Camellias Database ‘Camelbase’

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This database was created in December 2011 to assist in the identification of camellias, primarily in Brittany. It was subsequently extended to camellias worldwide. We have tried to gather all the information collected by the great Breton camellia experts and have entered these details on to the computer database. We also collect the data in the field, visiting public and private parks and gardens planted with camellias.

Composition of the database: it is composed of two parts, the criteria and photographs. At the time I write this article, it contains about 12,000 data entries and 1,900 photographs.

1. Criteria: they are 20 in number and were selected by myself and Roger Salaun, member of the Brittany Camellia Society and former director of the ICS France. After selecting the criteria, tests on 500 data sheets allowed us to determine the identity of many of the camellias using only the criteria from the leaves. The criteria are arranged around the photographic database and are selected from drop-down menus, single choice or multiple choice. Single options or multiple options depend on the chosen criterion: criterion of single data, eg species, or criterion of multiple data, eg petal forms. I chose to use the drop-down menus to facilitate the work of data entry: no keyboard use.

2. The photographic database: it is composed of 4 slots for photos. These locations are formatted, are of fixed size and contain pictures of the flower, leaf, bud and shrub. The leaves and buds are taken in close-up. The dimensions were chosen to allow adequate pictures without the database becoming too unwieldy.

Identification work with the database: for an unknown camellia, we note the criteria for the leaf and, if possible, the flower. We enter the data into the database. The search motor filters the data and sorts the sheets that match the criteria given.

Future of this database: this database will be online with free access for all camellia lovers when we have completed about 2000 data sheets. We also accept data on camellias from all other countries.