

# Camellias

## (Japonica & Sasanqua)

Camellias are not difficult to grow. They are hardy & relatively trouble free. With just a little TLC, they give years of pleasure with their attractive foliage & beautiful floral displays.

### Planting

Selection & placement of Camellias in the garden are influenced by the growth habits of the different species. Some have narrow & columnar growth habits, some weeping with long, pendulous branches, while others are compact & bushy. There are those that are unlikely to grow more than 1m tall & others, if left, can grow into tall trees. Consequently, even young plants of both varieties may vary in height, shape, density & even foliage colour.

Contrary to popular belief, Camellias thrive in hot, humid conditions. Camellia japonicas prefer a full shade or filtered light position, as opposed to Camellia sasanquas which will flourish in full sun aspects.

All Camellias love a slightly acid soil with pH of around 5.5 to 6. When planting Camellias, improve the soil with Searles Azalea & Camellia Mix & Searles Real Compost. The other important factor is to make sure they are in a well drained position, as they don't like soggy conditions.

### Watering

Once established, Camellias grow well with regular watering, about once to twice a week. In dry conditions, where they are left to fend for themselves, they won't grow or flower so well.

### Fertilizing

Camellias will flower best when fertilized regularly. As camellias are acid loving plants, they need and love good quantities of available iron. The

best way to add iron is when fertilizing in soluble form, by using Iron Chelate. Searles Flourish Azalea, Camellia & Gardenia Soluble Plant Food is a specially formulated fertiliser for these wonderful acid-loving plants, and contains high levels of soluble iron in chelate form. By regularly applying Searles Flourish Azalea, Camellia & Gardenia Soluble Plant Food every 3-4 weeks, you will ensure good strong healthy growth with lovely deep green leaves.

### Pruning

As they are slow growing, Camellias do not need much pruning, but an occasional tip prune will help keep them in shape.

### Pests and Diseases

The problem most common in our climate is bud-drop or flowers which fail to open. This can be caused by either insufficient moisture, lack of fertilizer or a combination of the two. Insects can attack the foliage but usually are not a serious problem. Thrips, aphids & mites, which may occur can easily be treated using Searles Bug Beater for thrips and aphids or Searles Rose Pro of all three pests.

