"LAFAYETTE — HERE WE COME"

As most of you know the annual Camellia Show and Pageant of the Louisiana Camellia Society will be held in Lafayette on January 15th and 16th, but this year a little something new has been added.

The July meeting of the board of the Louisiana Camellia Society was held at Alexandria, and it was voted that each year a Camellia Club in the state would be host to the show and meeting for that year.

The Men's Camellia Club of Shreveport was selected to be the first club to sponsor the annual event and to take the responsibility to "put it over".

Before this information was received here, some of us had already reserved 18 rooms in Lafayette. Now that our club is taking an active part in the meet we are sure that many, many more of you would like to join us on this weekend trip.

Here's the details, as much as I know of them. Lafayette is about a five hour drive from Shreveport. You should be there by Friday afternoon. At six o'clock the famous Shrimp Boil will be held. If you've never attended one, let me tell you about it.

It's hard to picture or realize the mixture of shrimp and Camellias, since one doesn't smell (yet), but they really mix beautifully, for a couple of hours. Shrimp and more shrimp are brought to your tables until you yell 'Uncle!' (however, at the last boil Grady McLemore made them yell, first.)

When you—realize that you cannot hold another shrimp, you move just across the road to the State Auditorium for the Camellia Pageant.

The building will hold, I would say, over 3,000, and I know that last year, more than 4,000 were in attendance. The College Band and Glee Club entertain you until the show starts and believe me it is a show. It lasts over 2½ hours with skits and acts by the College.

Then comes the crowning of the Camellia Queen. It is a sight! There are eight maids followed by the Queen
entering the block long auditorium. Then the show of shows when the president of the state society not only crowns the Queen, but precedent has it that he always kisses her. Since our own Dr. Bob Womack is state president, we are going down to see if he is going to continue the custom.

I would say that the highlight of the weekend is the clinic which is held Saturday morning at the College. Here in an auditorium a panel will discuss and answer questions on Camellia Culture. It is really outstanding and shouldn’t be missed.

Following the clinic the annual meeting of the state society will be held with Dr. Bob presiding.

The State Camellia Show will open at 3 o’clock Saturday afternoon.

Saturday morning you might rest up after all the parties of Friday night or you might drive to Avery Island or to the many nurseries close by.

It is our plan to take an entire floor at the hotel there. We will have one room equipped as a meeting place, or coffee station.

This is one time that you cannot delay on your reservations as there is only one hotel there and with all the cities attending we are giving warning that reservations be made NOW! Grady McLemore is the man to call at 3-6037.

I guess most of you are as tired of watering as I am, but there is nothing you can do about it except keep it up until the weather breaks.

We have had some swell articles in the press concerning care and things to do in August so I won’t go into them in this Newsletter.

But I have several thoughts to pass on to you beginners. Many of you will see an exceptional fine bloom and immediately go out and buy this variety. When it blooms the following year you will wonder why its size is small, why there is not enough white in it, etc., etc.

Your old timer and collector checks a plant before he buys it. He wants to know that it will throw the correct kind of bloom before he purchases it. Those that graft just don’t ask for a scion of a Suzie Que but they want the scion from the plant that produces the kind of bloom that they want. They are particular and you should be too. Just don’t buy or graft anything. Check it first. Your local nurserymen do this before they purchase plants to sell you.

It looks like your club is still getting more and more publicity as to its accomplishments over the past years. Let’s keep up the good work.

I cannot tell you about all the invitations but judges from Shreveport will be present at the Camellia Shows at Jackson, Miss., Slidell and Lafayette, La., Beaumont and Tyler, Texas, and many others. They must think we know our flowers whether we do or not.
You probably think that the summer months are dead months so far as your club goes, 'tis not! Your Show Chairman for 1955 has been planning and planning to make the show easier to put on, to cut out excess work, and to make the show even bigger (if possible) for this year. Committees are being set up now.

Your publicity chairman isn't waiting for the fall season to start to give you stories in the Shreveport Journal. They have been appearing when needed, giving you the needed advice when the time is ripe.

What do these men want in return? 'NOTHING!' except to put your club over and to keep it standing at the top. So why not do a little cooperating and those of you who have not sent in your dues for this 1954-55 season do it now. You know you are going to send in the $3 by meeting time so why not do it now and a budget can be made for all committees.

Speaking of publicity, we want to tell you that a feature story in the Southern California Fall bulletin will be by and about the Shreveport Club, so will a story in the Annual publication of the American Camellia Society.

I have received several letters and phone calls concerning my contradicting myself in the last news letter. I said that I do not recommend fertilizing in the fall and in the next paragraph highly recommend the spraying of fish oil for nitrogen to the leaves. I thought that I should explain this.

If you should fertilize new growth would come and there is always the possibility of an early freeze before this new growth could harden. When you spray with the fish oil you are using one tablespoon to a gallon of water and three gallons is more than enough for over 250 plants. So this minute amount of nitrogen is just enough to bring the color out in the leaves and not enough to cause a spurt of new growth.

Another thought it that if the bloom from a grafted plant does not come up to your expectations the first blooming season, don't fret, but wait until the second blooming season. Should the blooms be inferior then cut it down and regraft, but be sure to wait for the second year before becoming disappointed.

It would be a good idea to check your plants now once a week for spider webs. The webs won't hurt your plants, BUT, they catch leaf trash and form a congested area and if so watch out for scale. It can just be wiped off or use a strong hose to wash it off.
Keep watching for suckers coming up from your newly grafted understocks.

Should you have a graft that has taken off and shot straight up, be sure and pinch out the top. This will cause the plant to branch out.

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We have just been notified that there will be a one day school for judges and prospective judges under the supervision of the Louisiana State Camellia Society. Plans at present are that the school will be held in Shreveport. Should any of the members like to attend this one day school it would be advisable to contact your secretary now.

Your Editor realizes that this newsletter is filled with information pertaining to the state society. We are stressing your state organization because we feel that there is need for such a society and realize how much good it could do for all of us if properly backed up. The dues are only a dollar a year and the booklet that they are planning to publish is worth the dues.

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For those of you that plan to do grafting this spring we advise purchasing your sasanquas NOW for delivery in October. Plant them where they will be permanent and do some pruning. Being in the ground over the winter will let the roots grow and let the plant become acclimated before the shock of cutting it down for grafting.

This will be the last newsletter for the summer. Our only message to remember is that you can only get out of the club as much as you put in to it. Let’s have full attendance at the meetings and when called on to help on a committee or where there is a job to do let’s pitch in and do the best job possible.

This has been a rough year for summer grafting, according to all the reports that I have heard. I personally blame it on the intense heat and humidity, and ‘Lack of Something’?

It is just about time to start watching the seeds, if you plan to plant some this year be sure and pick them before they split and throw the seeds. You’ll never find them. Pick them about the middle or end of August. Let them dry out in a box. In several days they will split open and you can “peel” out the seeds. Plant them in the ground for sprouting next spring or force in peatmoss over your hot water heater for immediate growth. This was explained in detail in your Newsletter last summer.