Fall Plant Pick:
Fall Blooming Camellias

Fall blooming camellias make spectacular additions to area landscapes, offering evergreen foliage, showy flowers, and a variety of sizes and habits. Camellias that flower in the autumn are selections and hybrids of Camellia sasanqua, a close relative of the more commonly known winter and spring flowering species of camellia, Camellia japonica.

Fall blooming camellias tend to have smaller leaves and flowers and are less formal in appearance than their winter and spring blooming cousins. Overall, fall blooming camellias are more adaptable than spring blooming camellias, tolerating more sun and drier conditions once established. Their preferred growing conditions are moist, rich, well drained soil and light shade, though they will tolerate full sun when planted in moist soils.

There are many selections of fall blooming camellias, with uses that range from foundation plantings, specimens, and hedges. Larger varieties can even be trained as small trees by removing their lower limbs. Listed below are some of the more commonly available selections, demonstrating the variety of colors, sizes and habits this impressive group of shrubs has to offer.

‘Kanjiro’
A vigorous, upright variety, ‘Kanjiro’ can grow to 10’ or more and is usually taller than it is wide, making it a good choice to train as a small tree or use as a hedge. Its single, bright rosy red flowers are crowned in the center with a cluster of golden yellow stamens.

‘Mine No Yuki’
This double, white flowered selection has a spreading, loose habit with pendulous branches that can eventually reach 6’ or more in height and spread. A profuse bloomer, ‘Mine No Yuki’ can easily be kept small enough to use as a foundation plant with minimal pruning.

‘Bonanza’
This lower growing selection may eventually reach 5’ in height with a wider spread, and can be used in foundation plantings or as a low hedge. ‘Bonanza’ bears deep red-pink, semi-double flowers in October and November.

‘Chansonette’
Another low growing variety, ‘Chansonette’ can eventually reach 3’-4’ tall with a wider spread and cascading habit. It produces bright pink, double flowers over a long period and can be used for foundation plantings, espalier or as a groundcover.

‘Setsugekka’
The large, semi-double, white blossoms of this vigorous variety will light up any autumn garden. Growing 10’ tall or more, ‘Setsugekka’ has an upright habit and makes a lovely specimen shrub or small tree.

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Bulbs: Plant Now for Spring Color

Spring flowering bulbs have been on display at local garden centers for the past several weeks. For this area, November through December is the optimal time to plant bulbs. In the Coastal South, many of the bulbs planted in fall will usually only make it through one or two seasons and are best considered annuals. Bulbs that often do not persist more than a few years include tulips, crocus, hyacinths, anemones, grape hyacinths, Dutch iris, ornamental onions, scillas and snowdrops. Not all fall planted bulbs are so short lived though. Consider some of the following to add beauty to your spring landscape year after year.

Daffodils are a timeless symbol of spring but not all varieties perform well in the South. In fact, most of the classic large flowered varieties do not persist for more than a few years. On the other hand, the old fashion, multi-flowered, sweet scented varieties commonly known as jonquils persist for generations. ‘Trevithian’, ‘Sweetness’, and ‘Pipit’ are all jonquil varieties that should perennialize. Another group of persistent, multi flowered daffodil are the tazettas. Closely related to the paperwhites commonly available for forcing in winter, these extremely early blooming daffodils include the varieties ‘Avalanche’, ‘Erlicheer’, and ‘Geranium’. If you are looking for long lived, large flowered daffodils try ‘Carlton’, ‘Fortune’, ‘St. Keverne’, ‘Ice Follies’, or ‘Mt. Hood’. Additional reliable varieties include the early flowering, shorter selections ‘February Gold’, ‘Jack Snipe’, ‘Thalia’, and ‘Hawera’.

Other long-lived, reliable spring flowering bulbs for this area include the Spanish bluebells, Hyacinthoides hispanica, whose one foot tall spikes of blue, white or pink flowers make excellent companions for azaleas – not only do they flower at the same time, they also thrive in the same conditions. Star flower, Ipheion uniflorum, usually blooms at the same time as daffodils. Growing in low clumps and producing star shaped flowers in shades of white and blue, these tough, adaptable bulbs will thrive almost anywhere except where it is too wet. If you do have a moist area, consider summer snowflake, Leucojum aestivum, whose late spring 12” to 18” spikes are adorned with white bell shaped flowers. As well as being reliable perennials, daffodils, Spanish bluebells, star flower and summer snowflake are less tasty to deer than other spring flowering bulbs such as tulips and crocus.

To find out more about growing bulbs visit the plant fact sheets on NCSU’s Urban Horticulture website, http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer/factsheets/index.html and click on the ‘Bulbs that Perennialize’ link.

