News from the Regions

Australia

A new website: Camellias grown in Australia
This year has been a very busy and exciting camellia year in Australia. Early in March our new Camellias Australia website and gallery of camellia photographs were launched and in the first six months the gallery alone received more than 65,000 visits. It is hoped that the new set of photographs consisting of a very large number of ‘Camellias Grown in Australia’ will soon be operational.

National Congress in Melbourne
The Queensland Camellia Society has affiliated with Camellias Australia (which now consists of 11 regional societies) and now has representation on the National Council. Some of their members attended the recent annual National Congress in Melbourne, Victoria and over 100 people from all states in Australia had a fantastic time visiting camellia gardens and specialist nurseries, hearing inspiring speakers and visiting the National Camellia Show. Visits included the late Edgar Sabire’s garden.

Royal Botanic Gardens tour
After the Congress, 12 members from Queensland and New South Wales enjoyed a guided tour around the Royal Melbourne Botanic Gardens, led by ICS member Jenny Happell who is also a volunteer at the RMBG. This garden is one of the ICS Camellia Gardens of Excellence and has a splendid collection of old Australian cultivars, newer Australian and overseas cultivars and a special species garden. A plant of the camellia graft chimera *C. j. x C.s.* ‘Daisy Eagleson’ caused great interest, with its japonica leaves and blooms (with a sasanqua-like smell) low down on the plant and a branch with sasanqua leaves near the top of the plant.

Flower of ‘Daisy Eagleson’

Plant of camellia graft chimera
*C. j. x C.s.* ‘Daisy Eagleson’

After this five and a half hour tour we have been invited back to see the remainder of this immense camellia collection. Camellias Victoria and Camellias Gippsland have contributed financially to assist with improving the labelling of the plants in the garden. Most plants now have a large painted sign at the front and an inconspicuous, embossed, heavy gauge aluminium tag attached to the plant.
A new Garden of Excellence?

Much work is also being done at the E. G. Waterhouse National Camellia Garden at Caringbah, New South Wales, in preparation for their application to become an ICS Garden of Excellence. Plants are being well labelled, garden plans drawn and a digital register of the plants in the garden is being produced. This register includes the position of the plant, a description and a photograph of the bloom. To date over 300 plants have been registered in this way and many more are still to come.

At the E. G. Waterhouse Camellia Garden

Barry and Denise Di Salvia

China - Camellia events in 2013

The 3rd International Academic Forum on Yellow Camellias was successfully held in Nanning Guangxi, China on Feb.21-25, 2013. This event was co-sponsored by the ICS, China Camellia Society and Nanning City Government, and jointly organized by Nanning Landscape Administration Bureau, Nanning Golden Camellia Park as well as the Research Institute of Subtropical Forestry of the Chinese Academy of Forestry. There were about 200 participants attending from Australia, England, Germany, Italy, United States of America, Vietnam and China. The academic conference was held on Feb.22 to 23. There were 24 speakers invited to present academically, and 52 papers related to germplasm resource, preservation, taxonomy, breeding, process and industrial uses for golden *Camellia* species and camellia cultivars were collected in the proceedings. Most of the participants joined the post-conference study tour to the Guangxi Fangcheng yellow camellia reserve in the remote Mt. Shiwandashan. On the last day they visited the largest propagation and growing center of yellow camellias in the world.

The sixth Dali Camellias & Orchids Expo was held in Dali on 24-28 Feb 2013. Dali is one of the major production centers for *C. reticulata* in China, and will be the host city of the 2016 International Camellia Society Congress. Dali recognized camellias and orchids as its city flowers in 2011. Camellias have been popularly grown in every garden of local residents since the Nanzhao Dali Dynasty (ca.1500 years ago). There were more than 60,000 camellia plants from over 300 cultivars at 36 booths in this traditional event sponsored by the Dali prefecture government.

