

Atlantic Coast Camellias

Journal of the Atlantic Coast Camellia Society

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Camellia Japonica "Miss Lillian"

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From the Cover

“Miss Lillian” front page photo taken
by J. D. Thomerson

“Miss Lillian” was registered in 2001 by Lillian Gordy of Ocala, FL. It is a Small - Medium, Formal Double that blooms midseason.

The bloom is creamy white with petals bordered pink. Occasionally, the blooms are pale pink with darker pink on the petal borders.



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***Mark Your Calendars
ACCS Convention
October 2 - 3, 2023
New Location: Savannah, GA***

See Details on Page 5

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

by Fred McKenna

“To improve is to change, to be perfect is to change often.” — Winston Churchill

I was happy to see some great camellia shows this spring, both in terms of increased attendance and the number and quality of the blooms presented. Of course, with the camellia shows comes the opportunity to fellowship with our friends. I want to congratulate ACS and the Middle Georgia Camellia Club for the very enjoyable ACS National Convention held at Massee Lane this past February. Great hospitality and a fun agenda made for a grand and memorable event.

Speaking of conventions, I am excited to report that ACCS has a great convention planned. It will be held Monday, October 2nd, and Tuesday, October 3rd, at the Embassy Suites by Hilton Savannah Airport. The hotel is new, and the hotel staff are bending over backwards to make sure all arrangements go off smoothly. The convention site is about 15 minutes from the riverfront, and we hope many of you decide to stay a day or so either before or after the convention to spend time in this very historic city. The hotel has agreed to offer the same convention room rates from September 30th to October 5th. A huge thanks to Marsha Zeagler, Gene Phillips, Carol and Jerry Selph, and Fred and Sandra Jones, who did so much to organize and plan this great event. They even stayed overnight in the new hotel to assess the accommodations and they were very pleased with what they experienced.

I have a challenge to make; we need to get the word out and invite as many as possible to the convention. To the ACCS State Directors, please send out via email an invite to the convention to your respective camellia clubs. To those members in Florida and Georgia who have not attended an ACCS convention before because of distance, we hope you consider attending this convention.

Speaking of State Directors, they are the vital communications link with our individual camellia clubs and their members. At the general membership meeting this October, we will be electing state directors for the following states: Maryland, North Carolina, Georgia, and Mississippi. Once elected at the 2023 convention, these directors will serve a two-year term ending at the 2025 convention. Please consider being a State Director; it is a very important position to ACCS.

Toni and I wish each of you a safe summer. We look forward to seeing all of you in Savannah.



Fred and Toni McKenna

REGISTER NOW

2023 Fall Atlantic Coast Camellia Society Convention

October 2 - 3, 2023 (Monday and Tuesday)

Embassy Suites by Hilton Savannah Airport

145 West Mulberry Blvd., Savannah, GA 31407

To Register for the Conference, see Hotel Rates/Reservation Information & many other details about the conference; please visit the ACCS Website at:

<http://www.atlanticcoastcamelliasociety.org>

(Below is the Conference Schedule)

Monday, October 2, 2023	
6:30 - 8:30 a.m.	Complimentary Hotel Breakfast for Sunday Night Guests
10:30 a.m. - Noon	ACCS Board Meeting — Hotel Meeting Room
	LUNCH ON YOUR OWN
1:30 - 3:30 p.m.	Judges' Re-Accreditation (with Geary Serpas & Carol Selph)
5:00 - 8:00 p.m.	Welcome Party 5:00 p.m. — Low Country Boil 6:00 p.m. Coastal Georgia Botanical Gardens
Tuesday, October 3, 2023	
6:00 - 8:30 a.m.	Breakfast on Your Own/Complimentary Hotel Breakfast
9:00 - 10:00 a.m.	Bloody Marys/Screwdrivers/Coffee Bar (Hotel Meeting Room)
10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	General Meeting Followed by Auction (Hotel Meeting Room)
12:30 - 2:30 p.m.	LUNCH ON YOUR OWN
2:30 - 3:30 p.m.	Education Program — Speaker: Bob Black Topic: "Growing Protected Show Flowers in Virginia"
3:30 - 4:30 p.m.	Education Program — Speaker: Paul Greenway Topic: "Backyard Camellia Growing"
6:00 - 7:00 p.m.	Refreshments/Open Bar (Hotel Meeting Room)
7:00 - 9:00 p.m.	Dinner & Guest Speaker — Speaker: J. D. Thomerson Topic: "What We Learned From the December 2022 Freeze"
Wednesday, October 4, 2023	
6:00 - 8:30 a.m.	Complimentary Breakfast - Hotel

I've Been Thinking – and Asking Why and Why Not?

By J. D. Thomerson

Upon reading the articles of past ACCS Editors from many years ago, I noticed that many of their articles dealt with somewhat controversial topics – and the editors did this on purpose to get camellia folks talking and excited about things. Now, by nature, I am shy and normally try and avoid controversy or even friendly disagreement, but I am going to go out on a limb with this article and try and bring up some controversial topics. Please understand, I do this just to try and get everyone thinking and excited about camellias.

Sometimes I just think too much, or maybe it's that I just want to be contrary. At least Kay tells me so, and she is right. I like to think about all kinds of topics and ask "Why" or perhaps "Why Not?" Why this and why that? Why a Non-Retic Hybrid category? Why not a Non-Japonica Hybrid or Non-Sasanqua hybrid category? What will happen when we have many camellia azalea hybrids blooming naturally in summer and early fall (and yes, they are here, and more are coming) -- will we need a Non-Camellia Azalea Hybrid category? What percent minimum of reticulata genes makes it still a retic? If one variety that is 50% retic is crossed



Wenqing's Summer Dream — C. Azalea x Dr. Clifford Parks (Ungibbed, Aug. 2022)



**Summer Wind 'n Waves
(Blooming Ungibbed, August 2022)**

with another variety that is 100% Japonica, by my math, that makes the new seedling 25% retic and 75% something else. Well, what if that variety is crossed with another variety, that is, say, only 25% retic – well, my math is not very good, but that seedling actually has a small percentage of actual retic DNA. So, is it still considered a reticulata hybrid when entering it in a show – and, if so, does that really make good sense?

