

# OCALA CAMELLIA SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Patrick Andrews, Editor

**HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY!**

March 2018

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## **NEXT MEETING SET FOR THURSDAY, MARCH 1, 2018**

The next meeting of the Ocala Camellia Society will be on Thursday, March 1, 2018, at the Community Room at the Ocala Police Station located at 402 S. Pine (Pine Plaza) in Ocala. Park in front of the police station and enter in the side door to the right before you get to the main front door.

We will meet at 6:00 for our end-of-the-year potluck dinner and socializing, and the meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m.

Our guest speaker will be Kristen Kozelsky, owner of Indigo & Co. Photography, a studio that offers a luxury photography experience crafted specifically for women and couples in their 30s and beyond who believe in artistry, exploration, connection and truth, and who are looking for something unique from their photos. Kristin is excited to help camellia lovers learn to take photos of their flowers that make them say 'Yes! This is it!'

Kristen would like to offer a hands-on experience and encourages our members to bring whatever device they use most frequently for photos - whether that is their phone or a handheld camera - so that we can practice together.

Bring in as many flowers from your garden as possible (in containers would be super convenient) in order to have blooms to use for practice.

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The nominating committee submitted the following slate for election and installation at the March meeting:

President – Jill Reed

Vice-President – Susan Dunn

Secretary – Zlata Sabo

Treasurer -- Laura Perdomo;

Directors -- Patrick Andrews, Charlotte Bunyan, Mike Dorsey, Ann Greenwood, Joe Sabo, Kathryn Sickling, Judy Vaughn, Bob Weidman, and Cindy Witmer

See you at the meeting!

## **SILVER SPRINGS STATE PARK WORKDAY**

Susan Dunn, chair of the Silver Springs State Park Camellia Garden committee, has announced that there will be a SSSP garden workday on Saturday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, from 9:30 a.m. to noon.

Susan has requested that they drop off a load of mulch (pine bark) for us to spread, but Susan hasn't confirmed that yet. There will be the usual weeding and cleanup chores, and if we get the mulch, we can have that to work on, too.

## **CAMELLIA INFORMATION ON THE ACS WEBSITE**

Be sure to visit the American Camellia Society website regularly for up-to-date information about everything having to do with camellias: show dates, judging seminars, meetings, workshops, etc. The website is [www.americancamellias.org](http://www.americancamellias.org). Also like them and follow them on Facebook. The more stories you "share" the more people will be exposed to this wonderful organization.

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Jill Reed, President

One of our members asked this question: "How long does it take for a newly planted camellia to 'take off'?" I've been wondering that myself for some time! I started adding camellias to our property right after I joined the OCS in January 2013. Some of the camellias I have planted are growing nicely and blooming well, whereas others seem to be in stasis and a few have died. Also, some of blooms don't have the intensity of color that they should have. I've been wondering whether it is the soil, the sunlight, or water supply that accounts for the variation and the "poor doers."

So – at last – I decided to do a full soil test on the native soil from several locations where I have planted camellias, to determine what contribution the soil chemistry is making to the variations in growth. I did an experiment – collected soil samples from 6 locations from a strip of land about 30 ft wide by 150 yards long. I had the full gamut of tests run that the UF soil lab offers.

The upshot - there is significant variation in the soil analyses from this small strip of land. The pH values ranged from 5.6 to 6.8, with 3 areas in the optimal pH range for camellias (6.0-6.5). Phosphorus is high everywhere and there is no magnesium deficiency anywhere. However, in 5 of the 6 sites, copper content was zero or very low, and I'm wondering if this is the reason I have some disappointing red/purple colors, since it apparently is not due to magnesium deficiency. Manganese was borderline in a couple of places. Finally, zinc was very high in 2 of the 6 sites. I was interested in this because some time ago I read an article in the ACS 1990 yearbook by Clifford Parks, who found high soil zinc levels will cause decline and dieback in camellias, and in his case, it was caused by potting soil mixed in galvanized containers! The places where zinc tested really high were sites where 1) we had a piece of old metal roofing on the ground for years under our firewood stack, and 2) previous owners had a "midden pile" where I discovered all manner of buried rubbish, including metal pipes and car parts. The camellia planted in the "old woodpile" spot died. I never planted in the "midden pile," but planted around it, and 3 of the nearby camellias either died or look pitiful.