The 3rd Foshan Camellia Show & 1st Forest Product Exhibition was held in Foshan Forestry Institute in South China on 28 Feb 2013. This event included a camellia show, local special forest products exhibition, photography contest, ceramic art exhibition, Chinese paintings related to camellias and a half-day symposium. This Institute has introduced and planted more than one thousand camellia cultivars in its camellia garden since 1995, when the 1st Chinese Camellia Breeding Symposium was held there. The Institute is striving to build its camellia garden to qualify as an ICS Garden of Excellence.

The 1st Chongqi Wanzhou exhibition was held at the West Park from 28 Feb through to 1 March 2013. This park was initially established in 1924. This year they showed more than 5000 camellia plants from nearly 400 cultivars, of which 200 plants were ancient camellias, forming the largest ancient camellia garden in China. Visitors also enjoyed its camellia flower show, Chinese painting works and photograph works in this event. This park is making its great efforts to become an ICS Garden of Excellence.

The 13th Jinhua Camellia Show and the 4th Wucheng District Camellia Show were held in Jinhua Camellia Culture Park and Jinhua International Camellia Species Garden on 23 Feb. through 9 Mar. 2013 respectively. This city, which successfully hosted the 2003 ICS camellia congress, attracted more than 50,000 visitors to this annual event. There were more than 20,000 camellia plants in the *C. japonica* area, *C. reticulata* area as well as the Yellow Camellia area in the Jinhua Culture
Park and nearly 200 *Camellia* species in Jinhua International Camellia Garden that was recognized as an ICS Garden of Excellence in 2012. Visitors also enjoyed other special flowers, a camellia flower show, a flower arrangement show, tropical plants as well as bonsai plants in this traditional annual event.

Li Jiyuan

(*Director of ICS-China, Vice president of China Camellia Society, works as a Professor at Research Institute of Subtropical Forestry, Chinese Academy of Forestry*)

**France**

Last winter was very long with heavy snowfalls in some areas: many camellias were broken. Spring was chilly and some camellias were still in bloom at the end of May!

A *new Breton camellia association is born.*

In France, Brittany is the most prolific area for camellia. Until now, Brittany has had three major societies: Association Camellia, Association Breizh Camellia and Société Bretonne du Camellia.

The Société d’horticulture de Quimper (President Liliane Brunet) has recently created a new camellia section. The head of this section (Marie-Thérèse Bleuzen) is well-known among lovers of Breton camellias. In her beautiful garden she grows more than six hundred camellias.

This year the Society celebrated its centenary. To mark the occasion, an exhibition of camellias, and a lecture, were organised and a new camellia, *C. japonica* ‘Perle de l’Odet’, was baptized. This new camellia originated in the Kervilou Nurseries.

As every year, Trévarez Castle and Société Bretonne du Camellia organized the Camellia Festival on the theme of La Belle Époque (The Edwardian era). Once again the Camellia Association of the city of Guingamp handed out one thousand branches of camellias to the people of the city.

**The ICS prizes.** The Association Breizh Camellia awarded three prizes for the best new varieties.

The prizewinners were: first prize Roger Tanneau; second prize Félix Lozachmeur; joint third prizes Anne-Marie Tanneau and Joséphine Bilien.

Max Hill
Japan

The relationship between Japan and other Asian Regions, and the Japan Camellia Society (JCS) is so close that they seem as if they were acting with one heart and mind. In fact, all the members of the Regions belong to the JCS in principle and the two directors and the membership representative are holding the posts of JCS officers concurrently.

Every year, the JCS co-hosts a camellia meeting called Tsubaki Summit with one of the autonomies from all over Japan designating camellias as their symbol flowers. The Tsubaki Summit in the spring of 2013 was held in Okinawa, the southernmost Prefecture of Japan, from February 15 to 18 with 350 participants in all. Okinawa is known worldwide as the home of *Camellia lutchuensis*. During the holding term, many events such as an assembly, a camellia show, seminars, a panel discussion, optional tours, a social gathering, etc. were taking place on a large scale.