Over the years, I have collected and grown over 500 camellia seedlings. I collected most of these seeds from Hulyon

Smith's old camellia garden, Mark Crawford's camellia garden, and my own camellia garden. Each of these camellia gardens have a mix of Japonica, Reticulata, Sasanqua, and various Hybrids. All of these seeds were chance seedlings, and when I first started collecting seeds, I did not record the name of the mother seed plant. This being a new hobby, I did not even know if any of my seeds would sprout and grow. In later years, I would try and record the mother seed plant name, but by the time I filled up all four pockets of my jeans with seeds, I would forget what seeds



J. D.'s Pink Hybrid

were in what pocket. Then, there are the birds and squirrels that steal the labels of many of my seedlings. Of my 500-plus seedlings currently growing, I know the seed mother for perhaps 10% at most. But seven or eight of these unknown seedlings are very nice, and many camellia folks have said they deserve to be registered. Well, how do I register them? If you don't know either parent, then by default, do you register it as a Japonica? Well, I guess so unless it has leaves and a bloom that looks "re-tick-ish," and then I assume you could register it as a retic hybrid — or maybe not, I don't know.

I have one seedling plant that is probably my very favorite, and Mark Crawford and I both call it J.D.'s Pink Hybrid (see photo above.) I have no idea where the seed came from and no idea what type of camellia was mama or daddy. But, it has an odd long narrow leaf, and the bloom has an iridescent glow and does not look like the typical Japonica in the leaf or bloom. It does not have any characteristics of a Reticulata, so we both think it is a Non—Retic Hybrid of some kind. So when it gets registered, how should it be listed? There is not a "Don't Know" category, and I don't want to pay big bucks to have biologists study it under a microscope.



Sasanqua/Reticulata Hybrid — Maybe

I have another seedling I like very much that I call my Sasanqua-Retic Hybrid (see photo to the left and on the back cover of this journal.) I base this on a leaf that looks much like a sasanqua (but a bit larger), a very early bloom, a mass bloomer with a bloom that is larger than the typical sasanqua, and a bloom that has a bit

of curvy petals like most reticulatas. Do I know for sure this is part *Sasanqua* and part *Reticulata*? Well, no, but my “gut” thinks it is a *Sasanqua* x *Reticulata* cross. Likewise, I have hundreds of other seedlings I also don’t know the parents for, and since they look like a typical *Japonica*, I assume that is all they are, but I can’t guarantee you they don’t have some *sasanqua*, *retic*, or hybrid genes.

The vast majority of registered camellia varieties are chance seedlings. I wonder how many past camellia growers just registered their chance seedlings as *japonica*, *sasanqua*, or *reticulata* based on overall looks or “gut feeling.” Later, these varieties became parents of other seedlings, so if the first parentage was registered wrong, the new seedling would also be. And, I have not even mentioned the high chance that many growers that did record one or both parents of their seedlings probably made some careless mistakes of some kind especially considering seedlings are moved from one pot or location to another spot and then most likely another spot. And, if you are dealing with hundreds of small plants and labels, I know I would get several mixed up.

Now, with the *Camellia Azalea* species and its hybrids being crossed with other varieties and species -- and the John Wang *Retic-Hybrids* that are often only 25% *reticulata* being crossed with other non-*retic* varieties making the camellia really only about 12.5% *reticulata* there might be a need for additional camellia show categories or the elimination of Non-*Retic Hybrid* or redefinition of the *Reticulata hybrid* category. I don’t know; as I said at the beginning of the article, I am just thinking.

Switching topics just a bit but still thinking about Why and Why Not? Why do most shows give an award for Best White? I know some growers really like the whites – but



**Leonne Summerson
Best White at 2022 Perry Show**

white blooms are both Kay’s and my least favorite. I like dark red blooms the best – why not a Best Red award or perhaps a Best Striped award? And I am very serious about this one – What about a Best Variegated Bloom award? Most growers at camellia shows seek out blooms with great variegation, and I think this would be a neat award category. Oh, and what about a Best Formal Double award – I like that one also, but few shows have this category.

Most camellia shows I attend combine the Best Seedling award with the Best Mutant/Sport Award. First, I wish we would drop the term Mutant and just

GUT FEELINGS



always go with Sport. Mutant just sounds like a horrible word, whereas a Sport is looked upon in a positive way. But my issue with combining Seedlings and Sports is that they really are two very different things. Yes, they are both ways that a new camellia can be registered but other than that, how you obtain a Seedling and a Sport are nothing alike. Here comes a long run-on sentence, but I don't know how to fix it. The work that goes into growing a seedling: perhaps hand-pollination, collecting seeds, sprouting seeds, taking care of the seedling for 6 – 10 years or more, all while knowing that the chances of that one seedling being good enough

to register is very unlikely is way, way, way more demanding and requires much more skill than simply noticing one day that one of the camellias in your yard all of a sudden has a different looking bloom.