The bottom line – pH needs adjustment in a couple of areas, no phosphorus or magnesium is needed anywhere, potassium and maybe manganese are needed in some areas, copper is needed everywhere except the toxic midden pile, and watch out for zinc contamination of soils where galvanized metal has been! I'll let you know in a year if these adjustments make a significant difference in the health of my camellias!

Minutes from February 1, 2018 Ocala Camellia Society Meeting  
Zlata Sabo, secretary

The February meeting of the Ocala Camellia Society started with refreshments at 6:30 p.m.

President Jill Reed officially opened the meeting at 7:00 pm with a warm greeting to our newest club members. At that time all club members, old and new, introduced themselves. We were all very happy to have our new members join us for their first club meeting.

Vice-president Susan Dunn introduced Craig Littauer, the Silver Springs State Park Services Specialist, as our guest speaker. Craig spoke of the changes and park improvements that have happened in the last 5 years. He stated the Park's mission: to provide resource-based recreation, while preserving, interpreting and restoring natural and cultural resources. He underlined that the Camellia Garden is in the group of cultural resources. He showed us a power point presentation with controlled burning, Paradise Ballroom remodeling, and other changes made in gardens.

Susan called for the work day on Friday morning. She also announced that on the next meeting our guest speaker will be a photographer, who will teach us how to take good photos of our flowers.

The minutes from the January meeting were approved as printed in the newsletter. Treasurer Laura Perdomo reported that the club made \$4,600 from the sale of the plants, which should easily cover costs of the show.

Jill suggested that the Executive Board meet in April or May, while all is still fresh in our minds. She also reminded us to submit our volunteer hours to Craig at SSSP. Jill then asked Marge Hendon, chair of the nominating committee, to submit the slate of officers, as follows: President Jill Reed, Vice-President Susan Dunn, Secretary Zlata Sabo, Treasurer Laura Perdomo, and Directors Patrick Andrews, Charlotte Bunyan, Mike Dorsey, Ann Greenwood, Kathryn Sickling, Judy Vaughn, Bob Weidman, and Cindy Witmer.

Patrick announced their Open House on 2/4/28, inviting all to come. He also said our club made a donation to the ACS earlier this year.

For the next meeting we are asked to bring our flowers plants to share for the photography talk.

For the two-minute tip Jill shared several questions to discuss: 1. which plants are easier to plant, 2. how long does it take for the plant to take off, and 3. when to prune them.

The meeting was adjourned and the plant auction began.

## SPOTLIGHT ON JOE SABO!



Joseph Sabo was born in Yugoslavia to Hungarian parents. When he was 19 years old he met Zlata, and they married several years later. Right after the birth of their son, they emigrated to the United States. Neither one of them spoke English, but in spite of it, in late 1972, they left Cleveland, Ohio and all their friends from the old country, and moved to Ocala.

Sometime in January 1973, on their first visit to Silver Springs, Joe noticed beautiful large flowers he had never seen before. This was his first encounter with camellias. He vowed then, that one day flowers like this will bloom in his yard.

Joe started working with Link Brothers, a well-established firm in Ocala. After a few years he was offered a job with Driltex, a large international company that built rigs for the mining industry. He was a plant manager until the company moved to Williston and Joe, not willing to travel or move, accepted a job with Emergency One, where he became a manager for the Aerial Ladder Department. Under Joe's leadership they developed the manufacturing of the aerial ladder for fire rescue made of extruded aluminum, which made them a leading fire truck company in the USA.

