



News Notes

February, 2021

I pray that all of you and your families are safe from COVID. We thank all the healthcare providers and the science researchers who developed the vaccines now in distribution. The following Notes provide timely alerts, reference and summary of pertinent information coupled with some focus for your Camellia garden, regional events and related interests.

"Camellia Show Preparation." Also note that the preparation of blooms for a show is also great for displaying blooms at home. Use the link following on the tidewater camellia club web site <https://www.tidewatercamellioclub.org> to view the presentation on the TCC MEMBERS GUIDELINES link.

Great kudos to Marty Clark on the TCC website, Diane Clark for oversight of this virtual show initiation, and Matt Hunter for cemetery workshops. I encourage you to look at your website and pertinent links closely! Exciting information! Thanks to Tom Alexander President TCC and all the TCC leaders for the planning of these terrific events! Excuse if I have missed anyone!

SOCIALLY DISTANT MEETING VENUES AND VIRTUAL MEETINGS ARE PLANNED UNDER CDC GUIDELINES WITH MASK AND DISTANCES

NEXT MEETING :

Topic: Virtual Camellia Show Status

Speaker: Diane Clark and others

Where: Virtual by ZOOM, joining details to follow by email to members

Date: February 16, 2021

Time: 7:00 P.M.

CAMELLIA SHOW

TCC Virtual Camellia Show, and Festival

February 21 - 28, 2021

Festival Schedule

New Hanover County Arboretum - 6206 Oleander Dr, Wilmington

Camellia Walking Tours:

Thursday, 2/25 at 1 & 2 PM
Saturday, 2/27 at 1 & 2 PM (Sunday 2/28 is the rain date)

Camellia Air Layer Workshop

Saturday, 2/27 at 11 AM (Sunday rain date)

Limited to 15 attendees each; Please sign up on TCC website “Register for Arboretum”

Oakdale Cemetery events - 520 N. 15th St., Wilmington

Monday, 2/22 at 2 PM, Pruning and Disease control

Tuesday, 2/23 at 1 PM, Walking Tour

Wednesday, 2/24 at 2 PM, Planting, Placement & Fertilization

Thursday 2/25 at 2 PM, (Rain date)

Friday, 2/26 at 1 PM, Walking Tour

Participants will receive handouts, general guidance, and specific coaching while they practice/observe pruning and planting well-established camellia plants at Oakdale Cemetery. Duration of each workshop is expected to be no longer than about one hour. Attendance is limited so anyone interested should promptly contact Matt or Eric to reserve your spot. Matt Hunter (mhunter@cape-fear.net) at (910-232-0304) or Eric Kozen (910-762-5682). Limited to 15 attendees each.

TOPIC-- Container Grown Camellias and Camellia Soil Mixes for Containers -- Bradford King President ACS

Used with permission from ACS fact sheet .Thank you Dr King for your ZOOM presentation at our January TCC meeting.

“Camellias thrive in pots but require special care for them to grow and flower. Camellias in containers require repotting or potting up every two or three years. The soil becomes depleted, soggy and heavy after three years.

Containers – “Potting up’ is useful when a plant outgrows its container. For example, a camellia doing well in a one-gallon pot should be “potted up” to a three-gallon pot after

two years and so on until the plant reaches the size the grower desires. Once the optimal size is reached, the camellia is repotted every two or three years, in the same size container. When repotting, roots are trimmed an inch or two with a knife then put back in its container with fresh potting mix. While the same principles as with a camellia in the ground are followed, more careful attention is required.

First, the container must have adequate drainage holes because camellias can't tolerate wet feet. The bottom layer of the pot can be gravel, broken crock, coarse wire mesh, etc. I prefer two or three inches of coarse pine bark.

Second is the potting mix. Do not use ordinary garden soil because it gets too hard and its humus is depleted quickly. The most convenient method is to use a ready-made commercial camellia/azalea mix from your local garden center. However, many growers make their own mix.

My current mix is equal parts small pine bark, sand, oak leaf mold (or coarse peat moss) and a high quality commercial camellia mix. The commercial mix has "composted fir bark, sphagnum peat moss, mushroom compost, volcanic pumice stone, earthworm castings, bat guano, kelp meal, feather meal, gypsum and a natural wetting agent yucca shidigera sponen." The percentages are not listed for this product. I would assume percentages can change and that various commercial mixes will have different ingredients.

Third, a camellia in a container will require fertilization. The easiest solution is to purchase a commercial camellia/azalea fertilizer using it as directed on the label. These products are to be used only during the growing season—April through September. Never feed a dry plant and be careful not to over feed, especially during hot weather (over 90°F).

A popular alternative is to use cotton seed meal during the growing season. It is organic and much less likely to burn the plant. A successful alternative is to use four parts cotton seed meal to one part iron. This will keep the foliage green and flower colors vibrant, especially the reds. Notice how much nitrogen is combined with the iron. An N=2 or 3 is optimal and one over 10 can be dangerous as it is combined with the nitrogen in the cotton seed meal for a total exceeding 15.

Another fertilization method is to use a liquid fertilizer formulated for acid-loving plants which can be applied with a watering can or foliage spray during the growing season. The best example is Miracle-Gro for azalea, camellias and rhododendrons. Please note that Miracle-Gro contains a high level of nitrogen – nitrogen 30, phosphate 10 and potassium 10 and all the iron and trace elements needed for healthy camellias. Therefore, I recommend cutting the manufacture's amount in half, especially for small plants and non-reticulata hybrids. Several applications in two week intervals works well.

Do not use fertilizers when temperatures are above 90°F or you may burn the camellia leaves. During the rest of the summer growing season, I use cotton seed meal every 45 days. During the dormant season from October through February when buds are developing and blooms appear, a 2-10-10 fertilizer is applied.

A number of other growers begin the growing season with an application of fish emulsion, followed by four parts cotton seed meal, one part iron and one part blood meal every 45 days during the growing season and 2-10-10 during the dormant season every 45 days.

Fourth, camellia seedlings grown in pots require fertilizing once the seed has been absorbed. Cotton seed meal is acceptable but the commercial dry fertilizers may be too strong for “babies.” I prefer a liquid starter fertilizer applied every two weeks during the growing season which is cut in half during the dormant season. The objective is to keep the nitrogen level low (N=2 and never above 3) during dormancy. This is the period for bud and flower development in camellias, so some phosphate and potash is desirable.

Finally, take time to enjoy your flowers. Blooms may be cut and used to decorate your home. A collection of blooms floating in a shallow bowl makes an attractive center piece. A single bloom with leaves in a small vase is an attractive addition wherever you wish a touch of color. A container plant may be moved to a patio or window to better show its flowers as long as it is outdoors and has shade”.

Thank you ACS and Dr King

Dave Renquist

TCC News Notes editor