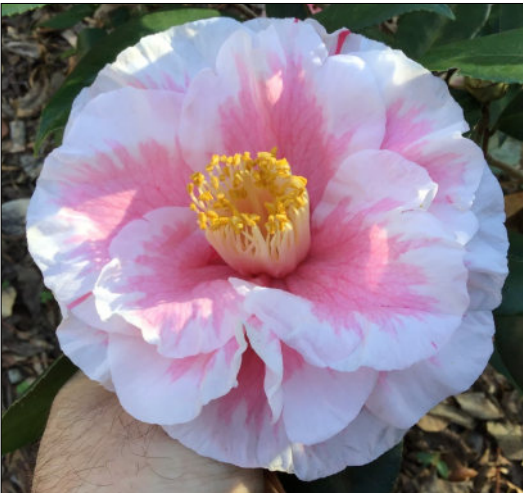
A sport is something that just happens by nature and luck. I am not against giving a Best Sport Award – that is a neat thing to happen, and many sports are beautiful and so deserving of registration. I think about all the Betty Sheffield Sports and the Sweetie Pie sport named Louise Fitzgerald, which is probably my favorite camellia bloom. But, I think the Best Seedling award should be a very special award only for seedlings. And, to be a bit more controversial, I think the Best Seedling award should be given to the individual (if still alive) that originated the seedling and brings their own seedling to the



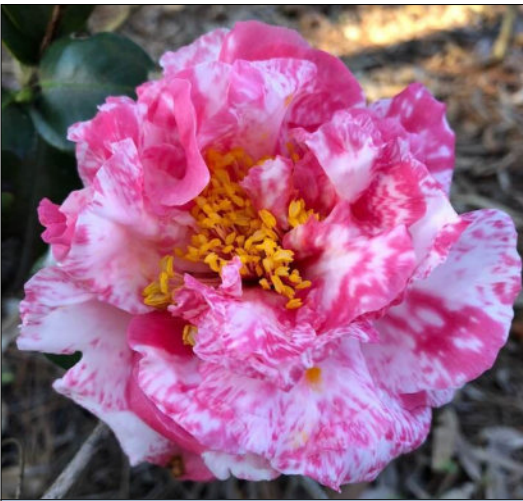
Elaine's Betty: A Beautiful Betty Sheffield Sport

show. To me, the Best Seedling Award should go to the individual who grew that little baby seedling from birth and nurtured it for many, many years – not just someone that grafted a scion from the original plant or rooted a cutting. I always like to congratulate the winner of the best seedling award at a show if it is the actual originator of that seedling.

And finally, to conclude this intentionally controversial article, I want to discuss registering variegated varieties. First, if a solid color camellia variety has already been registered, I see no reason to also register a variegated version. With the availability of good virus-variegated rootstocks, anyone that



Louise Fitzgerald: A Beautiful Sweetie Pie Sport



**Vernon Howell Var.
The Last Variety Hulyn Smith Variegated**

Smith's Big Dipper Var. They did not want or care about whoever first registered a variegated version of the solid variety – they wanted the best.

Variegating camellias is a fun part of the camellia-growing hobby. With our access to different virus-variegated rootstocks (speckled, blotched, moired, etc.), we will begin to see quite different variegated versions of solid-colored varieties. Many years ago, folks would register unique variegated blooms with names such as Audolph Audusson "Special" or Dixie Knight "Supreme" since there were already variegated versions registered. The camellia world decided to stop this practice. Suppose a show grower enters, for example, an Early Autumn Var. in a camellia show. Everyone can see that it is variegated — why is there a need to have two entries in the nomenclature book — one for Early Autumn and a second for Early Autumn Var?



**Chief Arnold Var.
Variegated by Jerry and Carol Selph**

I hope I have not offended anyone with my thoughts in this article. Like I said from the "get-go," I wanted to write an article that was a bit controversial and would get people thinking and hopefully sharing ideas about camellias. That's all I can think of for now – so I look forward to hearing your thoughts and what you have been thinking. Please let me hear from you.



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Introductory Electronic Membership Benefits include:

- Access to the online editions of *The Camellia Journal* and *The Camellia Yearbook*,
- A copy of the *ACS Camellia Culture* booklet,
- Free admission into Masee Lane Gardens, headquarters to the American Camellia Society,
- Free or reduced admission into 345+ additional botanical gardens and locations (*American Horticultural Society's Reciprocal Admission Program*),
- Access to "Members Only" content on the ACS website,
- Invites to educational Zoom Presentations and Show Judge/Novice Classes,
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Visit us at: www.americancamellias.org

Click on "About Us/Join Menu and select the Electronic Introductory ACS Electronic Membership Form.

What Could Be Finer Than a Camellia Tea in Carolina?

By Marsha Zeagler

When my talented young friend, Karyn Sealy Bland, who serves as secretary for the Aiken Camellia Society, described the annual camellia tea held in Edgefield, SC, I was intrigued. Karyn, who is active in Edgefield's Historical Society and a member of national historical societies as am I, gave the history of this event. The tea originated at the home of Joseph and Chrissie Holland in the early 1940's. The Holland's network of camellia friends was large and impressive for such a small town. Joseph Holland and Billie Cantalou, a neighbor, became camellia judges and routinely judged in Charleston, Augusta, and Savannah. They occasionally traveled together to judge in Jacksonville and Atlanta. Douglas Wise's garden (known as "Darby") and Cantelou's garden rivaled the impressive Holland garden as well as other beautiful gardens in Edgefield.

These were serious camellia growers whose friendships and exchanges included Norwood Hastie, who owned Magnolia Gardens in Charleston, and Dave Strothers, who grew up in Edgefield and later donated 150 acres to include his garden, Masee Lane, to the newly formed American Camellia Society. Judge and Mrs. Hammond (Augusta, GA) and Dr. and Mrs. Mealing (North Augusta, SC) as well as other historically significant influencers on the camellia world of that era were guests at "Camellia Hall" as the Holland home was known.

In years past, the annual Holland Camellia Tea began as visitors arrived prepared to add to



**Magnolia Dale
Home of the Edgefield Historical Society**



Beautiful Camellias were on Display



Camellias as Well as Great Food in a Beautiful Home

the massive amounts of blooms displayed on a long table in the parlor, mantels, and arrangements throughout the house. The dining room table always gleamed with silver trays, sparkling crystal, and a beautiful tea service. Camellias framing silver was and still is a showstopper! It was a day of camaraderie and enthusiasm, talking and sharing all things camellia. Unfortunately, this lovely tradition ended with the death of Joseph Holland in 1955 and then Chrissie Holland in 1961.

