C. dongnaiensis, a new camellia discovered by George Orel and Anthony Curry on a recent expedition to the Da Lat Plateau and the Lang Biang Massif in the southern provinces of Viet Nam. The exploration was a joint venture between Australian and Australian-Vietnamese scientific teams during which at least nine new species were found.
The Homecoming of the Camellia Princess to Oshima

The 16th century is known as an era of seafaring in which many examples of Western culture first arrived in Japan, but at the same time some offerings from Japan made the long journey in the opposite direction. The Japanese wild camellia trees would be a prime instance. In Europe, their seeds underwent breeding techniques and their flowers became even more gorgeous and a firm favourite of royalty and the nobility. In fact, they became the cultural symbol of one of the most beloved of Western operas: Verdi’s La Traviata, known to the Japanese as The Camellia Princess.

Our company is based on the island of Izu Oshima, which is home to more than 3 million Japanese wild camellia trees. Using their seeds as our raw material, we produce and sell pure camellia oil.

Moreover, we like to think of Kenji Miyazawa’s poem “Unperturbed by the Rain” as the inspiration behind our company philosophy. He was a Japanese poet who celebrated the importance of a fusion between Agriculture and the Arts. We feel that studying this poem helps us to increase the love we want to give to our labour.

As an important part of this belief, we hold an annual concert performance of La Traviata, for which we invite a currently active opera singer to Oshima and encourage the inhabitants of the island to take part in the chorus. For the first time, we were able to offer Mount Fuji as the spectacular stage background for our performance, a unique experience for our audience, which everyone thoroughly appreciated!

Through these concerts, we feel that we are extending a welcome home to the spirit of the wild camellia seeds which left Japan for Europe more than four hundred years ago and became the stunning flower of the Camellia Princess. We think it is particularly appropriate to let the island of Izu Oshima, the mecca of camellias, continue to serve as the background for these concerts and are very happy to convey a touch of romance to the hearts of our spectators.