Camellias Illawarra

An Affiliate of Camellias Australia Inc

www.camelliasillawarra.org.au

NEWSLETTER - March 2017

Jim Powell with Lord Mayor of Wollongong, Gordon Bradbury, after Jim had been named “Wollongong Senior Citizen 2017”.

Photo: Jenny Donohoe

Next meeting 18 March

Coniston Community Centre 2pm

Guest Speaker: Jim Powell

Jim will give us a pictorial journey to the last National Congress held at Launceston

Vale Alan Daisley

With much sadness we learned of the death of our very good friend Alan on the 13th December.

Alan was a very long time member of Camellias Illawarra serving on the committee for many years until illness preventing him from doing so. Alan was president several times during his membership..

For many years he and wife Margaret were the backbone for the successful running of our shows

Alan was one of those people who always wanted to share his love of camellias, by proudly opening his garden to visitors. If Alan had a plant that you wanted, scions were always available for you to graft.

He was a very capable camellia judge and shared his vast knowledge most willingly. For several years he judged the shows at Albury.

Alan will be sadly missed by his family and hosts of friends in the many organisations to which he belonged.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE March, 2017

Happy New Year to all our reader's, I hope all are eager to commence the new year and that the blazing sun and the extremely hot temperature and humidity of the past few weeks hasn't done any or too much damage to your camellias, or diminished your interest in our much loved favourite flowers.

We will commence our year with our meeting March 18 and I'd like to remind you all that the Monthly Bloom Competition will also commence on that day. Although blooms may be hard to come by so early in the year I feel sure that there will be members who will have some blooms to show, so keep your eyes peeled for any blooms that appear in your garden so that you can get away to a good start for the year.

Being so early in the camellia year there isn't much to talk about that might be of interest but the one topic that I would like to report about is the Judging School for 2017. I am interested to know how many are interested in attending and how often you would like the classes to be held. Last year it was the second and fourth Thursday of the month and commenced in May. Depending on what blooms are about I would like to begin a little earlier this year because as the year progresses and "Show Time"' approaches, time begins to become short and I feel that

last year the classes didn't achieve very much for those who attended and while I feel sure that people would much rather look at blooms every time they come, I believe that we need some backgrounding on species and where they originated, so a few extra days before we have an abundance of blooms might be beneficial to all who attend. I will raise the topic in General Business at our March Meeting.

Camellia seeds will soon be ready for planting, so, if you have some seed pods on your plants and you would like to be able to grow them but are not aware of how to go about it,

As soon as the seed capsule begins to split open, put the seeds (not the seed capsule) in a plastic bag (without holes) together with some moistened Peat or Sphagnum moss and tie the bag closed and leave in a warm place. If you want to know how to proceed further, raise it at our first meeting and it will be explained to you, as it will take up too much space in the Newsletter.

I look forward to meeting you all at our meeting in March so I hope that you will be able to be there.

WW.

Selecting Camellia Seedlings

Andrew Gillam

There are many pitfalls in selecting a seedling for registration, the first of which is ***ownership bias,*** *a very subjective issue. To minimise bias and to obtain an objective view several processes should be followed.*

1. *Intimate familiarity with camellias already available, especially those with similar characteristics—this may involve descriptions in catalogues, visiting gardens and observing plants for comparison, viewing photographs or consulting someone who is familiar with them.*
2. *Benching blooms at shows and monthly meetings to obtain feed-back will also help to obtain objective opinions.*

Ideally, seedlings should have at least one quality that sets it apart in a distinct and immediately recognisable way from other similar cultivars. These qualities might include– a new colour– a different growth habit- unusual flowers (in form or size) – or be pest and disease resistant.

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New cultivars come from two primary sources, a chance cross or a controlled cross. Seedlings from a deliberate cross definitely have a higher chance of giving a worthwhile new cultivar.

After a seedling has passed the evaluation tests, selecting a name may be the next step.

Simple descriptive names that give some hint to the cultivar will definitely be better if commercial success is the goal.

I encourage everyone to grow seedlings and select the best for registration, so that everyone can enjoy the fruits of your labour and patience

*(*Editor's note:) Andrew is one of the very few people I know who does controlled crosses by hand pollinating select cultivars.

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ILLAWARRA CULTURE NOTES MARCH 2017.

Well what a last 6 months it has been weather wise. Spring gave us good rain, good new growth and lots of hope for great blooms for the coming season. However, since Christmas a lot of these great hopes have diminished with the hottest, driest summer for many years, probably since the drought years of 2005-06.

Many of my larger leafed retics and japonicas have suffered a lot of leaf burn, and so have some sasanquas that had new soft growth on them. I did move a lot of my seedlings in small pots to more shade in a southerly aspect and all of these plants look wonderfully well.

Apart for keeping the water up to them, which is a normal summer requirement, this year it was even more an important task. Despite all the watering when you get 3 days in a row of over 40 degrees, some damage will happen as a lot of camellias have a waxy epidemic covering on the foliage which melts into the under tissue causing unrepairable damage. *(continued next page)*

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Do not remove this foliage as even though they look unsightly, they will give protection to new leaf buds that will replace the damaged ones at this time of the year. If the new soft stems are damaged and no new leaf buds appear, still leave them on the plant until the weather hopefully cools down in autumn time, and then remove them along with other diseased or unwanted spindly growth. A good dose of 'Seasol' or similar products, will help in the recovery of your damaged plants.

All the best for the coming Camellia season and best of good health to you all and your beloved Camellias.

Jim

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Really, Really Important Stuff

Subscriptions for 2017

Are now due and need to be paid by March 31

If you have not paid your fees please complete this form and return (with cash or cheque) to Membership Secretary, Tina Hamer. Or you can do a direct deposit to BSB:641-800 Account no. 021112238

Put your name in the subject box

Name: ……..

