the major pruning. During the second season following the severe pruning, the camellia should resume normal bud setting, and the plant should have healthier blooms because of the increased vigor in the plant.

It is important to always use sharp tools when pruning camellias. Knives, hand cutters, saws, and shears should be sharpened if necessary before pruning any camellias. A sharp cut will heal quicker than a jagged cut, which will also minimize the likelihood of disease investing a cut during pruning. It is generally recommended to not use power equipment such as gas hedgers to prune camellias.

Prune limbs flush to the feeder branches without leaving nubs. These leftover branches could eventually provide host for disease to enter your camellias. Many gardeners apply a pruning sealant or paint to all cut surfaces after pruning, but that practice is generally not necessary.

Pruning large camellias may be minor or major. Its general purpose is to maintain or restore vigor to the plant. Large

camellias that have been severely pruned have the advantage of a large root system that has excessive capacity, and its roots are capable of supplying all of its energies to a smaller number of branches and foliage. This enables the plant to increase its vigor, and become healthier. Pruning large camellias that are well established will enable the plant to have continued vigor, and lead to many more years of supplying beauty to the landscape.

*Courtesy of The American Camellia Society*

### **Monthly Care Reminders For Your Camellias**

#### **April**

Prune plants that have now stopped blooming. Fertilize with 16-4-8. For a large plant (6ft or higher) sprinkle 1 cup of fertilizer at the drip line. Water in the fertilizer after applying. If scale or insect problems are observed spray plants with dormant oil (Volck)

#### **May**

Now, and through the summer, water if two weeks pass without rain. Mulch plants with pine straw 2-4 inches. If you want to root cuttings, May through August is the best time to do it.

#### **June**

Follow May instructions if you have not already done those things.

#### **July**

Fertilize again with 16-4-8, or use Azalea-Camellia fertilizer 4-8-12 and water it in. It's now too late to prune. You will be cutting off bloom buds for the coming season. Check Air-Layers. If damaged and moss is dry, spray with water and re-wrap.

*Material used in this article courtesy of the Atlantic Coast Camellia Society Website*



## **VIRGINIA CAMELLIA SOCIETY CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2019**

Watch for future updates, cancellations, etc. on our Virginia Camellia Society FACEBOOK page and website.

### **SATURDAY, APRIL 27-28, 2019**

**9:00AM – 4:00PM (Saturday)**

**10:00AM - 3:00PM (Sunday)**

**FRED HUETTE HERB & PLANT SALE**

**(a/k/a: SENSATIONAL SPRING FESTIVAL)**

**Fred Huette Center**

### **FRIDAY-SUNDAY, MAY 3-5, 2019**

**10:00 AM\* - 5:00 P.M.**

**VCS MAY PLANT SALE**

**Norfolk Botanical Garden**

*\*9:00 a.m. for NBG members*

### **TUESDAY, MAY 18, 2019**

**3:00PM – 6:00PM**

**ANNUAL VCS PICNIC**

To be held at the residence of our VCS President, Malia Huddle. For address and directions, please reach out to Malia at 757-436-6457 or [malia.l.huddle@gmail.com](mailto:malia.l.huddle@gmail.com)

### **TUESDAY, JUNE 25, 2019**

**6:00PM**

**VCS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

**NBG, Administrative building**

### **SATURDAY, AUGUST 17, 2019**

**9:00 AM - NOON**

**VCS AIR LAYER HARVEST**

**Hofheimer Camellia Garden**

**Norfolk Botanical Garden**

### **SEPTEMBER DATE & TIME TBA**

**VIRGINIA BEACH MASTER GARDENERS**

**FALL FESTIVAL**

**Hampton Roads Agriculture Research & Education Center**

**1444 Diamond Springs Rd., Virginia Beach 23455**

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2019**  
**VCS AIR LAYER AND PLANT SWAP**  
**Location and time TBA**

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2019**  
**1:00 P.M.**  
**SET-UP FOR FALL SHOW**  
**& PLANT SALE**  
**Admin Building, NBG**

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2019**  
**10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.**  
**VCS FALL CAMELLIA SHOW AND PLANT**  
**SALE**  
**Norfolk Botanical Garden**

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2019**  
**6:00PM**  
**VCS CHRISTMAS PARTY**  
**Fred Heutte Center**

**VCS OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, &  
COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN**

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**The VCS MISSION STATEMENT**

**The Purpose/Mission of the Virginia Camellia Society is to learn and to promote the growth and propagation of the beautiful camellia through meetings, workshops, and through the presentation and sponsorships of annual camellia shows. (VCS 2004)**