In 2008, the Edgefield Camellia Society decided to revive the beautiful Holland tradition. As was the original tea, it is still held in February, but is now held at Magnolia Dale, home of The Edgefield Historical Society, a period setting evoking the past elegance and memories of its predecessor. I can't say enough about the graciousness, not to mention the incredible hours of work and dedication that the members put into this event. Not only do they do this for their community but also for many out-of-town visitors that joyously make this an annual camellia event. Members generously hand-make and bake delicious southern favorites including finger sandwiches (sans crust of course) and confectionaries, served on fine serving trays.

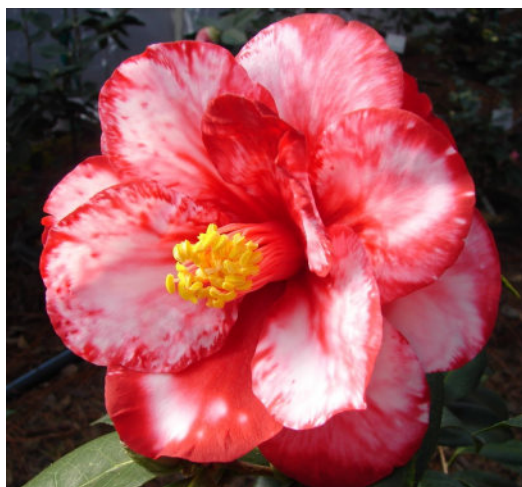
An abundance of camellias, picked from the Edgefield Garden, were displayed and clearly labeled throughout the house. Everyone in our group agreed that we didn't remember seeing so many relaxed, lovely smiles and enthusiastic camellia chatter in one place as we did that day. It's an event worth putting on your calendar next year. Camellia blooms truly are an elixir for the soul. Members of our travel group: Brad and Magdalena Kunz (Aiken, SC), Jenny Lynn Bradly (Savannah, GA), Karyn Bland (Edgefield, SC), Sara Sealy (Aiken, SC), Gene Phillips and Marsha Zeagler (Sylvania, GA).

“The Edgefield Camellia Tea – Making It Grow” can be found on YouTube.

VARIEGATED CAMELLIAS PHOTO GALLERY

Photos by Randolph Maphis (RM) and J. D. Thomerson (JDT)

Most camellia growers love an excellent variegated camellia and often debate who has the best variegated strain of various varieties. Show growers often “Ooh and Ahh” and take photos of great variegated blooms at shows and ask for scions of them to graft. Many camellia growers graft and re-graft on variegated rootstocks (to sweeten the pot as they call it) varieties that are already variegated trying to get an even better variegation. The photo gallery that follows spotlights a few great variegated camellias. And yes, I think there should be a “Best Variegated Camellia” award given at camellia shows.



Royal Velvet Var (RM)



Paul Haskee Var (RM)



Chuxiong Gold Var (JDT)



Oscar B. Elmer Var (RM)



Phil Piet Var (RM)



Dick Hardison Var (RM)



Helen Beach Var (RM)



Kyle Var (JDT)



Nuccio's Bella Rosa Var (RM)



Katie Northcut (RM)



Bill Goertz Var (RM)



Dr. Richard Hardison Var (RM)



Fire Dance Var (JDT)



Cleve James Var (JDT)



Magic City (JDT)



Frank Houser Var (RM)



Terrell Weaver Var (RM)



Ray Gentry Var (JDT)



Tudor Baby Var (JDT)



Ville de Nantes (JDT)



San Dimas Var (JDT)



Big Dipper Var (RM)

CAMELLIA FAMILY TREES

“The Nuts, Sports, Odd Balls, and Beauties”

By J. D. Thomerson

Do you come from a crazy family? I know I do – and I know my wife does too. I might get in trouble for this, but several family members in both Kay’s and my families are just a bit odd – not necessarily in a bad way— but just a bit unusual. I would love to share examples, but I would pay dearly if I did. Perhaps they would say that being around me is what drives them crazy – I don’t know. When I share with others about the “oddities” in our families, I often hear them talk about their crazy “Uncle Joe” or weird “Aunt Mable.” For some strange reason, it makes me feel better knowing that other families are just as unusual as ours. But, to be fair, both Kay and my families have some very successful and smart folks amongst the ones a bit more unique.



**Kay and Katie
acting Crazy**

My daughter, Katie, loves to look through our family photo albums and will sometimes laugh at photos of Kay and me when we were younger. The way we dressed and our hairstyles were so different years ago. When looking at other family members, she thinks some are really pretty or handsome, others a bit funny looking, and a few even scary looking. Instead of being embarrassed, overly proud, or boastful of our families, Kay and I have just learned to love them “as they are.”

I have some friends convinced that there are a handful of families (maybe 20 or 30) that have and are currently controlling the whole United States and possibly the entire

world. They name some very wealthy and powerful families from the past, like the Vanderbilts, Rockefellers, Carnegies, Du Ponts, and Hearsts, as well as modern folks like Warren Buffet and Bill Gates. Of course, powerful political families like the Kennedys, Bushs, and Clintons are mentioned and other folks that I either don’t know or can’t remember. They have not convinced me of all of this, but I do know there are and have been some very powerful and influential families in our society.

FAMILIES
ARE LIKE FUDGE...
mostly sweet.
WITH LOTS OF
NUTS!

What does all of this have to do with camellias?

I am glad you asked.



Gather and plant camellia seed. It's easy and fun!



Well, just like there are some elite human families in our society, there are also some very elite camellia families in the plant world. What, camellias have families? Yes, they do, and many camellia families can be traced back for over a hundred years. Camellias produce children by setting seeds, and sometimes they mate with beautiful spouses and sometimes oddball varieties. Therefore, just like real human families, the children (seedlings) can be similar to or very different from their parents. Some are weird looking, some beautiful, some grow tall, others wide, and some always seem to look sickly.

