

Galician Camellias in 1986

BUNTY KITSON

Camelias de Galicia en 1986

Camélias galiciens en 1986

Camelie galiziane nel 1986

Galizische Kamelien 1986

Don Juan Armada, the I.C.S. Director for Spain, has done great work in his vast garden, one of the largest in Spain with an extensive collection of superb camellias, and through his woods a lovely cascade. Some of his camellias are very old, *C. reticulata* 'Captain Rawes' with a trunk of 60 cms circumference.

He has introduced cultivars of *C. × williamsii* and other hybrids, and in his own words the actual ground cover in his woods consists of seedlings of *C. japonica*, which are everywhere, in all the paths and poking happily out of the granite walls.

Many of his ancient camellias cannot be named, and were probably planted before 1870; some are of Portuguese and some of Italian origin, like that great favourite 'Vergine de Colle Beato'. His hundred years old *japonicas* flower splendidly, and are not very tall, as they are more or less wild. The soil is very acid, decomposed granite, and the rainfall is 65'', mild and damp.

We visited Pazo de Rubianes, where the elegant octogenarian Marquesa Viuda de Aranda had been picking blooms for the Pontevedra Camellia Show next day: astonishing flowers, I recognised a splendid *C. 'Royalty'*, *C. 'Anemonaeflora'*, *C. 'Gigantea'*, and that violet coloured 'Margharita d'Malgahaes', as well as 'Dr Clifford Parks'. The rest of her beautiful flowers were said to be unnamed Portuguese cultivars. In her garden, I paid my respects to a very thriving 12'' high *C. chrysantha*, with a tiny bamboo shade. I recalled the original which I had seen in the Kunming P.R.C. under its wrought iron cage in 1981.

It is quite difficult to describe Robert Gimson's superb, crisp, fresh, huge camellia flowers; they are *C. × williamsii*. It is very sensible to grow mostly *williamsii* in the open because, unless *C. japonicas* are grown under a tree canopy, they can look sad: brown, yellow and scorched. In Galician streets where they are exposed, there they are with yellow leaves and brown messy flowers all over. I almost made up my mind to go home and throw out all my *japonicas*. Robert Gimson's shrubs however were loaded with hardier flowers and glistening leaves, and some like 'E. G. Waterhouse' were shedding their petals to the ground to make a pretty pink carpet. In the shade of his woods, he had *reticulatas* 'Lila Naff' and 'William Hertrich', both prize winners.

We visited the great garden of OCA; in a fertile valley an enormous *reticulata*,

larger even than Juan Armada's, was starting to flower, good blooms of a deep red formal double, looking like 'Robert Fortune', but very high in the sky. The *C. japonicas* were of great age, sporting all over in red, pink and white anemone flowers.

Pontevedra Camellia Show is free, and it was packed with happy people, who are mostly very poor and get little amusement. A small group of giggly children spoke English welcomes to us, and we urged them on and made them laugh. Ideas of staging were very varied; lustrous blooms floated in new galvanised buckets; others in a pink painted basket, some with fans, ribbons and feathers. Such gorgeous blooms, and amongst them a show-stopper 'Dr Tinsley', large luminous, and glistening as never before. A truly wonderful world of camellias which prompted me to write this, to tell members less fortunate than myself.

Camellias in New South Wales

BETTY KNYVETT

Camélias en New South Wales (Australia)

Camélias en Nouvelles-Galles du Sud

Camelie nel New South Walse

Kamelien in New South Wales

With a climate of hot, dry summers and cold, dry winters and an irregular annual rainfall of about 550 mm (22 inches), camellias are not expected in the interior of N.S.W., Australia. In summer, in this area, the temperature reaches 114°F for several days on end, and in winter the frosts can freeze water pipes and troughs.

However, there is a garden on a farming property, "Broombee", Leadville, about 360 kms from Sydney, in the Central West of N.S.W., which grows about 130 varieties of camellias, mostly japonicas, with some reticulatas and hybrids.

There are also about 40 seedlings, two or three years old and some young cuttings. Last year over 300 seeds were germinated and potted.

The camellias are grown in containers as the garden soil is unsuitable. Although some are in suitable spots around the house, most are in a special area, under the dappled shade of pepper trees, with tall fences and buildings protecting them from strong winds.

In bloom, the camellias are a glorious sight and very rewarding. They flower from about May until October, with one exception which begins to flower in April.

Each year, for the last ten years, a "Camellia Day" has been held, towards the end of August, for charity, bringing 150 to 200 people from surrounding towns and countryside within a radius of perhaps 100 kms.

This year, however, tragedy has struck. This part of N.S.W. has been affected by drought, on and off, for the last six years. As a result, the dams are now dry and the camellias have had to be watered with bore water. Although a gadget, designed to keep harmful chemicals in suspension, has been fitted, it does not seem to have been effective as the bore water has caused root damage, leaf burning, leaf loss and severe dieback.

A thick coating of dust covers the leaves, preventing them from absorbing even the little amount of dew which falls occasionally. Occasionally they have been sprayed with a hand sprayer and fresh water, but with little effect due to the encrustation.

As soon as the damage was noticed, water was carted from another bore thought to be less devastating. House water is stolen whenever possible, but this is necessarily on a small scale. A bird died in one house tank - quite accidentally - so that water was available for judicious feeding, watering those particularly affected and young ones, and for spraying.

Bore water has been soaked into the surrounding ground in an attempt to provide a more moist micro-climate from evaporation, but the pepper trees are beginning to object.

Certainly, some new growth has appeared. Some of the new leaves are healthy, some have deep green veining, others are yellow to almost white, and some show a burning effect like fertilizer burn. pH testing has not revealed very high levels. In fact, some containers show a very low pH. Remedial treatments have been tried with mixed results. Some bushes have died, some are sadly affected, some show rejuvenation to some extent and some have not been affected.

Many of the seedlings have succumbed and less than 100 now remain.

And the problem remains. There has been only 100 mm (4 inches) of rain for the first six months of this year and there is no sign of the drought breaking, certainly not for the sort of rain needed to fill dams.

Nevertheless, with optimism, Camellia Day is still planned for 1986.