Applications for 13 cultivars have been made so far and all of them were designated as new cultivars for the first time after the strict judgments by the jury. The certificates were awarded to the applicants at the meeting of Okinawa Tsubaki Summit. The JCS will soon apply to the *International Camellia Register* for inclusion of those new cultivars.

Thanks to the mediation of our ICS President, some valuable Japanese language material left by the late Mr. Charles Puddle was recently donated to the JCS. The material from the great founder of the ICS will be carefully preserved in the JCS camellia library and will be effectively utilized by its members.

Shigeo Matsumoto

New Zealand

Not too many years ago, New Zealand was at the exciting forefront of camellia cultivation and breeding with names that still resound in the camellia world: the Jury dynasty, Tom Durrant founder of the New Zealand Society, Pat Neilson, former ICS President and Neville Haydon, a camellia expert of truly international standing, to name but few.

Now, New Zealand is in the forefront once again, with new research and breeding programmes being undertaken. The problem being tackled? Camellia Flower Petal Blight, *Ciborinia camelliae* (Koln), the pernicious fungal disease that renders a perfect flower into a mass of infected tissue with alarming speed. This affects the popularity of camellias as...
garden plants and has a huge impact on the show benches, the display cases of the camellia world.

Research is being conducted in Europe by the team from University of Pontevedra together with Andrea Corneo, by Dan Charvet in the USA and in New Zealand by Matthew Denton-Giles and Paul Dijkwel. Matthew has been doing his research into resistant species and what is so good is that his doctorate is being sponsored by the Camellia Memorial Trust and by the Riggall Foundation. The results are encouraging. There will be a move away from the traditional cultivars but the results are indicating a way forward.

The quest to find resistant cultivars is not confined to the research students and the laboratory. Auckland Botanic Gardens and Dunedin Botanic Garden are both conducting their own trials of blight-resistant cultivars and Neville Haydon has issued a clarion call in his article; *It is up to us*, exhorting all camellia enthusiasts to get together in a campaign to breed resistant hybrids.

The NZ Camellia Society is not alone in facing the issues of declining numbers and an increasing age profile but interest throughout New Zealand remains strong. At the recent National Show and Convention over 1,200 blooms were exhibited, the most impressive being the reticulata hybrid ‘Frank Houser Variegated’, exhibited by Derek and Jenny Beard, which won the Champion Bloom of the Show. During the Convention, Betty Boswell from Whangarei was awarded Honorary Life Membership of the NZ Camellia Society for outstanding service to the Society.

There was a good turn out at the AGM, a further indication of increasing confidence in the future of the Society.

Edited by Tony Barnes

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**Portugal – a camellia paradise**

Here are some of the wonderful old camellias of Portugal. These photographs are by Joana Anderson Guedes and Clara Gil de Seabra.
News from the UK

A strange year – the longest, coldest spring for fifty years delayed the camellia flowering season but gardeners rose to the challenge and the display at the RHS National Early Camellia Show at Rosemoor in March was surprisingly good. The ICS had stands at a variety of venues including the RHS main Camellia Show and the RHS Malvern Spring and Autumn Shows. The autumn show featured the sasanquas and spotlighted their usefulness in contributing autumn colour as well as providing a welcome food resource for pollinators.

Disappointingly, the very late flowering season caused the trip to Norway to be cancelled, however the fourteen members who went on the weekend excursion to Belgium in October experienced the splendid spectacle of brilliant reds and golds of the trees in some of Belgium’s finest gardens as well as blooms on the Franklinias and Stewartias.
The main project for this year, the review of the status of the four Camellia Trial Gardens, reached a very satisfactory conclusion. These four gardens will now be known as ICS (U.K.) Gardens of Special Interest – a new award that recognises the work undertaken by these gardens since 1977 in testing the ability of camellias to survive in our northern climes. For more information see the article ICS trial gardens p 159.

Bee Robson