However, camellias can produce new family members in a way I can't really compare to humans – they can produce “sports.” I do recall my mother telling people that when I was much younger, I was a “real sport,” but I don't think she meant the same thing as a camellia sport. A camellia “sport” is when a camellia variety suddenly begins to produce blooms (often on one branch only) that look different from all the others. They do this not by reproducing from seed by way of pollen but just by “morphing” (how about that for a scientific explanation) into a new-looking bloom. The sports that look nice are collected and propagated by rooting or grafting to make new varieties. Probably the best examples of varieties that are known for producing many sports are the Betty Sheffield and the Tomorrow families.

Morph:

to undergo transformation from an image of one object into that of another

Merriam-Webster Dictionary

Just like the “Who's Who” of the human family world, like the Vanderbilts, Rockefellers, Kennedys, and Bushs, there are also the “Who's Who” of the camellia family world. I want to share a few of them with you in the remainder of this article.

Note: *I am only going to discuss Japonica family trees in this article. The Reticulatas all come from a much smaller gene pool. Most retic hybrids have either Crimson Robe, Cornelian, or Lilette Witman as parents, as these three reticulata varieties set seeds well. The Reticulata hybrids will require their own special family tree discussion that I will write for a future article.*

Continued on the next page

Ok, Here are My Top 10 Camellia Families:

Tomorrow: The Tomorrow family, similar to Betty Sheffield, is a sporting group. The sports include: *Tomorrow Crown Jewel*, *Tomorrow Leanne's*, *Tomorrow Marbury's Light Pink*, *Tomorrow Park Hill*, *Tomorrows Supreme*, *Tomorrow White*, *Tomorrow's Dawn*, *Tomorrow's Dawn Bessie*, *Tomorrow's Delight*, *Tomorrow's Sweet Image*, *Tomorrow's Lisa*, *Tomorrow's Tropic Dawn*, that is a lot of Tomorrows, and I am not even including all of them. Because all these Tomorrow varieties were so widely popular (they are all really beautiful), hybridizers used Tomorrow in their breeding programs. Popular seedlings of Tomorrow varieties include: *Charlotte Blount*, *Cleve James*, *Mike Witman*, *Ruffian*, *Terry Gilley*, and *Strawberry Swirl*. Your homework (remember, I am a teacher) is to do a Google search for several of these Tomorrow sports or seedlings. The list is so long that I just can't begin to describe them all.



Tomorrow's Dawn

Betty Sheffield: How can I possibly list all the sports and seedlings of Betty Sheffield? Many articles have been written about Betty Sheffield and the twenty-plus sports that the camellia has produced. Betty Sheffield lived in Quitman, GA. There is a very nice camellia garden next to the Historical Society building in downtown Quitman that has a life sized bronze statue of Betty. There is a very good article in the Feb. 2015 American Camellia Society Journal about Betty Sheffield, her story, and all the amazing Sports and Seedlings that this camellia produced. Look in the Camellia Nomenclature book or do a Google search for Betty Sheffield, and you can read about the many sports of Betty Sheffield. *Betty Sheffield Supreme* is probably the most popular or grown



Betty Sheffield Supreme

sport, but many others are also common. Some of the named sports do not begin with Betty as the first name, such as *Elaine's Betty*, *Funny Face Betty*, and *Blonde Betty*. Betty Sheffield produces many seeds, and in addition to the many sports of Betty Sheffield, there are also seedlings.

Elegans: Let's begin with the Sports in this family: *Elegans Supreme*, *Elegans Champagne*, *Elegans Splendor*, *Barbara Woodroff*, *C. M. Wilson*, etc. Then, you have the Sports of the Sports (grandchildren Sports, I guess we could call this) – *Shiro Chan* and *Hawaii* are sports of C. M. Wilson, and to go even further along the family ladder, we have *Snow Chan* as a sport of Shiro Chan and *Kona* is a sport of Hawaii. I have probably left out some of the “sports” in this family, but in addition to the sports, there are also seedling family members. Do you think that the seedling family members think they are better than the sporting family members? Seedling family members include *Elegant Beauty*, *Pink Explorer*, and *Sunset Glory*, and of course, there are grandchildren of these such as *Owen Henry* that is a sport of Sunset Glory. My goodness, if the Elegans family held a family reunion, there would be all kinds of questions about who is a child or sport of whom, who are the aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, etc.



Elegans Splendor



Ville de Nantes

Donkellari: Donkellari is a medium to large, semi-double, with red marbled white coloring. It is very old, having originated in China in 1834. It sets many seeds, so undoubtedly many chance seedlings have Donkellari genes whether the grower knew it or not. Donkellari's inclusion in the Who's Who of camellia families would be justified with just one sport named *Ville de Nantes*. Ville de Nantes is perhaps the most popular camellia of all time. My dear friend Hulyn Smith who grew hundreds of great varieties, had me help him make a photo of Ville de Nantes as the background for

his cell phone. Many camellia shows have a special category for the best Ville de Nantes. Ville de Nantes has a sport named *Lady Kay* which is a loose to full peony form of Ville. Since my wife's name is Kay, I have three plants of Lady Kay. Marvin Jernigan crossed Ville de Nantes with Granada and came up with three fine varieties: *Henry Lundsford*, *Marvin Jernigan*, and *Cecil Beard Var.* Walter Homeyer crossed the reticulata Crimson Robe with Ville de Nantes and developed the outstanding retic hybrid, *Terrell Weaver*. The Donkellari bloodlines go much further than what I have room to discuss.