Pest Watch: Mealybugs

Mealybugs are a common and difficult to control pest of many types of plants both indoors and out. They are often noticed on the leaves and stems of houseplants brought inside for the winter. Mealybugs are small, oval insects that are covered in waxy, white threads. They do not have wings and cannot fly. Mealybugs damage plants by inserting their needle like mouth parts into plant tissues to feed on plant juices. They also secrete honeydew, a sticky sweet substance that attracts ants and wasps. Black sooty mold, a gray to black fuzzy fungus, often grows on honeydew. Black sooty mold is harmless to plants unless it becomes so thick that sunlight cannot reach their leaves. Other insects that produce honeydew include aphids, whitefly and some types of scale.

Mealybugs are difficult to control because of the waxy coating that covers their bodies. A cotton swab dipped in rubbing alcohol can be used to control small infestations. Simply rub the swab over the insects. For more severe outbreaks, repeated application of pesticides may be required.

For more information about mealybugs and their control see NCSU’s Mealybug Insect Note, available from your local Cooperative Extension office or online at: http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/ent/notes/O&T/flowers/note19/note19.html.

Extensive information about managing pests of indoor plants can be found at NCSU’s Interiorscape Integrated Pest Management site: http://ipm.ncsu.edu/InteriorScapes/
In this area, warm season turf grasses are the best choice for lawns. Warm season grasses are those that actively grow when soil and air temperatures are warm—spring, summer and fall. These include St. Augustine, zoysia, bermuda, and centipede. With the onset of frost, these grasses go dormant, or stop growing, until the following spring when soil and air temperatures warm up again. Caring for these grasses in winter is simple because very little work is required. The following tips will help you keep your lawn happy and healthy:

- **Do NOT Fertilize!** Warm season grasses do not grow during winter and do not require any fertilizer before late March. Fertilizing in winter will only encourage weed growth and may pollute local ground and surface waters. In the cooler parts of NC and the US, cool season grasses such as fescue and Kentucky bluegrass are grown. These grasses do require fertilization in fall and early spring. Commercials and ads about fertilizing in fall and early spring are referring to cool season grasses only.

- **Do NOT Water!** Most of the time dormant lawns do not require irrigation. The only situation where it is beneficial to water lawns in winter is during extended periods of warm, windy weather.

- **Overseeding—Good or Bad?** Many people would prefer a green lawn year-round. One way to accomplish this is to overseed dormant warm season lawns with annual rye. The problem with this is that for most lawns, overseeding with annual rye is detrimental to long term health. The only type of turf that can with stand this type of treatment annually is bermuda. Overseeding is especially harmful to less vigorous turf grasses like centipede and St. Augustine.

- **Winter Weed Control.** Just as there are warm and cool season grasses, there are also warm and cool season weeds. Cool season weeds grow during the cool part of the year. They come up in fall and early spring and flower, set seed and die before the heat of summer. Cool season weeds can be controlled with herbicides, but which herbicide to use depends on what type of lawn you have and which weeds are growing in it. For help with weed identification and herbicide recommendations, contact your local Cooperative Extension office. The most effective way to control weeds in turf is to nurture a healthy, dense lawn by following correct cultural practices.

Learn about the correct way to care for your lawn by requesting a Lawn Maintenance Calendar for your turf from Pender County Cooperative Extension, also available online at [http://pender.ces.ncsu.edu](http://pender.ces.ncsu.edu), click on the Lawn & Garden link.

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**A Garden Grows at Pender County Cooperative Extension**

The Pender Community Gardens, a project of the Pender County Master Gardeners, surround the offices of Pender County Cooperative Extension, located at 801 South Walker Street in Burgaw. The goal of these gardens is to serve as a demonstration site for good plants and landscape practices for area conditions and to provide a place for hands on learning for youth, Master Gardeners, and anyone interested in gardening. Your help is needed to make these gardens grow and thrive. Individuals and groups are invited to be part of the Pender Community Gardens—to find out more contact Pender County Cooperative Extension at 259.1235 or email charlotte_glen@ncsu.edu.
Learn More!

For recommendations of more plants that thrive in Pender County, logon to the Pender County Cooperative Extension website at http://pender.ces.ncsu.edu.

Click on the Lawn & Garden link to access fact sheets of hundreds of plants recommended for local growing conditions.

Extensive gardening information for NC, including thousands of plant fact sheets with images, is available from the NCSU Urban Horticulture website at: www.ncstate-plants.net

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Fall Blooming Camellias

‘Sparkling Burgundy’
‘Sparkling Burgundy’ bears rose pink double blooms and is often one of the first fall blooming camellias to flower. This medium sized shrub grows to 8’ tall and wide with a dense, bushy habit.

‘Shishigashira’
This long blooming variety produces an abundance of double, dark rose-pink blossoms throughout fall. A compact variety, ‘Shishigashira’ will eventually reach 5’ tall and wide with a spreading, compact habit.

‘Showa No Sakae’
Similar in habit to ‘Shishigashira’, ‘Showa No Sakae’ can eventually reach 4’-5’ tall and 6’-8’ wide with an arching, spreading habit. This floriferous variety produces lovely soft pink, semi double flowers over a long period in fall.