Several years later Joe accepted a job as a consultant for the new fire truck company in Pennsylvania. After a while, tired of constant traveling, he opened his own small engine business. All the while, he was buying and planting camellia plants. He discovered Bob Wines Nursery and then later Jim Smith's Old South Nursery, and that's where all his extra money went. He would come home with a large 30-gallon camellia on his truck, and with a big smile brag to Zlata what a great deal he got for it, to which she would respond "Don't tell me, for whatever you paid for it, it was still too much."

After joining the Camellia club, he learned a lot and continued buying and later propagating camellias, to the point that he would leave his assistant at the shop, and he would come home for several hours to play with his camellias. He was constantly clearing woods and expanding the camellia garden. When he retired, it was all he would think of - at one point he had over 450 different camellia varieties planted around the house.

For a long time, his favorite camellia was Black Magic. Now, who knows? He likes them all. Right now, Joe doesn't push himself as hard as before, but still he has already managed to plant over 100 camellia plants in our new homestead. It is a love affair that will never end.

## **AUCTION PLANTS FOR THE MARCH MEETING**

### **MY DEBBIE**

(Japonica, medium, formal double, light red to dark red)



### **ALCYONE OSTBERG**

(Japonica, large to very large, semidouble to peony, deep pink)



**Camellia sinensis** (tea plant) This one is from Nepal being tested in the US



## CAMELLIA CULTURE – SPRING AND SUMMER

**GRAFTING:** There is still plenty of time for grafting, although all grafting should be completed before new growth begins. Scions will keep in a sealed plastic bag in the refrigerator for three weeks or longer, so even if you aren't ready to graft immediately, cut your scions now, before they start to grow, and store them for later. Once the growth bud has begun to feather it is too late to be used as a scion.

**SPRAYING:** Spider mites and scale insects can still be a problem at this time a year, so keep a close eye out for them. Spider mites cause the leaf to appear bronze, particularly along the central rib, and can ruin the look of the foliage. Scale insects can be seen on the lower surface of leaves and result in yellowing and dropping of the leaves. You can spray with chemicals such as Orthene to control mites, but a better, more environmentally friendly solution would be to spray with insecticidal oil (such as Super Fine or Ultra Pure) or insecticidal soap. These oils and soaps kill mites and scales but be sure to coat both sides of the leaves, and do not spray during hot temperatures. Check with local camellia growers for other spraying tips and to find out what they spray with to control these insects.

**PLANTING:** You can still plant and move camellias, as they are still dormant. Potted camellias can be planted at any time of the year, but remember to water at least twice a week. Be sure to plant them above the soil level to allow for settling. Never plant a camellia at a level lower than it is growing in the pot.

**MULCHING:** Camellias should be mulched to help keep the roots cool and to help the soil retain water. Mulch also cuts down on the need to weed, while contributing to the organic content of your soil.

**WATERING:** Watering is extremely important during the blooming season, as flowers consist mostly of water, and during our usually dry spring, when camellias start to put on a major flush of growth. A well-watered plant will bloom much more freely and the flowers will be much larger if the plant is watered well. It is very important to water regularly during any dry periods. Camellias should receive a deep watering (1 inch) once a week. This is true year-round, but is more crucial during dry periods.

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**FERTILIZING:** It's time to start thinking about applying the first round of fertilizer to your camellias. You can use any fertilizer, but a Camellia, Azalea, Gardenia fertilizer is ideal. Be sure to spread the fertilizer out to the drip line. Many local camellia growers fertilize during the first week of April, the middle week of May, and the last week of June or first week of August. Other gardeners fertilize at the beginning of each season, so this would mean the first application would be in the latter part of March. Your last application of fertilizer should probably be in late August or early September, as fertilizing after this may cause camellias to grow again, and the new growth may not harden off before cold weather starts. Some growers like to apply a light application of a low-nitrogen fertilizer in the fall to stimulate root growth.

