



# Corner Copia Courier

*Passion, Plants, People*

## The Camellia Edition

**C**amellias are evergreen shrubs and small trees native to the humid forests of eastern and southeastern Asia. Two species shaped their early story: **Camellia sinensis**, the tea plant, cultivated in China for millennia; and **Camellia japonica**, prized in China, Korea, and Japan for winter and spring flowers.

In China, camellias appear in classical paintings and garden manuals as symbols of elegance and endurance. Scholars and gardeners selected forms for bloom size, petal count, and color, while tea growers refined **C. sinensis** into the green, oolong, and black teas that moved the world.

In Japan, **C. japonica** and **C. sasanqua** became staples of temple gardens. Regional forms—like the single-petaled **Higo camellias** associated with Samurai culture—reflect a long tradition of careful selection and aesthetic rules.

Portuguese traders, Jesuit networks, and later the Dutch and British East India Companies carried camellias to Europe in the 17th–18th centuries. By the early 1800s, heated conservatories made them status symbols. Collections flourished in Italy, Belgium, France, and England, and a wave of breeding produced hundreds of named cultivars. The plant's glossy leaves and winter flowers filled formal lawns, and “camellia houses” became fashionable on grand estates.

Camellias reached American gardens by the late 1700s and early 1800s, with early plantings in **Charleston, Savannah, New Orleans, and Philadelphia**. The humid Southeast proved ideal: public gardens and private estates quickly built notable collections, and camellia shows and societies followed. As breeding advanced, gardeners began blending the

strengths of **C. japonica** (large, formal blooms) and **C. sasanqua/hiemalis** (earlier season, finer texture, sun and pruning tolerance), expanding both bloom season and landscape uses—from specimen shrubs to clipped hedges and espaliers. Across two centuries, dedicated breeders expanded color, form, and cold tolerance:

Alabama embraced **Camellia japonica** as the state flower, and along the Gulf Coast the plant is part of local identity. In **Baldwin County** mild winters, acid soils, and generous rainfall create

nearly perfect conditions.

In **Fairhope**, camellias anchor modern landscapes—used as evergreen structure, privacy screens, and seasonal color under pines and live oaks. The area also contributes to camellia innovation: **Bobby Green** of Fairhope popularized the **October Magic® series**, compact sasanqua/hiemalis-type camellias selected for **reliable fall bloom, tidy habit, and landscape toughness**—traits perfectly matched to coastal gardens and widely adopted across the Southeast.



Camellia Japonica  
“Professor Charles S. Sargent”  
Photo courtesy of Cam Too

# **The Camellia Chefs**

## This Trio Defined and Refined Camellias on the Gulf Coast



Camellia sasanqua "Cleopatra"

**Kosaku Sawada (Mobile, AL)** – Japanese-born nurseryman; founded Overlook Nursery in Crichton; introduced 'Alba Plena' improvements and 'Herme'-type seedlings; shaped Southern taste.

Sawada's camellia hybrids include:

Autumn Moon  
Bienville  
Cleopatra  
Floribunda  
Gulf Glory  
Imura  
Liberty Bell  
Lurie's Favorite  
Mrs K. Sawada  
Overlook White  
Queen Bessie  
Sarasa  
Sawada's Dream  
Sawada's Mahogany  
Shiro Botan  
Smiling Beauty  
Snow Flake  
Tiny Princess  
Victory White  
White Giant  
White Queen



Cam. sasanqua "Oct. Magic White ShiShi"

**Bobby Green (Fairhope, Alabama)** – Owner of Green Nurseries; hybridized the *October Magic*® series .

Green's camellia introductions include:

Aphrodite  
Daydream Believer  
Dream Weaver  
Eos  
Greens Blues  
Grey Ghosts  
Irrational Exuberance  
Katsuya Nomura  
Mary Allen Sargent  
Mockingbird Blush  
Moonshadow  
Oct. Magic Bride  
Oct. Magic Carpet  
Oct. Magic Crimson & Clover  
Oct Magic Dawn  
Oct. Magic Inspiration  
Oct. Magic Ivory  
Oct. Magic Orchid  
Oct. Magic Pink Perplexion  
Oct. Magic Rose  
Oct. Magic Ruby  
Oct. Magic Snow  
Oct. Magic White ShiShi  
Purple Haze  
Rose of Autumn  
Stephen's Garden  
Steven Sawada  
Susy Dirr  
Tama Anemone



Camellia Sasanqua "Bonanza"

**Tom Dodd (Semmes, Alabama / Mobile area)** – Produced hardy landscape varieties and maintained important parent collections.