‘Stephanie Golden’
A relatively new variety, ‘Stephanie Golden’ is a profuse bloomer, producing semi-double bright pink flowers that are lightly fragrant. It will grow to 6’-8’ tall and has an upright form.

‘Yuletide’
This late blooming selection bears crimson red single flowers with golden centers around Thanksgiving and Christmas. ‘Yuletide’ is a fairly slow growing camellia, eventually reaching 10’ in height with a narrow upright habit that make it great for spots where horizontal space is limited.
You Could Become a Master Gardener Volunteer!

Who Are Master Gardener Volunteers?
Master Gardener Volunteers are members of the local community who take an active interest in their lawns, trees, shrubs, flowers, and gardens. They are enthusiastic, willing to learn and help others, and able to communicate with diverse groups of people.

What really sets Master Gardener Volunteers apart from other home gardeners is their special training in horticulture and willingness to educate others. In exchange for their training, persons who become Master Gardener Volunteers contribute time as volunteers, working through their Cooperative Extension office to provide horticultural related information to the public.

Master Gardeners Volunteers are part of the volunteer staff of NC State University’s Cooperative Extension Service. They provide unbiased, research based educational assistance and programs in horticulture and environmental issues to the gardening public.

Is the Master Gardener Program for You?
To help you decide if you should apply to be a Master Gardener Volunteer ask yourself these questions.

- Do I want to learn more about the culture and maintenance of many types of plants?
- Am I eager to participate in a practical and intense training program?
- Do I look forward to sharing my knowledge with people in my community?
- Do I have enough time to attend training and to complete the volunteer service?

If you answered yes to these questions, the Master Gardener program could be for you.

Training
If accepted into the Master Gardener program in your county, you will attend a Master Gardener training course. Classes are taught by Extension Service staff, local experts and Master Gardener Volunteers.

The program offers a minimum of 40 hours of instruction that covers topics including lawn care, landscape maintenance, ornamental trees and shrubs, insect, disease, and weed management, soils and plant nutrition, vegetable gardening, home fruit production, garden flowers, water conservation, and environmental stewardship.

You will also receive a notebook of comprehensive horticulture subjects. It will be a valuable tool in answering homeowners plant questions.

Volunteer Commitment
Once you successfully complete the training program and pass the final exam, you will begin a volunteer internship. During your internship, you will learn even more about plants and people.

Master Gardener Volunteers function as resource individuals for horticultural questions in their local Extension center. Their efforts serve to multiply the capabilities of county educators.
What Are the Types of Volunteer Activities?

- Diagnosing plant, insect, and disease problems
- Staffing plant clinics and educational exhibits
- Operating a telephone hotline in your local county Extension center
- Designing and maintaining a demonstration or community garden
- Giving lectures on various gardening topics
- Bringing the joys of gardening to senior citizens or young families
- Volunteering in local schools to develop educational gardens and teach youth gardening skills

The variety of volunteer opportunities available for Master Gardeners is limited only by their imaginations! Volunteers work with their local Cooperative Extension Agent to determine which opportunities will make the best use of their time, talents and interests.

Master Gardener Volunteers are representatives of the N. C. Cooperative Extension Service. In all volunteer work related to the program, Master Gardener Volunteers follow the research-based recommendations of the Cooperative Extension Service. The title Master Gardener Volunteer can be used by volunteers only when engaging in Extension Service sponsored activities.

Who Can Become a Master Gardener Volunteer?

Individuals with an interest in both gardening and volunteer service are potential candidates for the program. No previous formal training is necessary.

This program does not discriminate in regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. Resources, however, limit the number of people that can be accepted. Applications are screened to select the best candidates to perform the volunteer staff needs of the local Cooperative Extension Service Center.

"Why Should I Become a Master Gardener Volunteer?"

You will become knowledgeable about a wide array of gardening subjects. The practical training is designed to increase your confidence and horticultural skills, enabling you to assist the public with questions and problems involved with gardening. Volunteer service helps your community and you derive the pleasure and reward of working with others who share your interests.

Volunteers also participate in advanced Master Gardener training classes and field trips. Developing new ways to participate assures you that the learning process and the opportunity for satisfaction never end.

To find out more about North Carolina Cooperative Extension’s Master Gardener Volunteer Program, visit the Extension Master Gardener Website at http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer/masgar/.

How to Become a Pender County Master Gardener Volunteer

Master Gardener Training in Pender County will take place this spring beginning in February. This exciting fourteen week course will cover all aspects of home gardening and landscape care. Classes will alternate between locations in Burgaw and Hampstead. The cost of the course is $110, which covers training materials, an extensive Master Gardener manual, and name badge.

Anyone interested in becoming a Master Gardener Volunteer in Pender County should contact Charlotte Glen at 259.1235 or charlotte_glen@ncsu.edu to receive an application form and further information. All participants will be expected to complete a fun and educational 40 hours volunteer internship within one year of completing training. Opportunities for volunteer service exist throughout Pender County.