

Almost
Eden



The Source for Beautiful,
Unusual, Exotic, and
Native Plants



New, Heirloom, & Found Japonica Camellias – More October Magic® Sasanquas - 2017 Fall Sale

NEW, HEIRLOOM, & 'FOUND' JAPONICA CAMELLIAS

Usually when we think of the word 'Camellia' we are thinking of the generally large flowered (there are also miniatures or 'minis') Japonica Camellias that are a staple of Southern gardens. These large evergreen shrubs require very little maintenance and provide a much-needed dash of color to the garden in late fall, winter, and into spring.



Alba Plena

Camellias, referring here to the Japonicas, may be **early season** flowering with flowers beginning to show up as early as October for some but November-December is typical, **midseason** with the main show occurring in January and February, or **late season** flowering in March and April.

This year we have added a variety of Japonicas including the heirlooms like 'Alba Plena' dating from before its circa 1800 introduction to the US. This has long been a favorite for its early season, pure white, perfect or rose form, medium to large flowers that simply glow like spotlights against a foil of apple green glossy foliage.

The most exciting new Japonica to hit the Camellia world is the aptly named 'Irrational Exuberance' from Green Nurseries and the breeding work of Bobby Green and company of Fairhope, Alabama. This is NOT your typical Camellia! The petals are broadly edged in clear bright white and quickly fade into a deep rosy red at their heart. The midseason, medium-sized flowers cover a wide-ranging gamut of flower forms from perfect form, to anemone, to peony form and basically every form in between as shown by the image provided by Bobby Green. Irrational Exuberance has an unusual spreading to weeping growth habit reaching about 4-5'H x 5-6'W in 10 years.



Irrational Exuberance



Stephen's Garden

Stephen's Garden Camellia is a 'found' Camellia that was discovered in a local garden and introduced by Bobby Green and company. The medium to large perfect form flowers range from white to medium pink and seem to darken over time. It begins flowering early in the season (December for us) and continues into the new year. Stephen's Garden is a vigorous grower with a rounded upright habit. Occasionally, and often more often than we prefer to admit, gardeners lose their plant's (no not their pants!, we hope anyway) cultivar names and so a good quality plant such as a Camellia or Fig may be reintroduced under a different name until, or if ever, the original cultivar name is discovered. And so it

is considered a 'found' or temporary cultivar name. This simply lets everyone know that this is not the original name. In the words of Shakespeare "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet".



Bob Hope

Nuccio's Nurseries has produced some truly fabulous Camellia cultivars over the years including the intensely red 'Bob Hope'. The large to very large, deep red, double flowers are centered by a boss of brightly contrasting golden yellow stamens. Bob Hope flowers in mid to late season and is a moderately vigorous growing plant.

This year we are happy to be able to share what is probably a sport or seedling of the highly sought-after Purple Dawn Camellia that we have enjoyed for years and that was originally shared with us by Corey Stanford of Stanford's Nursery in Forest Hill, Louisiana. Mr. Stanford, as I knew him, was always bringing different and interesting Camellias and other woody plants to share with my parents John and Bonnie. Smokey Dawn produces large, perfect form, pink to rose colored flowers that are highlighted by purple edging and veining that is most predominant in cool weather. It begins flowering early in the season and may continue well into February on well-established plants.



Smokey Dawn

You can view all of our Camellia and Sasanqua Camellia cultivars by selecting the [Camellia category](#) on our website. We currently have a few thousand Camellias in cultivation at this time and so many more will be ready as the season progresses.

OUR NEW OCTOBER MAGIC® SASANQUA CAMELLIAS

The October Magic® Sasanqua Camellias are the result of many years of breeding and selection by Bobby Green and company of Greens Nurseries in Fairhope, Alabama. They have used proven cultivars such as the Louisiana Super Plant Shi-Shi Gashira and Yume Sasanqua Camellias as some of the base breeding parents. The result has been a wonderful selection of these more adaptable Camellias (as compared to Japonicas) in a wide range of colors, flower forms, and often long seasons of flowering with their intended usage as low maintenance evergreens in the garden, landscape, and as container plants. Sasanqua Camellias are known to be much more forgiving of soil types and light conditions. Most will grow as well in sun as they do in moderately shaded conditions. The October Magic® series of Sasanqua Camellias are a part of the [Southern Living Plant Collection](#). As with most Sasanquas, they can be pruned and shaped into hedges or use the larger growing types as specimens and screens.



