

CAMELLIA SOCIETY OF MODESTO

November 2018

President's Message



November is already here! So much to be thankful for and so much to do in our camellia gardens.

At our November meeting, on the 11th, Tony Miranda will be speaking on what we need to be doing in our camellia gardens at this point in the year. We will also be filling shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. As the postal restrictions have changed, please refer to the Operation Christmas Child flyer in this newsletter for a list of approved items that can be shipped overseas.

November is going to be busy! We have entered the Modesto Downtown Christmas Parade on December 1st at 5:30pm. Let me know if anyone is willing to help by making truck decorations, decorating the truck that morning, or be in the parade that night! We will be handing out flyers with our club information on them to get our name out in the community. There is also an abundance of little jobs within our society that need done. If you have a little time, I have a little job you can do! Please let me know! Our December meeting will be on the 9th, and is our annual Christmas Party. Please stay tuned for emailed details.

On a different note, we were saddened at the loss of our society member, Sylvia Aherns. However, many of our society members were able to attend a celebration of life service in honor of Sylvia, where Barbara offered beautiful thoughts and a prayer, and her daughter Chris was presented a lovely camellia. Sylvia, you will be missed.

We all have so much to be thankful for; family, friends, and our camellias! Have a wonderful Thanksgiving, and see you at the meeting!

Kim Bardsley

Membership Dues!

Membership dues for the Camellia Society of Modesto are only \$10 for the entire family. Please bring cash or check to the November meeting to take care of your dues. Please note, if you signed up and paid for membership at the 2018 Modesto Camellia Society Show, you are paid for through this year.



WHAT'S BLOOMING IN YOUR GARDEN?

Share the camellia love! Send your camellia photos to camelliasocietyofmodesto@gmail.com and we will feature them in the monthly newsletter!



Camellia Care Center:

Quick Tips for Your Camellia Garden in November!

By Cindy Cook

1. Start 0-10-10 fertilizing now for maximum bud growth.
 - ⇒ Morbloom Alaska has a good organic fish emulsion that uses peppermint oil to reduce smell. Local big box stores and Amazon are good sources.
 - ⇒ Prime growers say they fertilize using half the amount on the directions, but apply twice as often.
 - ⇒ Water your plants the day before you fertilize.
2. Disbud RUTHLESSLY.
 - ⇒ Only one bud per branching and don't leave any buds near main stem.
 - ⇒ If there are multiple buds, save the one that is pointing downwards. When it blooms, rain will not affect the petals as much.
 - ⇒ Disbudding promotes better blossoms as more nutrients are available to the fewer buds.
 - ⇒ Please note, it is not necessary to disbud Sasanqua plants, unless there are more than 3 buds on a branch.
3. Enjoy yourself!

Operation Christmas Child

After the November Camellia Meeting we will be packing shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. The boxes will be delivered to children around the world in need this holiday season. If you wish to participate, please bring any of the following items:

1. A standard sized shoe box.
2. Toys
 - ⇒ Jump ropes, yo-yos, toy cars, etc.
3. Accessories
 - ⇒ Socks, sunglasses, hair clips, hats, jewelry, watches, etc.
4. School Supplies
 - ⇒ Pens, pencils, crayons, markers, notebooks, paper, calculators, etc.
5. Non-Liquid Hygiene Items
 - ⇒ Toothbrush, combs, bar soap, wash clothes, etc.
6. A Note for the Child (optional)



**Please do not bring: candy, toothpaste, gum, used or damaged items, war-related items, seeds, food, liquids or lotions, medications or vitamins, breakable items, glass containers, or aerosol cans.

If you have any questions, please contact Barbara Bort.

CONTAINER GROWN CAMELLIAS

Camellia Soil Mixes for Landscape & Containers
By Bradford King

The ideal soil for camellias is well drained and acid. Camellias prefer a well-drained soil that is high in humus and slightly acid. A pH of 7 or less is acceptable but 5.5 to 6.5 is ideal. The use of coarse peat moss or oak leaf mold provides humus and the acid condition. When either is mixed in equal parts with "sharp" or "potting" sand, a loose, well-drained quality mix is obtained. Fine peat moss frequently found in garden centers is not recommended. It easily becomes too wet or too dry; both conditions lead to loss of camellias.

LANDSCAPING

When planting a camellia in the ground, determine your soil conditions. A simple test is wetting the soil and then grasping a handful of it. If it remains loose and formless, it is sandy. If it forms a one or two inch ribbon, it is loamy. If it forms a two-inch or firmer ribbon, it is clay.

If your garden soil is sandy, add oak leaf mold or coarse peat and small pine bark in equal parts in a hole dug twice the size of the root ball. If the soil is loamy, it has acceptable conditions. However, adding equal parts sand and humus to the soil will provide optimal growing conditions. When the garden soil is clay or adobe, remove as much of it as possible, add in equal parts sand, medium-sized pine bark and humus (coarse peat moss or oak leaf mold). This will make the soil well drained, acidic and rich in humus.

The pine bark decomposes slowly, keeping the mix loose for a longer period of time. As it decomposes, the bark does remove some nitrogen. However, it is a sound trade off to keep the soil loose and to fertilize with either cottonseed meal or a camellia/azalea commercial fertilizer once or twice a year.