**PRUNING:** There is plenty of time to prune, but it is best to prune before growth has begun in earnest. Prune for shape, to limit the size, and to produce new growth for next season's flower buds. Be sure to remove dead wood. You may wish to seal large cuts with a commercial tree sealer. After pruning one plant, sanitize your clippers with a mild bleach solution before pruning another plant.

**AIR LAYERING:** Air layering can be done at any time where temperatures remain above freezing. Some people air layer as early as February, but many wait until May, when the parent plants are actively growing and the bark peels away easily. Air layers done in May are generally ready to harvest by August and September, and on into the fall for some slower-rooting varieties.

**CUTTINGS:** Cuttings are generally taken during the summer, around June or July, when they will root quite readily. Reticulatas are the hardest to root (and many varieties won't root from cuttings at all), so it's a safer bet to stick with japonicas and non-reticulata hybrids. Take cuttings with about four leaves; snip off the lower two leaves and cut the others in half. Trim the base just below a leaf axil, dip it in a rooting hormone, and insert the cutting into a small pot filled with a moist, sandy potting medium. You may want to put the pot in a plastic bag (to keep the air around the cutting humid) and place in a shaded spot. Check the bag regularly and add water when needed. The roots don't develop immediately, but they should form within 4-6 weeks on some varieties, longer on others. Cuttings can be taken at other times of the year, too, but rooting takes longer.

**OCALA CAMELLIA SOCIETY**  
**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The officers of the Executive Committee of the Ocala Camellia Society for 2017-2018 are:

- President: Jill Reed, 352-591-4343
- Vice-President: Susan Dunn, 352-694-4461
- Secretary: Zlata Sabo, 352-237-5537
- Treasurer: Laura Perdomo, 352-625-6467
- Directors: Patrick Andrews, 352-895-8762  
Charlotte Bunyan, 352-624-3022  
Ann Greenwood, 352-347-9992  
Marge Hendon, 352-625-3510  
Joan & Don LaClair, 352-693-5047  
Judy Vaughn, 352-502-3837  
Bob Weidman, 352-840-3911

**OCALA CAMELLIA SOCIETY**

The Ocala Camellia Society meets on the first Thursday of each month, September through March, at 6:30 p.m., at the Community Center of the Ocala Police Department, 402 S. Pine, Ocala, Marion County, Florida. Members, friends, and interested gardeners from the general public are invited to attend. Members are encouraged to bring friends.

- March 1, 2018, Ocala Police Department  
September 6, 2018, Ocala Police Department  
October 4, 2018, Ocala Police Department  
November 1, 2018, Ocala Police Department  
December 6, 2018, Ocala Police Department  
January 3, 2019, Ocala Police Department  
January 26-27, 2019, Ocala Camellia Show, **Paradise Ballroom, Silver Springs State Park, 5656 E. Silver Springs Blvd., Silver Springs, FL**  
February 7, 2019, Ocala Police Department  
March 7, 2019, Ocala Police Department

**OCALA CAMELLIA SOCIETY**  
**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2018-2019**

The Ocala Camellia Society is a local society, affiliated with the American Camellia Society, whose members meet the first Thursday night of the month, September through March, and presents an annual camellia show during January. The monthly meetings are devoted to various cultural aspects of camellias. Annual dues are \$10 for individuals and \$15 for couples. Dues are collected in September for the camellia season. Please complete the application below for membership in the Ocala Camellia Society.

OCALA CAMELLIA SOCIETY  
Single Membership ( ) \$10.00  
Couple Membership ( ) \$15.00  
Corporate Membership ( ) \$50.00

Total Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Application \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Mr. \_\_\_\_\_

Ms./Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: Home ( ) - \_\_\_\_\_ Cell ( ) - \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to Ocala Camellia Society and send to: Laura Perdomo, Treasurer, Ocala Camellia Society, 11960 NE 52nd Place Road Silver Springs, FL 34488.