

# Camellia's

## THE QUEEN OF WINTER FLOWERS

These exquisite winter flowering shrubs feature a remarkable variety of flower colours and forms. There are a few that have a subtle but lovely perfume. All are delicate, showy and worthy of a place in every garden. A mature plant can produce hundreds of flowers at one time. Camellias have deep-green glossy foliage and they look most attractive when growing under a shady patio, pergola or veranda.

Camellia's natural habitat ranges from the tropical Malay Peninsula to the cold coastal areas of Korea and Japan. The semi-tropical forest however, is the most typical condition in which you would find native Camellias. Here they grow under the light shade of trees in compost rich, free draining soil.

To grow magnificent Camellias in your WA garden you will need:

1. Filtered shade under trees or shade cloth. Ideally either 50 or 70% shade factor. Alternatively choose a position against a south or east facing wall where they receive morning sun and afternoon shade.
2. A Humus rich well drained soil. This can be achieved by building up sandy soils with Waldecks Pure Peat, Waldecks sheep manure or Bio-ganic Mix in the proportions of 2 parts organic matter to 1 part existing garden soil.
3. Constantly moist soil: This can be easily achieved with an 8cm thick mulch of peat, compost or pine bark combined with regular watering.
4. A humid atmosphere. A moist, well mulched soil will supply humidity; however on very hot dry days it is recommended that you spray water over the foliage.
5. Light Feeding It is recommended that you give a light application of Slow Release Fertiliser twice a year or Waldecks Premium All Purpose Plant Food every 2 months. Camellias are slow growing plants resent forcing with strong fertilisers.
6. Protection from strong winds: This will help flowers to last the full distance.
7. Planting out care Plant without disturbing the root ball, at exactly the same depth as it was in the pot. Water well before and after planting.

Camellia japonica types are characterised by large showy flowers and large dark green leaves. Most require light shaded conditions to thrive. Flowering peaks in July and August in the Perth Metropolitan Area.

Camellia sasanqua types are far more heat and exposure tough. In Perth these varieties can be grown in the full sun. Their more open shape make sasanquas ideal for espalier. Generally the flowers are smaller and simpler in formation than the japonica types. Flowers usually peak in late May and June.

Camellia reticulata varieties are the flamboyant prima donnas of the family. Flowers are generally larger, more ruffled and dramatic. Growth is usually strong and upright.

There are also now available a large number of hybrids linking many different characteristics, eg; perfumes and soft yellow coloured cultivars.