



CAMELLIA COLUMNS

October 2019

A publication of the Virginia Camellia
Society

P.O.Box 15574 Chesapeake, Virginia
23328

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A Message from President

Hello Camellia Friends,

It is that time of year again!! Finally, I am starting to see blooms on some of my camellias! I've also been thinking about where to plant the new camellias I've collected over this past year. By the way, the fall season is an excellent time for planting camellias. I have started some de-budding on a few of my camellia plants. I'm hoping that this process will help to promote better blooms. Some people have informed me that they've started gibbing. I have had very little luck with gibbing personally, but others "swear by this process" in that it produces show winning blooms for them. One person informed me that the only camellia plants he did not gib were the ones he accidentally missed.

If anyone is thinking about planting this fall, the VCS has a yearly VCS Air-Layer and Plant Swap. This year, this

event will be held on 10/13/2019 from 2pm-4pm at the Chesapeake Arboretum gazebo. So, bring a snack or beverage to share and whatever plants you may have to swap.

Our work on Camellia Cove continues. We will start clean-up and tagging plants, the ones we are able to identify. Once we have finished the tagging and trails throughout Camellia Cove, I plan on completing a landscape map.

For people that follow Facebook on the Virginia Camellia Society, check out Mike Chelnick's post on the blooms when you get a chance. It is a great source for information.

The Virginia Camellia Society Fall Show and Plant Sale this year will be held on November 2, 2019. It will be located at the Norfolk Botanical Garden - Baker Hall. Please come and bring as many blooms as you can. We are so in need of volunteers for this event. If you can help in areas like plant sales, set-up, break-down, clerking, please contact Dale Shelley or Toni McKenna (Show Chair). This event, as with all other events, is a great opportunity for fellowship and learning. You can also take home a plant or two!

The Virginia Camellia Society is hosting the American Camellia Society 2020 National Convention!! The VCS 2020 Planning Committee, led by Peggy Troyer, has been working very hard and the details are coming together. I would like to thank each and every person for their efforts in this endeavor. We will need everyone's help to make this convention in 2020 a success! Please consider not only

attending this convention, but also helping out with the various tasks in hosting and hospitality as well. Yes, registration has already started for our 2020 convention! Early registration runs through December 15, 2019.

Best regards,
Dale Shelley

The 2019 hands-on Fall Workshop

The Virginia Camellia Society's hands-on Fall workshop was held August 17, 2019 at the Hofheimer Camellia Garden. It was attended by 14 people, an unusual low number, with few novices. The group was successful in removing 149 of the 188 air layers applied in April. The reason for the 20.7% rate of failure is unknown. The low performers were Spring Sonnett with only 2 air layers, Mr. Sam with 1 air layer and Guillio Nuccio had 0. In spite of the poor attendance, the work was completed in an expeditious manner. Thank you for volunteering and completing this work expeditiously.

Respectfully,
T. Winston Gouldin
Education Committee Chairman

VCS Fall Camellia Show and Plant Sale

The 2019 VCS Fall Camellia Show and Plant Sale will be held on November 2, 2019 at the Norfolk Botanical Garden. Please have your blooms entered by 10:00 a.m.

We will have a nice variety of 3 gallon plants for sale at the VCS Fall Camellia Show. The plants are from the Bennett's Creek Nursery, and will sale for \$25.00. Sale begins at 10:00 a.m. Shop early for the best selection.

NBG Liason

VCS welcomes Mary Mantley as the new NGB Liason. Welcome aboard.

Very Cold Hardy Camellias

As a result of interest in camellias that are very cold hardy there have been a number of new camellia introductions that have been tested and proven hardy for Zone 6 plantings. Some of these require a protected location and may occasionally experience damage to flower buds during extreme cold weather. However, the plants have proven hardy after a number of years of testing at various sites in the northeast. Dr. William Ackerman of Ashton, Md., a retired U.S.D.A. plant breeder and Dr. Clifford Parks, a botanist at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill have introduced the varieties described below. Drawings of the forms used in the following descriptions (anemone, peony, etc) are illustrated in Good Garden Varieties.

Fall blooming camellia hybrids

These varieties are the result of crosses made by Dr. Ackerman using a very cold hardy selection of *C. oleifera* with *C. sasanqua* or *C. hiemalis* (fall blooming species) These varieties

bloom in mid-Autumn and are quite attractive for the landscape. They have withstood winter temperatures of -10 °F with little or no damage.

Polar Ice - White, 3-1/2 inch diameter, anemone form. 12 petals and 89 petaloids.

Snow Flurry - White, 3-1/2 inch diameter, peony form. 12 petals and 18 petaloids.

Winter's Beauty - Glowing shell pink with very light pink petaloids near center, 3 inch diameter, peony form. 19 petals and 7 petaloids.

Winter's Charm - Lavender pink, 3-1/2 inch diameter, peony form. 14 petals and 14 petaloids.

Winter's Dream - Pink, 3-3/4 inch diameter, semidouble. 15 petals and 3 petaloids.

Winter's Fire - Medium red pink, 4-1/2 inch diameter, semidouble with upright creased petals, starlike form. 12 petals.

Winter's Hope - White, 3-3/4 inch diameter semidouble. 12 petals.

Winter's Interlude - Clear pink with violet shading, 3 inch diameter, anemone form. 12 petals and 76 petaloids.

Winter's Peony - Medium to light pink, 2-1/2 inch diameter, semidouble to peony form. 36 petals and 14 petaloids.

