



**Camellia Columns
October 2018**

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

A Message from our VCS President

Hello Camellia Friends,

The temperatures are finally dropping and the rain has let up a bit. I am hopeful that you did not experience any severe damage during our recent storm event. Unfortunately, our neighbors in the Carolinas bore the brunt of the storm. Some of our regular show attendees were directly impacted by the storm. We continue to wish them well as they assess the damage and make needed repairs.

Fall in the garden is always an exciting time for camellia lovers. While many other plants are beginning a season of rest and recovery, our camellias are gearing up for their busy season. Our sasanquas should be offering up their first blooms soon if they are not doing so already. Our japonicas are forming buds that we may be gibbing and monitoring in preparation for our show.

We will be rounding out the VCS calendar year with several upcoming events that will allow us time for fellowship, learning, and sharing a bit of camellia love. I hope to see many of our members at our airlayer and plant swap, hosted by Bob & Sandy Black, on Saturday, October 13th. It is my understanding that, in addition to plants, we may have chickens and other items being offered this year. Come join us and add something new and fun to your garden/homestead.

Our Fall Camellia Show and Sale will be held at NBG on November 3rd. It is always a time to see lovely blooms and to purchase additional plants to add to your garden. Our judge's dinner on Friday evening will be held in the Holly Room at NBG from 6 to 8:30 p.m. If you'd like to volunteer to assist, please contact Malia by email at malia.l.huddle@gmail.com We always need able bodies for set up and take down.

As we prepare for 2019, the VCS Board would like your feedback as well as your suggestions for future social and educational events. If you have suggestions or ideas, please email me at malia.l.huddle@gmail.com or give me a call at 757-436-6457.

Wishing you great days in your garden,
Malia Huddle, VCS President

**VCS WELCOMES OUR
NEWEST MEMBERS
April-June, 2018**

Denise Gruccio
Norfolk

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Camellia Species

The most common camellias grown as landscape shrubs are Camellia Sasanqua and Camellia Japonica and hybrids of these.

Camellia Japonica - Bloom in winter or early spring. They have large leaves and certain varieties have large flowers, some reaching 5" across.

Camellia Sasanqua - Bloom in the fall. They have smaller, darker leaves. They are hardier, more drought tolerant than japonicas; and some varieties can tolerate full sun.

There are over 250 known species of the genus Camellia. In addition to the sasanqua, japonica and their hybrids, there is also reticulata, hiemalis, vernalis, and their hybrids.

And, of course, as you take in the beauty of your camellias, you can enjoy the beverage made from the young leaves of another well-known species of camellia, Camellia Sinesis, also known as the tea plant.

Courtesy of Gardenia.net

Bloom Time

Sasanqua

Early: Sept. - Oct.

Mid: Oct. - Nov.

Late: Nov. - Dec.

Japonica

Early: Dec. - Jan.

Mid.: Feb. - Mar.

Late: Mar. - April

Courtesy of Fayetteville Camellia Club

These species should be pruned at different times. Since japonicas bloom in early spring, they should be pruned immediately after the flowers fade. Sasanquas flower in autumn, forming flower buds in spring. Prune them in early spring to avoid snipping off flowers. A light shaping is all you need, snipping off branch tips to encourage fullness.

Read more at Gardening Know How: Caring For Camellias: Tips On Growing A Camellia

Camellia Flower Forms

Single: One row of now over 8 peals and having conspicuous stamens.



Semi-double: Two or more rows of petals and having conspicuous samens.



Anemone: One or more rows of large outer petals lying flat or undulating; the center a convex mass of intermingled petaloid (similar to a petal, but smaller and a bit irregular in shape) and stamens.



Pathway to Enlightenment

Peony: A deep rounded flower of two forms.

Loose peoney has loose petals, intermingled with stamens and sometimes petaloids.

Full peoney has convex mass of mixed irregular petals, petaloids and stamens or with no stamens showing.



Rose form double: Overlapping petals, showing stamens in a concave center only with fully open.



Formal double: Fully overlapping, many rows of petals, never showing stamens.



Flower Size

Miniature: 2.5" or less or 6 cm or less

Small: 2.5" to 3" or 6 cm to 7.5 cm

Medium: 3" to 4" or 7.6 to 10.4 cm

Large: 4" to 5" or 10.5 to 12.5 cm

Very large: over 5" or 12.6 cm or over

I have had a Camellia growing here in my lawn since 1996. I was not the one who originally planted this evergreen shrub so consequently, I never knew exactly what it was. I did notice it bloomed in the winter. In truth, I never cared much about it.

I was working full time and had such little time to spend at home anyway. My family and I did enjoy bringing a bloom into the house during the winter from time to time.