October Magic® Bride

October Magic® Bride Sasanqua Camellia produces masses of brilliant white double flowers held against dark green glossy foliage. Bobby Green describes it as "budding so profusely each summer that the growth that follows is minimal". October Magic® Bride is a dense growing and compact evergreen shrub with a dense upright to conical form that reaches about 4-5'H by 3-4'W at maturity.

The large rose to peony form, peachy pink Japonica-like flowers of October Magic® Dawn shine brightly against the dark green glossy foliage of this medium-sized, 5-7'H Sasanqua Camellia. Flowering later in the season, it bridges the gap between the typical Sasanqua season, October-December, and the Japonica flowering season



October Magic® Dawn

according to Bobby Green. October Magic® Dawn has a naturally upright to conical habit making it an excellent choice as a medium-sized hedge or specimen plant.



October Magic® Ivory

The fully double, frilly, almost carnation-like dense white flowers are much larger than what you would expect on your typical Sasanqua Camellia and even as young plants the flowers of October Magic® Ivory may near 4” or more across. The large dense flowers may tinge to yellow at their heart and are produced over an extended period in fall. "October Magic® Ivory has a bushy, symmetrical, upright habit making it a clear new choice for an upright, white flowered Sasanqua Camellia" - Bobby Green in comparing it to its awkward growing parent Mine-No-Yuki. Expect it to reach 6-8’H by about 5-7’W at maturity.

becoming a staple for landscape designers due to the dense, semi-dwarf nature and ability to bloom profusely over a long season each Fall. The buds form so heavily in summer, that little pruning is needed thereafter. Flowers are a high semi-double with varying tones of white and orchid pink." - Bobby Green. Expect this exemplary Sasanqua Camellia to mature to a neat 4-5’H and about 3-4’W lending itself to a low maintenance landscape setting.



October Magic® Orchid

October Magic® Orchid Sasanqua Camellia is "Fast

All images, excluding Smokey Dawn and Bob Hope, are courtesy of Bobby Green and Greens Nurseries, all rights reserved.

ALMOST EDEN'S 2017 FALL SALE

As the recent snow and cold have been hinting, Fall is about to fade away into Winter and so our **2017 Fall Sale** will soon be ending. We have marked down over 160 great plants so get them while supplies last and at great prices before the sale comes to a close. You can even place your order now for spring 2018 shipment. It's easy, just select your preferred shipping week at checkout for up to 6 months from now.



WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO PLANT AND PRUNE BACK TROPICALS GROWN AS PERENNIALS?

We get a lot of questions as to when the best time to plant and prune tropical and subtropical plants, such as Lantana, Confederate Roses, Angels Trumpets (*Brugmansias* and not *Daturas*) and Turkscaps, in areas where freezes occur such as in our zone 8B garden. First you should realize that these are naturally tropical shrubs or trees and in much of their mild native habitat they would most likely remain evergreen throughout winter. They survive via dormant buds at the root crown and so this is where they need protection in order to emerge again once soil temperatures begin to warm in spring. In zones 7,8, and at times zone 9, these plants act like dieback perennials, literally dying back to the ground after the first few freezes have come through. Admittedly they can begin to



Missy Puryear Turkscap - the newest introduction from Greg Grant's breeding work



*Purple Trailing Lantana
with a Painted Lady
Butterfly nectaring*

look unsightly with burned foliage, brown and/or bare stems, and remnants of summer flowering. Personally, I like to think of these stems and remnants as reminders of what was and the potential for what will be again. The fallen leaves and even the brown bare stems help to provide some protection for next season's buds which are generally located at the crown or the point where stems and roots meet. The University of [Clemson Cooperative Extension's fact sheet on Lantana](#) suggests that you should **"Prune perennial lantanas back hard in spring (March) to remove old growth and prevent woodiness. Cut back to about 6 to 12 inches from ground level. Avoid hard pruning in fall as this can cause reduced cold hardiness."** This is a good rule of thumb for any of these tropical and subtropical plants grown as perennials in our gardens and landscapes. In mild winters, when stems are still green and healthy looking in spring you can wait until new growth begins to prune them, cutting just above the healthiest young stems and leaves that begin to emerge. A loose breathable protective mulch, such as pine straw, can be placed around the base of and among the stems of these types of plants to help further ensure their survival chances in the northern portions of their ranges. Many of these tropical and subtropical plants are true power houses when it comes to flowering and providing color in the garden and landscape as well as nectar and pollen to a variety of pollinators from spring until fall making the extra

effort to mulch them in marginally hardy areas worthwhile.