Do not fertilize the first year you put a camellia in the ground. Camellia roots need to breathe. Soggy wet soil and dry, hard-packed soil destroy roots. In other words, camellias thrive in moist, not wet or dry, conditions. Therefore, add ingredients to your garden soil to get the optimal balance for your conditions.



CONTAINERS

Camellias thrive in pots but require special care for them to grow and flower. Camellias in containers require repotting or potting up every two or three years. The soil becomes depleted, soggy and heavy after three years.

Containers-1 Potting up is useful when a plant outgrows its container. For example, a camellia doing well in a one-gallon pot should be potted up to a three-gallon pot after two years and so on until the plant reaches the size the grower desires. Once the optimal size is reached, the camellia is repotted every two or three years, in the same size container. When repotting, roots are trimmed an inch or two with a knife then put back in its container with fresh potting King June-August 2008 30 mix. While the same principles as with a camellia in the ground are followed, more careful attention is required.



First, the container must have an adequate drainage holes because camellias can't tolerate wet feet. The bottom layer of the pot can be gravel, broken crock, coarse wire mesh, etc. I prefer two or three inches of coarse pine bark.

Second is the potting mix. Do not use ordinary garden soil because it gets too hard and its humus is depleted quickly. The most convenient method is to use a ready-made commercial camellia/azalea mix from your local garden center. However, many growers make their own mix.

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My current mix is equal parts small pine bark, sand, oak leaf mold (or coarse peat moss) and a high quality commercial camellia mix. The commercial mix has “composted fir bark, sphagnum peat moss, mushroom compost, volcanic pumice stone, earthworm castings, bat guano, kelp meal, feather meal, gypsum and a natural wetting agent yucca shidigera sponen.” The percentages are not listed for this product. I would assume percentages can change and that various commercial mixes will have different ingredients.

Third, a camellia in a container will require fertilization. The easiest solution is to purchase a commercial camellia/azalea fertilizer using it as directed on the label. These products are to be used only during the growing season—April through September. Never feed a dry plant and be careful not to over feed, especially during hot weather (over 90°F).

A popular alternative is to use cottonseed meal during the growing season. It is organic and much less likely to burn the plant. A successful alternative is to use four parts cottonseed meal to one part iron. This will keep the foliage green and flower colors vibrant, especially the reds. Notice how much nitrogen is combined with the iron. An N=2 or 3 is optimal and one over 10 can be dangerous as it is combined with the nitrogen in the cottonseed meal for a total exceeding 15.

A fourth method is to use a liquid fertilizer formulated for acid-loving plants which can be applied with a watering can or foliage spray during the growing season. The best example is Miracle-Gro for azalea, camellias and rhododendrons. Please note that Miracle-Gro contains a high level of nitrogen – nitrogen 30, phosphate 10 and potassium 10 and all the iron and trace elements needed for healthy camellias. Therefore, I recommend cutting the manufacture’s amount in half, especially for small plants and non-reticulata hybrids. Several application in two-week intervals works well.

Do not use fertilizers when temperatures are above 90°F or you may burn the camellia leaves. During the rest of the summer growing season, I use cottonseed meal every 45 days. During the dormant season from October through February when buds are developing and blooms appear, a 2-10-10 fertilizer is applied.

Containers-2

A number of other growers begin the growing season with an application of fish emulsion, followed by four parts cotton seed meal, one part iron and one part blood meal every 45 days during the growing season and 2-10-10 during the dormant season every 45 days.

Fourth, camellia seedlings grown in pots require fertilizing once the seed has been absorbed. Cottonseed meal is acceptable but the commercial dry fertilizers may be too strong for “babies.” I prefer a liquid starter fertilizer applied every two weeks during the growing season, which is cut in half during the dormant season. The objective is to keep the nitrogen level low (N=2 and never above 3) during dormancy. This is the period for bud and flower development in camellias so some phosphate and potash is desirable.

Finally, take time to enjoy your flowers. Blooms may be cut and used to decorate your home. A collection of blooms floating in a shallow bowl makes an attractive centerpiece. A single bloom with leaves in a small vase is attractive addition wherever you wish a touch of color. A container plant may be move to a patio or window to better show its flowers as long as it is outdoors and has shade.



Questions about YOUR camellias? Attend the monthly meetings in Modesto and get the advice of camellia-experts!

Recipe of the Month:

Cream Cheese Apple Cake

Ingredients:

- 1/2 Cup Butter
- 2 Eggs
- 1 Teaspoon Vanilla
- 6 Ounces Cream Cheese, Softened
- 1 1/2 Cup Sugar
- 3 Cups Apple (About 3 Medium) Apples
- 1 1/2 Cups Flour
- 1 1/2 Teaspoons Baking Powder
- 1/4 Teaspoon Salt
- 2 Teaspoons Cinnamon



Directions:

1. Grease 9" Springform Pan.
2. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
3. Cream butter with sugar, then add cream cheese and beat until smooth and creamy.
4. Stir in eggs and vanilla.
5. In a small bowl, mix flour, baking powder, and salt.
6. Peel and slice apples.
7. In another small bowl, mix 1/4 cup sugar with cinnamon.
8. Beat flour into cream cheese.
9. Add cinnamon mixture to apples and stir until coated.
10. Stir apple into batter.
11. Pour all ingredients into greased pan.
12. Bake 1 hour.

Let us know what you think of this recipe!

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