

Coushatta

Camellia



March 2005 Newsletter

Society

PEGGY'S LITTLE CAMELLIA

P.O. Box 1655, Conroe, TX 77305

When Peggy Levrier brought her basket of camellias to the Coushatta Camellia Society's 2004 January show, she had no idea the stir she would rouse. Peggy had come to see the beautiful flowers and to share the bounty of her garden. She was not too disappointed when, that Saturday afternoon, she was told the judging had already been completed. After all, she was not an "expert" grower or competitor, so she simply smiled and asked if someone could tell her more about the blossoms she loved.

Several judges examined the lovely blooms, identifying them one by one, until one small rosy blossom was raised. 'Wait, now what is this?' The books were consulted, but no one could identify the flower. It looked as if Peggy Levrier had brought a new variety of camellia, and so she was advised to enter the flower as a seedling at the next show.

When Don and Peggy Levrier moved to the Conroe area in 1967, they bought 5 uncleared acres of land on Walker Road in Bennett Estates, south of Conroe. It was a wonderful place to raise their 4 children, three of whom are boys. Peggy & Don started to landscape the land around their home, but left the bulk of the property in its natural wooded state. "We have a circle drive," says Peggy, "and I started planting azaleas and camellias around the drive. We didn't have a landscaper, but I love to garden, and I remembered the beautiful azaleas and camellias my aunt in Alabama had growing around her drive. I wanted to have my garden look like hers."

They had dug up and brought one camellia with them – "a big, red, rosy one" –from their previous home in Houston. As the years passed, Peggy would buy a few azaleas and camellias that she liked each year to add to her yard. Some were white, some pink or red. "I never noticed the names," she says. "I just would buy one or maybe two camellias from the nursery as to what looked nice and was available." She has about 2 dozen different varieties.



Continued page 3-see Peggy's Camellia

Upcoming Events

April 5 End of Year Social
6:30 p.m. - Dinner
Coronelli's Restaurant
(formerly Villa Italia - downtown Conroe
- south of Courthouse - 203 Simonton)
hosted by Renee and Dennis Bilyeu

April 9 Spring Field Trip
Bus leaves from Library at 8:30 a.m.
Nacogdoches highlights:
Pineywoods Native Plant Center
Downtown Shopping/Art of Floral Design
Dutch Treat Lunch
SFA Mast Arboretum
Ruby M Mize Azalea Garden
Bus returns to Library at 6:30 p.m.
cost: \$27 per person for bus

Invite your friends!

Call JoAnn Treat to reserve your seat.

*Have a wonderful summer - we'll
see you in September!*

September 6 September meeting
6:30 p.m. - social
7:00 p.m. - program
Rivershire Community Bldg.
206 Scarborough, Conroe

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Welcome New Members!

Welcome to our newest members! Their contact information is listed below to be added to your yearbooks.

John & Peggy Jonietz

8943 Summerdale Lane, Conroe TX 77302-3488;
936-441-5167; peggy71@cox-internet.com

Joe & Nancy Santamaria

2337 Sunset Blvd., Houston, TX 77005-1531
(713) 522-0335; jwsantamaria@netscape.net

Deborah Vaughn

12448 Roy Harris Loop, Conroe TX 77306-6600
936-441-9195

Lost & Found!

A size M white windbreaker was left at Rivershire at our last meeting. Please call Linda McCrary at 539-5205 to claim your jacket.

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CALLING ALL COOKS!

Diane Dyer thanks all the wonderful cooks who have shared their goodies with us for the Coushatta Camellia Society Cookbook. We are now over 200 recipes and will soon be able to send to the publisher!

The category "This & That" is the smallest, and we would especially like recipes that are related to gardening. For instance, if you have a special mix of potting soil or fertilizer that you use, we'd love to have you share!

If you have a recipe that you still want to submit, you may e-mail it to Diane at d.s.dyer@att.net, or type it in yourself at the website - www.morriscookbooks.com. Click on the type 'n save icon at the right of the page, enter the ID CCScooks and the password is 4ae03. Sorry, we cannot accept any more recipes after April 15.

The cookbook should be ready for sale in September and will definitely be ready in time for the fall plant sale.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR ALL GOOD MEMBERS TO PAY THEIR DUES!

Treasurer Jan Waller is ready to collect your dues for 2005-2006. Make your payment (\$10 single, \$15 joint) at the March meeting and save postage. Thanks to all you members who have already paid your dues - we appreciate you.