Mathotiana Sup. Var.
aka: Avery Island

Julia Drayton/Mathotiana: OK, this family has its share of drama and controversies, like many human families. Who is actually the original family member, Julia Drayton or Mathotiana? Are these two different camellias or actually the same one? It depends upon who you ask. The Southern California Camellia Society's official nomenclature book seems to indicate that they are the same – but visit the International Camellia Society Register on the Web, and it is obvious that they think otherwise. I don't claim to know the answers, but I think it is interesting that camellia families have controversies just like humans. To make this issue more

confusing, there are dozens of nick-names (not official names but what folks in different parts of the country call Julia Drayton or Mathotiana) such as Purple Dawn, Rubra, Purple Prince, Purple Emperor, and William S. Hastie to name just a few. Well, is all of the above as clear as mud? So, let's move on to the sports of Julia Drayton or whatever you choose to call the Grand Poo Pa of this camellia family. Sports include:

Flowerwood, Sultana, Dautel's Supreme,

and ***Rosea Superba.*** This controversial family even has a very unique family member that is not a seedling or a normal sport – the very popular ***Helen Bower*** is what is called a "Chimera" of Dr. Knapp grafted onto a Mathotiana Variegated. A chimera forms when the two varieties actually combine together at the graft union and form a totally new variety that is not exactly either one of the parents – you might think of this as a "metamorphosis" into something new.

There are few examples of known chimeras in the camellia world, and Helen Bower is probably the best-known example. Mathotiana probably does not have as many chance seedling children because it is a rose form double to formal double, and the bees can't get to the stamens that contain the pollen very easily.



Helen Bower

Daikagura: Daikagura is a bright rose pink splotched white, medium to large, peony form bloom. It is very old, having been originated in China back in 1891. What is special about Daikagura is that it blooms EARLY – not E-M, but just “E” for Early. **High Hat** is a pale pink sport of Daikagura, and **Conrad Hilton** is a white sport of High Hat. The award-winning non-retic hybrid **Mona Jury** contains 1/3 Daikagura genes, as does the large fine white variety named **Joshua E. Youtz**. Joshua E. Youtz produced a seedling named **Ecclefield** which is a large white anemone flower that was very popular in the 1960’s and 70’s. **Indian Summer** is a seedling of Daikagura, and with the popularity of Daikagura and it being so old, I am sure many chance seedlings contain Daikagura genes.



Daikagura

Herme: Actually, the rightful name is Hikaru-Genji which was how it was originally registered in Japan back in 1879. Folks in the U.S. know it as Herme, although many call it by the synonym **Jordan’s Pride**. Several sports of Herme include **Colonial Lady**,



Herme

Look Away, and **The Mikado**. Of course, you also have the sports of sports such as the very pretty **Spring Sonnet**. Herme is such a popular and known variety that hundreds of other camellia varieties would reference Herme when giving descriptions of its own characteristics. Often in the camellia nomenclature book, you read “the semi-double flower, similar to Herme” or “the Herme type bloom.” Due to the cold-hardiness characteristics of Herme, Dr. Clifford Parks used it as the pollen parent when originating the very cold-hardy variety named **April Dawn**. Since Herme is such a popular old variety and produces seeds, it is very probable that many chance seedling registrations

probably have Herme as either a seed or pollen parent. I have an old (well, 1950) variety named **Simeon** that is a Rev. John Bennet by Herme cross, and the great hybridizer Walter Homeyer crossed Simeon with Tomorrow to produce **Cleve James**. The old Herme genes are surely very widespread.

Aspasia McArthur: I really like this family of blooms. *Aspasia McArthur* is a white to cream medium-full peony bloom with a few rose red lines and dashes that blooms E-M. It is an active sport and has produced the award-winning **Margaret Davis** (see photo), which would have to be in my top 10 favorites list. **Jean Clere** is the exact opposite colors than Margaret Davis. Everywhere Margaret Davis is white, Jean Clere is red, and where Margaret Davis is red, Jean Clere is white. **Lady Loch** is another sport of Aspasia McArthur, and Mark Crawford made sure he got this one since his nursery is named “Loch Laurel Nursery.” Then you have sports of the sports such as the popular **Can Can** variety, which is a sport of Lady Loch. There are many other sports of Aspasia McArthur and sports of sports, but I cannot include them all. Aspasia McArthur seeds were used to originate **Ave Maria**, which is a very early blooming variety that has a nice pink formal double to peony bloom. Lillian Gordy even had a Jean Clere seedling that she registered as **Scarlet Ribbons** in 2013.



Margaret Davis

Edna Campbell: Hulyn Smith really liked dark red camellia blooms, and he used the seeds of Edna Campbell, a very dark red bloom that sets many seeds, to try and get some great new dark varieties. He was successful in a big way with **Chief Arnold**,



Chief Arnold

Georgia Fire, **Henry Parrish**, and **Dr. Frank Wilson**. John Spencer from Lakeland, FL, also planted Edna Campbell seeds and came up with **Deep Purple Dream**, which is a new popular variety, as well as **Kute Kate**, that I really want because my daughter is named Katie, and I think she is very cute. Miss Lillian Gordy planted an Edna Campbell seed and came up with a variety she named **Emberglow**. Emberglow is a bluish rose fading to magenta (basically a purple color.) All of these Edna Campbell seedlings are very dark red/purple and are new varieties that are very popular.

Moonlight Bay: The popular camellia variety named **Sweetie Pie** is a Moonlight Bay Seedling. The late Jerry Conrad who was the owner of Erinon Nursery located in Plymouth, FL, really liked to plant Moonlight Bay seeds. He was successful with the

introduction of **Dale Fitzgerald**, a large, rose pink, peony bloom that blooms E-M and is a new popular variety. But, what has everyone really excited is that Sweetie Pie has developed a sport that is really spectacular – Jerry Conrad chose **Louise Fitzgerald** for the name of this very nice sport of Sweetie Pie. Unfortunately, Jerry passed away before many of his Moonlight Bay seedlings could be evaluated and registered, but I remember him telling me to plant every Moonlight Bay seed you can get your hands on. I took his advice and have several seedlings I am anxiously waiting to bloom.



