

CHISWICK HOUSE
& GARDENS TRUST

PRESS RELEASE

FREE CAMELLIA SHOW AT AWARD WINNING CHISWICK HOUSE GARDENS

Chiswick House and Gardens are holding their annual Camellia Show from Friday 3rd March to Sunday 2nd April 2017.

In early Spring, the show brings a burst of colour to the 65 acre park which has won a string of awards this year.

The grounds recently scooped Gold and Overall Winner of the London in Bloom “Heritage Parks & Garden Award for 2016”. They also won Gold in the Walled Garden category for the historic kitchen garden and members of the small team attained the “Horticultural Achievement Award 2016”. And at this year’s RHS spring fair their heritage Camellias featured in a display which won Gold.

Many of the Camellias have been growing for over 200 years in what is now a Grade I listed Conservatory. The collection is thought to be the oldest under glass in the Western world and includes rare and historically important examples, many believed to be descended from the original planting in 1828. There are 33 varieties housed in the 300 ft glass house, including the Middlemist’s Red, one of the rarest Camellias in the world.

The future of the heritage camellias has been secured by an on-site propagation programme run by the gardeners in the newly restored Melon House and visitors to the show have the opportunity to purchase a choice of heritage varieties from Chiswick’s original collection. The show includes special plant displays created by Roots and Shoots and the Royal Parks Apprentices. Visitors are invited to make a day of it, enjoy the whole Grade 1 listed estate, stop off for refreshments at the award winning Chiswick House Café and visit the 18th century Villa at weekends.

The show attracts visitors from all over the world and remains free to the public with donations welcomed. Chiswick House and Gardens Trust Director, Clare O’Brien, says “We’ve had an amazing year winning so many awards. And we hope visitors will show their appreciation by making

contributions towards the hard work our small team and brilliant band of volunteers do to retain gold standards of care. All income raised or donated to the charity is in aid of the continued preservation of the Grade I listed gardens.”

The Chiswick House Camellia Show 2017

Chiswick House, London, W4 2QN

Dates: Friday 3rd March to Sunday 2nd April.

Conservatory opening hours: Daily 10am – 4pm (Closed Mondays)

Admission: Free

Chiswick House: Special Camellia Show weekend openings Saturday and Sunday 10am – 4pm

Schools and Group bookings, guided tours and information on admission prices for Chiswick House: chgt.org.uk

- Ends -

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Chiswick House Awards 2016

In February this year The Chiswick House and Gardens Trust won a coveted Gold Award at the Early Spring Royal Horticultural Society Fair in the category “Seasonal plants from the National Plant Collections” with the Plant Heritage London Group.

The stand displayed coloured stems, evergreens, and flowers and the Chiswick House Camellias added a wonderful splash of colour, displayed in water surrounded by moss to offset their pink and white petals.

The gardens went on to win the London in Bloom

‘Heritage Parks & Gardens’ – Gold

‘Walled Garden of the year’ – Gold

‘Heritage Parks & Garden Award for 2016’ (overall category winner)

‘Horticultural Achievement Award 2016’ (Awarded to William Rallison, Chiswick House & Gardens, and Jaimie Cook, Gavin Jones)

The 65-acre Grade I listed Estate is maintained by a small team comprising of the Garden Estate Manager, Community Gardener, Gardener, an Assistant Gardener and Gardens Ranger who work with over 50 volunteers to garden the walled garden, formal gardens and conservation works throughout. In partnership with Head Gardener and Gavin Jones Grounds Maintenance who maintain all lawns, hedges, sports facilities and litter.

The walled garden built in 1682 is now a thriving community kitchen garden.

The Chiswick House Camellia collection:

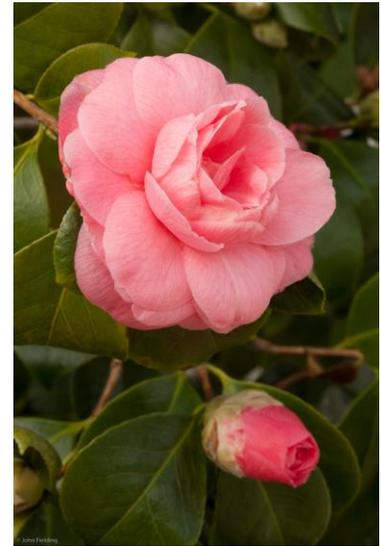
Camellias have been grown in China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam as a garden plant for thousands of years. The Camellias that grow at Chiswick are all of the species *C. japonica*. The original collection was ordered by William Lindsay, the 6th Duke’s Head Gardener, from Alfred Chandler’s Vauxhall nursery. Today’s Conservatory collection of 33 different varieties includes many of the earliest varieties introduced to Britain. Using stem girth as an approximate guide it is probable that the Camellias identified as *C. japonica* ‘Variegata’, ‘Imbricata’, ‘Chandleri’, ‘Alba Plena’, ‘Pompone’, ‘Aitonia’, ‘Corallina’, ‘Rubra Plena’ and ‘Rubra’ are all from the original 1828 planting.

The Conservatory and the Italian Garden:

The Conservatory was designed by the architect Samuel Ware (who later designed the Burlington Arcade, Piccadilly) and completed in 1813. At 300ft long it was one of the earliest large glass houses to be built and thus a forerunner of Decimus Burton's glass house at Kew and Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace. 50 years ago (May 20, 1966) the Conservatory was the setting for the Beatles' Paperback Writer promo, a ground breaking music video.

The Duke also commissioned Lewis Kennedy to lay out a 'Italian' garden in front of the Conservatory. Completed in 1814 the Italian Gardens represents an early example of the reintroduction of formal gardens to England.

The garden is characterised by its symmetrical formality and intricate pattern of flower beds. Stone urns on plinths are set against an enclosing semi-circular path. The central path is flanked by copies of two magnificent Coade stone vases; the originals are now housed in the Conservatory.



Pictures clockwise from top left : Close ups by John Fielding; Lucy Bell cleaning the Camellias in preparation for the Chiswick House Camellia Show opening on March 3rd by Fiona Hanson; Camellia japonica Rubra with Coade stone vase by Clive Nichols; You are welcome to use these free of charge for editorial use.

More images, including landscape format, the Conservatory's interior and exterior, the award winning team and close ups of all the Camellias available from Lucinda.macpherson@gmail.com.