



Camellias **Melissa King 30/06/10**

Top Picks of Camellias for Cool Season Colour

There is just so much to love about Camellias, from the flamboyant Japonica's with big "look at me" blooms to the more subtle Sasanquas and everything in between! They're evergreen, easy to grow and extremely versatile. Here are some top varieties for brightening your garden through the cooler months.

'Asakura' is a classic beauty. It's a Sasanqua camellia, so during autumn and early winter it is smothered in masses of semi-double white flowers that have the slightest blush to the petal edge and bud. It's an ideal hedging plant and perfect for pots on the patio or balcony. Sasanqua's also make really good standards because many of them have lovely weeping branches. They can also be espaliered along a fence or wall.

'Yuletide' is the only red-flowering Sasanqua and what a beauty with single scarlet flowers right through winter. It grows to just 2 metres tall and can be easily kept to a hedge under 1 metre. It got its festive name because in the Northern Hemisphere it flowers around Christmas time.

'Marge Miller' is an early flowering sasanqua that is perfect for pots! It has a compact growth habit and weeping branches which make it an ideal container or hanging basket specimen. You can use 'Marge Miller' as a groundcover too, to cascade down an embankment or wall. It has showy pink flowers!

'Federation' is a new Australian bred Japonica Camellia with magnificent white and pink flowers. It was bred in honour of the 100th anniversary of the Federation of states. It has an upright growth habit and glossy green foliage – a stunning specimen in the garden or pots.

'Volunteer' is a striking Japonica Camellia with rich deep green foliage. It makes a great specimen plant or hedge with gorgeous bi-coloured deep pink and white flowers. It was originally released in N.Z for their "Year of the Volunteer".

'Sweet Jane' is a stunner for its long flowering habit and striking two-tone flowers. This pretty hybrid displays rose pink buds that open into lovely white blooms blushed with pink. It flowers from April right through to September - that's three seasons of colour.

'Trans Tasman' is a small leafed hybrid which displays masses of pretty miniature flowers. Pink buds open up to reveal a single white flower. It makes a perfect hedge or container plant and can be grown in full sun.

Growing Tips:

- Get Camellias in the ground now during winter or early spring to encourage maximum root development before summer kicks in.
- Camellias enjoy a rich, slightly acidic soil so prepare the ground first with good amounts of compost and organic matter.
- Feed Camellias at the start of the footy season and then again at grand final time with an Azalea and Camellia food or good complete fertiliser.
- After feeding give them a good layer of mulch in spring
- Do any pruning after they've finished flowering so you don't sacrifice your blooms.