Sometime around 2013, I had an impromptu conversation with my neighbor, Larry Barlow, and he told me a little about this bush. Larry informed me I had a Professor Charles S. Sergeant Camellia growing in my lawn. We both started walking casually around his place, and he began showing me the Camellias he had growing on his property. Larry talked about the Virginia Camellia Society at length and he informed me about the membership drive the Society was sponsoring. I must admit, my interest was minimal in joining an organization that would further busy my life! Larry Barlow, is just about the most neighborly fellow a guy could live beside. Larry paid for my membership for both the American Camellia Society and the Virginia Camellia Society. As a new member, I received a free White Empress Camellia from the Virginia Camellia Society. As a new member of the American Camellia Society I received the quarterly issues of the *Camellia Journal plus American Camellia Society Yearbook*. Larry educated me on what the bloom of the White Empress would look like so with great joy I planted it. Unfortunately, my White Empress died that winter. I was

surprised by the loss I felt in losing this plant. Later on, I learned to plant my Camellias not so deep. But an appreciation for Camellias was already being fostered within me. I was hooked. The following spring, my neighbor Larry and I air-layered a number of Camellias in his yard and I was to receive a few of them when they were ready for potting. That fall we harvested the Camellias and I potted my new Camellias using only garden soil. I lost a number of the plants I potted that winter due to the cold weather. I still had some plants that survived and I planted them the following fall. With this first planting, I learned that garden soil is not the best idea when potting Camellias. Most of the garden soil I used fell away from the plant roots as I was trying to plant them. I planted them regardless and only half of these new Camellia plants survived. When food is scarce, I soon discovered that Camellias plants can be a delectable snack for some critters. I lost some of my young plants to foraging deer that winter.

Every year since then, I'd air-layer a few Camellia plants but still had a heavy loss for one reason or another. I even tried buying a few Camellia plants rather than air-layers, but I was still losing too many regardless.

I retired from work in 2016, and at that point I had about 15 Camellia plants growing in the ground and another 10 or so in pots. My green thumb had begun not so green, but I was improving with experience. At this point in 2016, I was also helping out with the Virginia Camellia Society's Camellia Shows in any way I could. I still had a lot to learn but my interest and admiration for the Camellia plant was growing.

In October 2017, I received an email from Mike Andruczyk, ACE-Horticulture Agent in Chesapeake, informing me about the Extension Master Gardeners program. The Extension Master Gardeners are trained volunteer educators. As an educational outreach component of Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech will provide 50 hours of horticultural classes. Upon completion of the program, Master Gardeners provide 50 hours of volunteer community service through the local extension office. The cost for me when I took this course was \$125 for books. Classes started for me in January 2018 and extended through March 2018 with two classes a week, 3 hours per class session. I also submitted to a background check in the event that I would be working as an educator with young children.

We had classes on landscape design, botany, pesticide safety, soils, plant pathology, native plants, pruning, and much more. I quickly discovered that everything I was doing in my own lawn and garden care was either wrong or better yet, there was a better way. Some of the classes that hit home for me – pruning correctly with the correct tools – proved invaluable to me. In the past, whenever I pruned a plant or tree, I butchered it, doing more harm than good. Another area was the correct way of watering the lawn and potted plants. Mixing my own potting mix for potted plants and of course my Camellias was another area that helped a great deal. How about this piece of advice: *Read the label first before purchasing and using lawn and garden products!* I've implemented much of what I've learned in and around my home. I designed and planted a butterfly garden as well as a native plant display. My blueberry

ACS 2020 Convention Planning Committee Update

bushes have never been pruned right in the past. This year, these plants were full of fruit for the first time. My roses also have benefitted from my knowledge as my care and cultivation skills have matured.

Many of my Camellia plants were hit hard this past winter by the prolonged cold here in Virginia. With care and diligence, however, I only lost three!

With the knowledge, experience, and even mentoring I received from both the Virginia Camellia Society and with the Master Gardener Training Program, great winning blooms are on the horizon for me.

If interested in becoming a Master Gardener or would like to learn more go to:

http://www.cmgv.org/aboutus/becomea_mastergardener

Classes will start in January 2019.

Courtesy of Dale Shelley

Camellia Cove at Chesapeake Arboretum

VCS is partnering with the Chesapeake Arboretum for the care and maintenance of the Camellia Cove. Our 1st Vice President, Dale Shelley, is leading this effort. Several workdays have been scheduled to focus on pruning, clearing, and restoring that area. We need some folks with time and tools to come out and help us. Please contact Dale if you are interested and willing to assist.

The ACS 2020 Convention Planning Committee, led by Peggy Troyer, is working diligently to create an exciting, educational, and fun event that highlights our local area and history as well as showcasing our beautiful gardens and horticultural resources.

The committee is seeking donations and sponsorships for different events.

This year we are looking for ideas for activities and/or programs that children of varying ages might be interested in participating in. Please let us know if you have ideas.

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

Airlayer and Plant Swap

Bring a snack to share, your favorite beverage and a lawn chair. Come and enjoy some social time trading plants and other items with your fellow VCS members.

More details listed under events.

PHONE TREE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Great communication is key for every successful volunteer organization. Please call or email Malia if you would be willing to help call members as needed with event reminders. It would be fabulous to split the membership list up between three or four callers so we can keep our members in the know.

2018 UPCOMING EVENTS

Watch for updates on our website vacamelliasociety.org or on our Facebook page.

VCS AIRLAYER AND PLANT SWAP

**Home of Bob and Sandy Black
Windsor, VA**

Saturday, October 13, 2018

1:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.

Email Bob Black for address

VCS FALL CAMELLIA SHOW AND PLANT SALE

Norfolk Botanical Garden

Saturday, November 3, 2018

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

Plant sales will begin at 10:00 a.m.

VCS HOLIDAY PARTY

Fred Heutte Center, Norfolk

Friday, December 7, 2018

6:00 P.M.

NBG ANNUAL GATHERING OF THE GARDENERS

Norfolk Botanical Garden

Monday, December 17, 2018

6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

R.S.V.P. to Malia by 12/10.

VCS BOARD MEETINGS

6:00 P.M. NBG, Room: TBA

January 8, 2019

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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)