Winter's Rose - Shell pink, 2 inch diameter, formal double. 28 petals. Slow growth and small leaves.

Winter's Star - Light red purple, 3-1/3 inch diameter, single. 6 petals.

Winter's Waterlily - White, 3-1/4 inch diameter, anemone to formal double. 21 petals and 15 petaloids.

More fall blooming camellia hybrids

Dr. Clifford Parks, his wife Kai Mei and son, David have introduced the following hybrids at their nursery in Chapel Hill, NC.

Survivor - White single flowers on a well formed, vigorous, free flowering shrub.

Mason Farm - Large white flowers tinged with pink on a vigorous shrub.

Courtesy of the Virginia Camellia Society

Planting & Care of Camellias

Site: Most camellias grow and produce better flowers in partial shade. Plants located in full sun often are less dormant during warm periods of the winter and may suffer damage if cold weather follows. Plants in a northern or western exposure of a building or fence or otherwise protected from intense morning sun will usually stand more cold weather than those in an eastern or southern exposure. Choose a planting site with well-drained soil. Do not plant where shade trees with shallow root systems will compete with camellias for nutrients and water. Plants in the sun may suffer scald on the leaves or leaves may appear yellow rather than deep green. Plants of *Camellia sasanqua* generally do better in the sun than those of *C. japonica*.

Soil preparation: Camellias will grow in most well-drained slightly acid soil. A soil pH (degree of acidity or alkalinity) of 6.0 - 6.5 is considered best for camellias. However, they will tolerate a lower pH. A soil test made before planting will tell you what is needed to bring the soil to the desired pH and fertility level. Practically all soils will benefit from the addition of organic matter when planting. Two to four inches of peat moss, leaf mold, ground aged bark, sawdust or cow manure worked into the soil improves both the drainage and fertility of the soil.

Planting: Camellias are generally planted in the late fall through the early spring although they may be set out any month of the year if properly cared for. Adequate moisture is a necessity until the roots become well established in the soil. The newly developed roots will then provide enough moisture for the plant to start growth when spring arrives. Allow a minimum of five feet between plants and preferably more when planting unless planting a hedge when a distance of three feet between plants is recommended. The following steps should be followed when planting a camellia:

1. Dig a hole at least two feet wider than the root ball.
2. Leave soil in the center of the hole undisturbed to prevent settling, as illustrated.
3. Place ball on column of soil. The top of ball should be slightly above soil level. When planting a container-grown plant, wash away the soil from the root

ball with a water hose and rough up the root ball if tight to allow better penetration into the soil.

4. Fill the hole around the root ball with a mixture of topsoil and organic matter.
5. Build a berm of soil around the plant three feet in diameter to prevent water from running off.
6. Mulch with straw or other organic matter around the plant.
7. Water well after planting and soak once a week during dry weather.

The State Extension Service no longer recommends the addition of organic matter to the backfill soil. Research has shown that this does not improve plant growth. They now recommend digging a wide hole and refilling with the removed soil.

Watering and mulching: Camellias prefer for the soil to remain moist, but not soggy, all the time. When watering, the soil should be wet to a depth of 14 to 18". Mulching the surface of the soil around the camellias can help keep the soil cooler and hold moisture. In addition, mulch can help eliminate weeds. Two to four inches of pine straw, bark, or other organic matter makes a good mulch. Do not use peat moss as a mulch as it dries out and can become quite hard to wet. Do not pile mulch too high as this can keep the soil too wet and provide good conditions for root rot.

Fertilizing: Camellias should be fertilized in the spring following

flowering. Organic fertilizers such as cottonseed meal have been used successfully for years. Commercially prepared inorganic fertilizers (such as 10-10-10) will also do a great job. Sprinkle on top of the mulch and allow rain or irrigation to wash into the soil. A soil test will identify any problems or special needs that may exist. Leaving a column of soil when planting will prevent the plant from settling too deeply. Camellias prefer to be planted near the top of the soil.

Courtesy of the Virginia Camellia Society

ACS 2020 Convention Update March 13-17, 2020

Registration for the ACS National Camellia Show in Norfolk, Virginia is open.

Early registration discount offered:
Now to 12/14/2019

Registration dates:
12/15/2019 to 02/15/20.

Please see last page of this Newsletter for the Registration form.

VCS Board Vacancies

We currently have two vacancies on the VCS Board. Please contact our President, Dale, via email: dstfshelley@earthlink.net, if you would be willing to serve. The Board meets quarterly at NBG.

Monthly Care Reminders For Your Camellias

October

Continue Gibbing. Remove air layers if not already done so. Put them in pots with an appropriate growing medium and leave them in pots for 1 year.

Now is the best time to plant new Camellias.

November

Continue Gibbing. Take off air layers if you have not done so.

December

A good time to spray for scale and insects if problems are observed. Most of all - ENJOY YOUR CAMELLIAS FOR THE HOLIDAYS - OFTEN CALLED THE WINTER ROSE!

Materials used in this article courtesy of the Atlantic Coast Camellia Society

VIRGINIA CAMELLIA SOCIETY CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2019

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

**VCS AIR LAYER AND PLANT SWAP
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2019
2:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.
Chesapeake Arboretum
Gazebo**

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

**VCS FALL CAMELLIA SHOW AND
PLANT SALE**

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2019

10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.

Norfolk Botanical Garden

**NBG ANNUAL GATHERING OF THE
GARDENERS**

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2019

6:00PM

Rose Garden Hall

VCS CHRISTMAS PARTY

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2019

6:00PM

Fred Heutte Center

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2023- vacant

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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)