Dodd's contributions to the camellia world include:

Alabama Beauty  
Alice Stokes  
Angel's Blush  
Bessie Battle  
Bonanza  
Claudia Vanis  
Elizabeth Acree  
Elizabeth Ann  
Reverend Ida  
Ruth Bell Graham  
Stephanie Golden  
Strawberry Cream  
Winter Rouge



Camellia sasanqua "Pink Perplexion"

All Photos courtesy of Cam Too

## The Six Flower Forms Of Camellias

### Single

*Japonica "Tama No Ura"*



### Semi Double

*Japonica "Taylor's Perfection"*



### Anemone

*Japonica "Laura Walker"*



### Peony

*Sasanqua "Bonanza"*



### Rose

*Japonica "Miss Biloxi"*

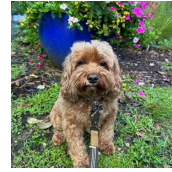


### Formal Double

*Japonica "La Peppermint"*



Photos courtesy of Cam Too



## Copper's Corner

I woke up this morning and, as usual, Mom was still snoring. Dad was awake and he came and let me out the back door and ... OH, WOW!!! ... It's finally cool!

Any proud Alabamian will tell you that they just LOVE the heat. I am here to tell that this fur coat doesn't make that long summer very attractive.

But this morning was the first cool morning of the fall. My brother Weaver (the Retriever) and my brother Satsuma (the catsuma) and I all did a happy dance on the porch which involved much barking and running in circles.

By way of explanation, Mom is very particular about the fact that all of the pets ... meaning dogs, cats and chickens ... have to have plant names. So Zinnia, the tortoise shell cat; Dahlia, the black and white cat; and Meyer Lemon, the yellow cat all live in the greenhouse and prowl the front of the property.

I was named for the Copper plant and Weaver was named for a variety of camellia called Dreamweaver. We haven't named the chickens yet but we will be announcing a chicken-naming contest soon. It will be very cool ...

**Just like this morning!**



Camellia sasanqua "Dreamweaver"

Photo courtesy of Cam Too

# Connoisseur's Corner

## ***Rare & Hard to Find Plants***

- ⇒ **October Magic “Pink Perplexion”**—A stunning soft pink camellia sasanqua not often seen for sale. Fairhope’s own Bobby Green hybridized this beauty as part of the Southern Living October Magic series and these plants were sourced from a local grower. Grab one while they last!
- ⇒ **“Dream Weaver”**- Another Bobby Green beauty, this one is a non-reticulata hybrid—deep pink in the center to pink and white on the edges with bright yellow stamens in the semi-double to rose-form double. This is the camellia variety that Weaver (The Retriever) is named after!
- ⇒ **“Black Tie”**- Also a hard-to find camellia—this one a japonica featuring dark red petals forming a formal double bloom. Think cummerbund!
- ⇒ **PRE-ORDER NOW!!! “Moon Glow” Christmas Cactus (Yellow)**

### **Fresh off the Truck**

Camellias  
Pansies  
Violas  
Jolt Dianthus  
Cyclamen  
New arrivals in our gift shop



## **Upcoming Events**

- ♦ Oct 30—Spook & Shop 4-6 pm  
Eat, drink and be scary
- ♦ Oct 31 —Scarecrows Last Day
- ♦ Nov 1—Fall is For Planting  
Class w/Michelle 10 a.m.
- ♦ Nov 10—Camellia with Chris  
Class 10 am
- ♦ Nov 18—Live Music 2-4 pm  
Billy Bones
- ♦ Nov 21—Poinsettia Party
- ♦ Dec 11 Holiday Sip & Shop 4-6 pm