Planting in spring, once the danger of freezes and frosts have passed, is optimal as this is when soil temperatures begin to warm again encouraging new growth. As an example, here in Louisiana we often use Periwinkles or Vinca, *Catharanthus roseus* and its hybrids, as reliable summer long color. But, like many of the other tropical and subtropical plants we grow they are sensitive to frosts and even cool soil temperatures. Noted horticulturist, author, and gardener Dan Gill of [LSU AgCenter](#) recommends that we plant Periwinkles in May which should be a great time to safely add most any of the previously mentioned tropical and subtropical plants to the garden and landscape here in zone 8. This gives these die-back perennials the most time to get large healthy root systems established and to produce next year's growth buds. The additional foliage and stems that they have produced through summer will also help to get them through the rigors of winter. Another key factor for many plants that are sensitive to soil moisture levels should be planted in areas where they have good to excellent drainage as this will help to prevent root rot through the cold and often wet days of the cool season.



Herbstonne or Autumn Sun Rudbeckia

WINTER IS A GREAT TIME TO PLANT HARDY PERENNIALS

Winter is an excellent time to plant fully hardy, winter growing perennials such as Monarda, Rudbeckia, Physostegia, Louisiana Irises, and Phlox. Even though it is cold this time of year many plants will continue to grow in preparation for spring, summer, and / or fall flowering often in the form of leafy rosettes of foliage. By growing low and close to the ground this dense foliage helps to insulate the rootzone. The leaves of the rosettes are in turn protected from much of the harshest freezing weather by the warmth of the soil.

There are many more advantages to growing during the winter, especially for C3 plants whose photosynthetic efficiency drops when summer temperatures exceed about 86°F. Our native warm season grasses (some of these are C4 plants that are more vigorous in hot weather) and grass-like sedges tend to die-back to the crown during winter reducing the competition for sunlight. Since these grasses are dormant, root growth and nutrient requirements are also generally reduced lessening further the competition they would provide in summer. Many of our leaf eating

insects are generally in hibernation. Warm season fungal and bacterial problems are also generally less of an issue helping to produce healthy, rich green foliage. Moisture tends to be more readily and reliably available during this time of year. The cooler temperatures and natural mulch of fallen leaves and stems help to further reduce water losses through evaporation. Louisiana Irises seem to be perfectly adapted to their fall, winter, and spring growing as they have a better chance of escaping periodic summer droughts that could potentially cancel their chances of flowering and ultimately reproduction. As you can see, winter is an excellent and often the optimal time to establish many of our native and ornamental perennials.

Like hardy, winter growing perennials, fully hardy, woody trees, shrubs, and vines are also most easily established in winter. Their carbohydrate rich sap feeds the growing root systems of these plants throughout the 'dormant' period providing many of these same advantages that the winter growing perennials receive. Due to the readily available moisture, watering requirements are often minimal this time of year but even then, you do not want to let young plants, whether they are perennials or woody plants, go dry for extended periods.



Correll's False Dragonhead or Physostegia

NEED A GREAT GIFT FOR YOUR FAVORITE GARDENER?



An Almost Eden Gift Certificate is sure to be a hit with your favorite gardening friend or loved one! Our gift certificates start at just \$20 so if you are an undecided last-minute shopper (I may be guilty of this) here is an easy solution. You can purchase our gift certificates from the 'My Account' page or follow [this link](#) to go there now.

From our family to yours have a safe and wonderful holiday season!

Thank you for taking the time to peruse our Winter 2017 Newsletter and if you know of anyone who would be interested in reading it you can forward it to them by copying the below link:

[Almost Eden's Winter 2017 Newsletter](#)

Textual version of the link:

https://almostedenplants.com/shopping/growing_guides/Winter%202017%20Newsletter%20-%20Almost%20Eden.pdf

You can sign up to receive our periodic [newsletter here](#).

Thank You & Good Growing,
John, Bonnie, & Jeff McMillian
& the Crew at **Almost Eden**

1240 Smith Rd

Merryville, LA 70653

337-375-2114