Just joined in January or February? We're glad to have you! You need not pay dues until next year at this time.

Consider becoming a "Friend of CCS" this year. Your donation of \$25 will be recognized in the yearbook.

Is there a program you'd like to see or give? Edie Tong would like to have your ideas! Thanks to all our members who have provided such wonderful programs this year!

Peggy's Camellia - continued from front

Peggy spends a lot of time enjoying the outdoors and her gardens. "Housework is so tedious," she says, "but working in the yard and watching something grow is a joy." "Just for fun," Peggy would gather the seeds from her camellias and scatter them "like Johnny Appleseed" to see what might sprout and grow.

Sometimes she would try cuttings, just sharpening the cutting by slicing at an angle and immediately poking it into unprepared ground, "just stab them into the ground." She places her cuttings and seeds in one area so she can keep that area moist and carefully watch to see what might happen to them.

"We have the ideal ground in Montgomery County for cuttings," Peggy says. "In my case of camellia cuttings, maybe 10% root off the cuttings. I have rooted quite a few little camellias." Don't ask her for the names of her plants, however. "I am not a serious person as far as names and dates. I suppose I should start keeping track of them. I'm a casual gardener, on my way to being a serious gardener." She has found her membership in the Coushatta Camellia Society very helpful during the past year. "The programs are very good. I have learned a lot, how and when to fertilize and how to treat scale."

The lovely little camellia that Peggy brought to our January show has been growing in her yard for quite a few years. Peggy really isn't sure how long it has been growing, but since it is nearly 8 feet tall, it has been awhile. She has been getting blooms from the plant for at least 6 years. "It has always looked different," she says, "and the first year it bloomed I thought it just wasn't mature. But it never did look like the rest of the camellias. At first I wondered - what is wrong? Now I'm sure they are never going to look like the rest of the flowers."

Hyman Norsworthy describes the bloom as a miniature, double, cuplet, rose-colored. Peggy adds that not every flower is a solid color. In many the dark rose at the edges fades to a lighter color at the center. The plant flowers mid-season and has very few flowers that go to seed; she may get 3 or 4 seeds each year. This year she is going to try to grow a seedling from those

seeds. Hyman has given her the name of a man who can try to reproduce it, should she decide she needs help.

Right now, Peggy has started the process to register the plant as a new variety. She entered the blossom in the 2005 Coushatta Camellia Show, winning in the "Chance Seedling" category. The next step is to enter the flower in 2 more shows so it may be seen by a variety of judges.

Peggy plans to visit her daughter in Alabama later this year and attend a show at that time. "My daughter tells me there is lots of interest in camellias in Alabama." Her daughter also helped her decide upon a name for the camellia - Peggy Ray. "Peggy for me, and Ray is my husband Donald's middle name. Don helps me a lot with the fertilizing and the spraying. I liked her idea of including his name."

All 4 children and 9 grandchildren are excited about the possibility of having a new camellia named for their family. "What fun to register," says Peggy. "God has blessed my yard with a unique little flower and I get such pleasure from it. I thank God for that little flower!"



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**Coushatta Camellia
Society Newsletter**

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Editor &

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Coushatta Camellia Society

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COUSHATTA CAMELLIA SOCIETY APRIL END-OF-THE-YEAR FEAST

Don't be an April Fool! On Tuesday, **April 5th**, come celebrate a great camellia year with dinner at **Coronelli's Restaurant, 203 Simonton, Conroe**. This elegant but cozy restaurant was formerly Villa Italia and is located south of the Courthouse in downtown Conroe. We'll be meeting at **6:30 p.m.**

Will your taste buds be ready for a scrumptious meal? Dinner will include your choice of entree (see below), plus salad and dessert, as well as tea or soft drink, and coffee.

When paying, choose your entree of Beef Lasagna or Chicken with Cream Mushroom Sauce. Checks without a choice marked will be designated as lasagna.

Bring your check made out to **CCS** for **\$22.00** per person to the March meeting, or mail it to Renee Bilyeu by March 28. (Renee says may be extra seats, so if you miss the deadline - give her a call.)

Tax and gratuity are included in the price of the meal.



Driving directions:

Take the TX Highway 105 exit (Exit 87) from I-45 and proceed east on 105 (Davis Street) towards downtown for about 3/4 mile.

Turn right on Main Street and drive one block to Simonton Street. The restaurant will be near the SW corner of Simonton and Main.

