The Pallanza Symposium papers

Historic Camellias: Identification, Protection, and Enjoyment
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Abstract: Camellias are slow in their growth but are capable of surviving many years; some are a few hundred years or more old. Thus, we need an accurate description and careful protection of an original camellia cultivar when found. Methods for conservation of important historic camellias are illustrated. Teamwork for camellia conservation is essential, yields tremendous enjoyment, and helps to protect the environment.

1. Identification of Camellia cultivars
The following information will be useful for basic identification.
• A reference to the original (essentially from the International Camellia Register) is required, but classical references may be used when needed.
• Morphological descriptions of the qualitative and quantitative nature of flower, leaf, fruit and whole plant.
• Molecular data regarding the identity.
• The identification of the candidate camellia tree from which the information is obtained (GPS should be provided). Additional background information regarding acquisition, planting history and relationship to other trees will be useful.
• Comprehensive records of identification should be kept and opened to the public when required.

2. Protection of historic camellia trees
Historic camellias grown in old castles and gardens are often endangered due to the old age of trees or neglect. In Japan, old trees of historic importance are still being discovered now and then in the deep mountain areas. The ICS Gardens of Excellence (GoE), now numbering 30 worldwide, began in the late 1990s and was designed to introduce the general public to fine gardens that happened to have attractive camellias. In Japan there are five GoEs that differ in their features and characteristics. It has been proposed that these gardens collaborate to form a chain of camellia gardens in the near future. When such a schema is accomplished over different municipalities it may be possible to network on identification, propagation, protection and to share information that will be useful to the public. Hopefully, in the next ten years the network of GoE may be extended to the Honshu and Shikoku areas, to cover the whole of Japan.

3. Enjoyment of historic camellias
As the number of GoEs increases, the general public will be well informed regarding the historical significance of many fine camellias and the deep secrets of these beautiful plants. The hard work of conserving old historic camellias and of protecting camellias of outstanding significance will give joy to many volunteers. The sustained presence of famous historic camellias will attract many visitors from not only nearby areas, but also international guests. Learning about the historical background of certain ancient camellias will become a rewarding educational experience.

Conclusion
A systematic international collaboration is required to promote the proper identification and the conservation of historic camellias. A strategy for identification and conservation must be discussed and agreed to achieve the common goal.

References