Louise Fitzgerald

Well, family trees are interesting to study – whether they be human or “camellian.” And, the more I think about it, perhaps human families do have sports. I know one morning I woke up and looked in the mirror, and my nice full head of hair had “morphed” into a shiny bald head – unfortunately, I don’t think anybody would want to try and reproduce my “sport” of a head. But, perhaps I can “graft” some scions (or hair plugs in this case) into my old bald head. Just like people trace back their ancestry, it is fun to know the “roots” and genealogy of our beloved camellias.

If forced to pick a favorite camellia family, I would have to choose the Tomorrow family. Below are two photos taken by Randolph Maphis, that will help explain why.



Tomorrow's Sweet Image



Tomorrow Park Hill Pink Var

“HOTDOG BUNS AND AIR LAYERING”

by Dr. Billy Ray Price

I am a relative novice in the camellia world. About four years ago, after seeing some beautiful “flowers” at a camellia show, my wife and I purchased 2-3 from a gentleman named Mark Crawford and received a business card for some place called Loch Laurel Nursery. That following winter, we visited the nursery, which was also his home. The yard was in bloom, and I was in awe. My exposure to the Camellia bug had begun, and infection was inevitable. He then invited my wife and me to the Wiregrass Camellia Society meeting. There we met individuals who had already contracted the illness. We were not warned of the devastating effect of a Society meeting on the progression of this infection.



Billy Ray in Action

One couple, Jerry and Carol Self, lured my wife by educating her on preparing blooms to show. Another fellow, J. D. Thomerson, promised a quick fix by teaching club members about air layering. Another couple, Fred and Sandra Jones, offered a cure by allowing me to air layer at Camzalea, telling me that I just had to have . . . you name the cultivar. They are still whispering in my ear. The hook was baited, the line was cast, and the fish swallowed it whole. There is no cure. And these individuals enjoy letting the line play out while the hook gets deeper.



Presoak Sphagnum Moss for at least one hour then squeeze out all water from a double handful of moss before making your wrapped Hot Dog Bun

Today I am infected and working on various propagating techniques to keep the infection at bay. My cutting and grafting techniques need some work, but air layering seems fairly satisfying. This will be my third year. There is one problem with air layering: I never have enough hands. I pick the densest, tightest spaces to take the layer so that the bush is not distorted and my host won't know that I have been there (I do get permission before layering, and I do not swoop in in the middle of the night). Usually, the bush is putting up a fight as it is hard to pull back a limb while applying the moss and the wraps. I've seen the plastic

cannonballs designed for layering, but I am cheap and trying not to unnecessarily spend money except for the next cultivar.

After pondering this for several weeks, I hit upon an idea. Why not pre-wrap the moss and then figure out how to apply this to the prepared limb? The flash of brilliance and simplicity follows. Besides the typical layering needs (camellia, permission, knife, plastic wrap, foil, moistened sphagnum moss/coconut coir, rooting hormone), you will need 2-inch masking tape, which provides the perfect amount of adhesion for the following technique.



Cut a slit in the bun. Notice extra tape for sealing bun back up around the limb.

The night before your air layering outing, make moss “buns”- 10, 20, or 436, however many layers you plan to make. Take a 15-18 inch length of plastic wrap and lay it out flat. Make a softball-sized bun of moss and squeeze it out as you would with other layering techniques and place it on the wrap. Then roll up the moss, folding in the sides. Think of making a burrito at “Moe’s” or your other favorite Mexican restaurant/sandwich shop. Unroll 12 inches of 2-inch masking tape. And fold over the last inch so that you have a non-sticky tab on which to pull. Wrap the tape around the middle of the bun, overlapping the tape and ending with that 1-inch tab.

Next day the fun begins. Take someone with you. If you get tired of layering (like this would ever happen), you can have a snowball bun fight. Select your shrub and identify the desired limb. It should be about a cubit long- the length from the elbow to the tips of your fingers. I suggest a branch with the diameter of your pinkie- 1/4-3/4 inch. You

need to be able to wrap your fist around the limb to have enough space to accommodate your bun. Make two cuts around the limb about 1 inch apart and scrape off the bark between these two cuts. All the cambium layer, the dark green layer, should be gone, and now it should be lime green.

Apply the rooting hormone if you are using this. Take a freshly made bun and pull back the tape tab about 3 - 4 inches. There should still be some of the tape overlapped. With your knife, slice halfway through the bun, and pull it apart. It should look like an open hotdog bun or baseball cut in half but not cut all the way through. Now wrap the bun around the limb and secure the tape to close the bun. This



Remove All Green Cambium



Wrap Bun of Moss Around Removed Bark



Tin Foil Over Plastic Wrap

should close the slice with a minimal gap for evaporation. If you are worried there is still too much area for evaporation, place another piece of plastic wrap around the first. Then apply a tin foil covering around the plastic wrap. Supposedly exposing the tin foil's dull side helps prevent birds from pecking at the tin foil.

Voila, now wait impatiently for six months for the rooting to take place. If the tin foil ball feels firm like a baseball is inside, then that is a sure sign that plenty of roots have been made. If so, cut the branch off below the rooted ball and soak it in a bucket of water for several hours to help hydrate the severed limb.