Address: ……

……..

Single: ($20) Household: ($24)

TOP WHITES FOR SHOWS (Sandy Reiman)

Many of our members are keen to compete on the show bench at our monthly bloom competition and other branch camellia shows. To be successful it does help to grow the varieties that have a record of being selected for champion blooms.

Traditionally "stand out" booms are often white. Judges recognise that it is difficult to bench a white bloom without blemish and may send a stand out white bloom for consideration for champion status.

The following eight white cultivars are worth growing if you are keen to show.

Polar Bear - medium to large semi double japonica. Useful for Australian cultivar class.

Elegans champagne - large to very large japonica. Can also attract national champion as USA cultivar.

Kama Hon Ami - large single. Known to have won national champion for overseas cultivar.

Lady Pamela - very large semi-double reticulata. Although not totally white, has good substance and symmetry of form. Another cultivar for the Australian class.

Silver Chalice - medium to large informal double japonica. A cultivar from the USA.

Nuccios Gem - medium to large formal double japonica . Often seen as champion bloom of the show. Popular cultivar from USA.

Man size - miniature elegans form japonica. Good flowerer and often seen in miniature group classes. USA cultivar.

Wirlinga Bride - miniature cluster flowered hybrid. Used for cuts or sprays. An Australian cultivar

After some thought I could not recollect a white hybrid that had won or is likely to be selected for a champion category other than miniature or sprays.

Perhaps other members could suggest a white cultivar for the hybrid class?

Odd Bits and Pieces

Gift for Members

At the annual Christmas party member Charles Cowell gave the club a device for cutting the scions and rootstock in readiness for grafting. Charles said that he had used it for many years but no longer had need of it.

Charles purchased the tool from a company in Australia from a New Zealand manufacturer but it is no longer listed on the Australian company's online catalogue.

So out of curiosity I have had a look elsewhere on line and found some on ebay. There is one that looks exactly like the one Charlie gave us called "Garden fruit tree seedling grafting pruning shears" that is made in China and sells for around $50.

Both William and Bernie have purchased their own tools so you might like to speak with them. Not sure what type they have.

The tool cuts a vee shape in the rootstock and a corresponding wedge shape on the scion. Charles said he then fixed the two pieces together with the green and yellow electrical tape.

Members who wish to borrow the tool should contact the committee.

Many thanks Charles for your thoughtfulness.

Camellias for sale

Kevin has some camellias from last years grafting ready for sale, there is a mix of not easy to get japonicas and reticulata. Just give him a call.

Articles for newsletter

As with William before me, I am always on the lookout for articles for the newsletter. If you have any ideas of what you would like to see (or not see) in the newsletter or would like to write something yourself just give me a call or send me an email. Kevin

Gardening Rule No1

When treating areas of your garden with weed killer *do not* walk on the area you have just treated.

Right

Results of not observing gardening rule no 1

No prizes for guessing who the idiot was!!!!!!!

Q: What do you get if you cross a four-leaf clover with poison ivy?

A: A rash of good luck.

Q: Why don't you ever iron a four-leaf clover?

A: You might be pressing your luck.

Cutting the Grass

Michael O'Leary was waiting at the bus stop with his friend, Paddy Maguire, when a lorry went by loaded up with rolls of turf.

O'Leary opined, 'I'm gonna do that when I win de lottery, Maguire.'

'What's that, Michael?' responds his mate.

'Send me lawn away to be cut,' concludes O'Leary

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Christmas Party 2016

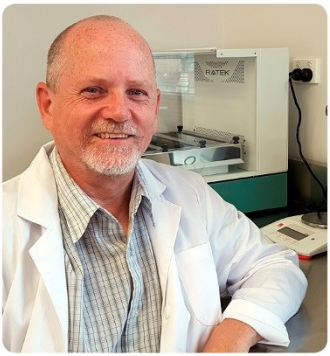
At the Party, Elizabeth Martin honoured 3 members by presenting them with the " Golden Camellia Award" for their many contributions to the society over long periods of time.

Calendar 2017

March 5 —Committee meeting

March 18— Monthly meeting—the first bloom comp

Research Scientist Dr Uwe Stroeher appointed to Neutrog



Australian owned biological fertiliser manufacturer, Neutrog Australia, has recently appointed research scientist, Dr Uwe Stroeher Ph.D., to head up its Research and Development team.

Announcing his permanent appointment, Neutrog Managing Director Angus Irwin said Dr Stroeher's background as a highly regarded scientist together with his expertise in molecular biology will allow Neutrog to continue to be at the forefront of biological fertiliser development.

"Innovation is central to Neutrog's strategic agenda and by employing a research scientist with the right combination of knowledge, skills and curiosity, we will further strengthen our position as a leader in the development of biological fertilisers worldwide," Mr Irwin said.

Dr Stroeher will play a pivotal role at Neutrog, conducting field research and running trials on which to base further development of biological products that are able to pinpoint, extract and proliferate specific soil bacteria which are known for their roles in the soil such as unlocking phosphorus and fixating nitrogen.

Dr Stroeher's background ensures Neutrog's manufacturing methodologies and processes, like batch and DNA testing of raw materials and finished products, providing customer reassurance by far exceeding mandatory safety standards.

Dr Stroeher has consulted to the company for the past ten years, initially during the concept stages of GOGO Juice (a liquid probiotic for soil). He's been involved in developing processes and technologies aimed at maximising the beneficial microbiology in all of Neutrog's fertiliser products.

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This newsletter printed courtesy of the office of Stephen Jones MP. Federal Member for Whitlam

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