



## *Camellia Garden Fact Sheet*

### *Overview*

The Huntington Camellia collection includes about 67 species (of the 300 known species) and over 1200 different cultivars. These occupy approximately twelve acres of native oak woodland, divided between the North Vista and the North Canyon. Our collection serves to inform the public about the great beauty and diversity of the genus *Camellia*. Native to Asia, *Camellia* can live more than 300 years. With great variety in flower color, form, and size, as well as foliage and growth habit, camellias provide an endless array of beauty.

### *History*

The origins of our Camellia collection predate the institution. When Mr. Huntington bought the land in 1903, two camellias were already growing in the area north of the Shorb ranch home. Of these, a 'Pink Perfection' survives. In 1908-09, approximately two dozen large camellia plants were purchased from a local nursery and planted in the North Vista. Additional plants were acquired along with the Japanese house and garden in 1912. In 1918, a small shipment of camellias came directly from Japan. In the late 1940s the collection was expanded to the North Canyon. In 1950, the Huntington imported a number of new *Camellia reticulata* cultivars from the Kunming Botanic Garden in Yunnan Province, China. In 1951, the North Vista and North Canyon camellias gardens were permanently opened to the public.

### *Landscape*

Camellias favor a semi-shaded woodland habitat. Ours grow under mature oaks and other trees along the both sides of the North Vista and in the North Canyon of the Japanese Garden. Their companion plants enjoy the same environment as camellias such as: azaleas, ferns, fuchsias, dogwoods, and magnolias.

### *Collections*

The Camellias are planted in groups.

- Species Lane is an area dedicated to showing the vast diversity of the genus *Camellia*, from low growing horizontally branched *Camellia trichoclada* to the large leaved, heavily veined *Camellia semiserrata*.
- The plants along Elegans Lane show that camellias are genetically unstable and tend to sport or mutate. When this happens, a camellia will have a different flower color or form growing on one branch of the plant, giving rise to the possibility of naming a new cultivar. In the case of *Camellia japonica*, 'Elegans' and 13 new cultivars have been named from one original cultivar.
- Reticulata Knoll informs us about the species *Camellia reticulata*. These have a more tree-like form with an open, rangy growth habit, but have the largest flowers of all

camellias. They are native to the Yunnan Province of China, and were acquired by the Huntingtons in 1950.

- Over the years the Huntington has introduced eight new cultivars into the nursery trade. They are wonderful additions, popular with hobbyists, and several have won awards as best new introductions for that year. These include: 'Margarete Hertrich', 'Robert Casamajor', 'Mrs. Goodwin Knight', 'Beverly L. Baylies', 'Betty's Beauty', 'Little Michael', 'Carl Tourje', and 'Rudy's Magnoliaeflora'.

### *Programs*

- Camellia Garden Docents are on duty in the garden to answer questions.
- Camellia Garden volunteers assist with propagation and pruning.