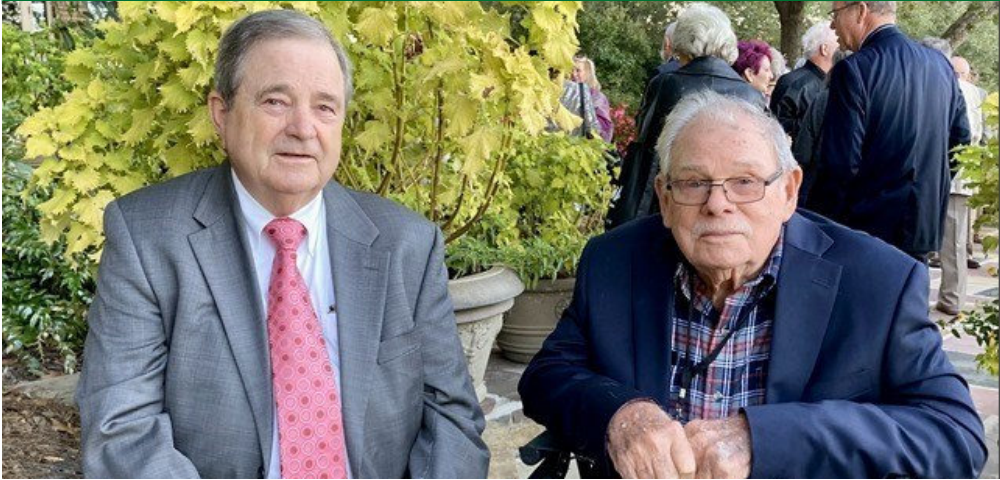
Then, plant the air layer in a two-gallon pot using a loose draining camellia potting mix. Do not plant too deep. The top of the air layer should be barely below the potting mix. Place air-layered plants in a semi-shady location and water well. Use stakes if necessary to keep plants from blowing over or moving too much in the pot during strong winds, which might damage delicate roots.



Successful Air Layer

Mist the foliage daily for about two weeks and then every other day for another couple of weeks. Water when the soil mix gets dry, but do not keep it too wet — root rot is a danger at this time. After a year of growing the air layers in a pot, the plants should be ready to plant in the ground the following Fall/Winter. Finally, thank your gracious host who let you air-layer their camellias.

Jim Smelley (below right) continues to stay busy — He has just registered the four Reticulata Hybrids shown below for 2023



T. Morris



Carol Selph



Colonel Richard Hooton



Debbie Smith

CAMELLIA WORKSHOP AT PEBBLE HILL PLANTATION

Due to the hard freeze, the Wiregrass Camellia Society's Show to be held at Pebble Hill Plantation in Thomasville, GA, was replaced by a Camellia Workshop. Fifty-Two paid participants broke up into five groups and engaged in 20-minute classes/demos led by Wiregrass Society Members. The event was a huge success as nine new members joined the Wiregrass Camellia Society, and several joined ACS and ACCS.



Jerry & Carol Selph Supervise Waxing Camellias



Mark Crawford and Nancibeth Shealy Discuss Planting, Pruning, and Propagating Camellias



Billy Ray Price Demonstrates Air Layering



Fred Jones & Patti Niewoehner Discuss Joining ACS, ACCS, and Wiregrass Camellia Societies



Alden McDonald, 2023 Miss ACS Camellia Queen was Present



J. D. Thomerson Discusses Camellia Flower Forms and Types of Camellias

CAMELLIA EXHIBITIONS AT QUITMAN AND TALLAHASSEE

Exhibitions are a great alternative to official camellia shows. They are low-stress and allow plenty of time for fellowship and discussion. Even with limited blooms, the public enjoys coming to see the blooms available, learning about camellias, and having the opportunity to purchase new camellia varieties. The photo below shows one of many display tables at the Wiregrass Camellia Exhibition.



CAMELLIAS THAT CAN HANDLE COLD TEMPERATURES

The camellias shown below and on the next page withstood temps as low as 19 degrees to 23 degrees for four consecutive nights in Valdosta, GA, during the hard freeze of Dec. 2022. These varieties bloomed nearly as well as if they experienced no cold at all. Royal Velvet actually seemed to bloom better than normal. Frank Houser was the only Reticulata that bloomed almost as well as normal. All the other blooms shown performed and bloomed extremely well. I have talked to many growers all over the southeast, and these blooms were consistently reported to have performed well. Unfortunately, as many of us know, the majority of our prized camellia varieties lost all their flower buds after this season's deep freeze — so these varieties are truly exceptional.

I would like to compile a more comprehensive list of the camellias that performed well during the freeze of Dec. 2022, as well as those that performed very poorly this past camellia season. Please email me at jthomers@valdosta.edu with any input, and hopefully, this information can be shared in an upcoming journal.



Royal Velvet: Best Cold Hardy Japonica



Frank Houser: Best Cold Hardy Retic



Tudor Baby Var



Dancing Blaze



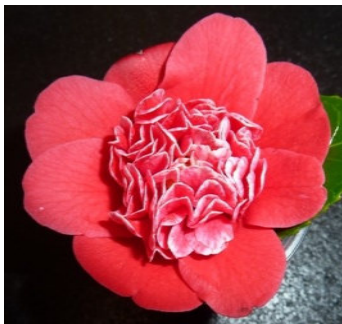
Ville de Nantes



Fire Dance Var



Chief Arnold



Shikibu



Maroon and Gold



Herme



Above: *Camellia* hybrid "Mary Phoebe Taylor" along J. D. and Kay Thomerson's side yard after the hard freeze. This variety wins my best cold hardy hybrid award.

ACS VISITS COLUMBUS, GA

Photos below taken by David Williams



Attendees Visit the Columbus Botanical Garden as Part of the 2023 American Camellia Society National Convention



Sam Wellborn Greets Those in Attendance

ACCS STATE DIRECTORS

State	Name	Term
Florida	Chuck Ritter	2022-2024
Florida	Howard Rhodes	2022-2024
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Georgia	Sandra Jones	2022-2023
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North Carolina	John Fields	2022-2023
North Carolina	Bob Fox	2022-2023
South Carolina	Paul Cloessner	2022-2024
South Carolina	David Elliot	2022-2024
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Virginia	Toni McKenna	2022-2024

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A membership entitles you to a journal published in January, May, and September and full access to ACCS Website. To join, send your check and membership info below to:

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ACCS Annual Dues, Good for 1 Year from Date of Payment

Single or Double \$25.00

Name(s): _____

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**Unregistered Camellia Seedling
Grown and Photographed by J. D. Thomerson**