

# Camellia House at Planting Fields

By Toni Cabat and Photos by Stuart Germain



Planting Fields had a Camellias Festival February 8th which we attended with LIHORT member Chris Douglas. It was our hope to bring some color and warmth into these dark and cold days. It certainly did. While the weather has been frightening, we find that the greenhouses of Planting Fields provide much needed coziness and joy.

The Camellias were in bloom with so many shades and variations of red, white, pink and yellow. We arrived before the 1 pm tour which turned out to be a good time since the greenhouse was not yet too busy. We walked around leisurely and enjoyed the flowers with variations and colors. Each plant was clearly marked. This collection was started in 1917 by W.R. Coe with a total of 114 Camellia plants representing 48 cultivars. Some of the original plants exist today but many are the offspring of the original plants. The green houses were built a few years later after several disastrous events and have stood ever since.

Although the tour was very crowded, it offered much interesting information into these "tea" plants. Tea is made from Camellias. Also,

much information was offered by our expert guide about hybrid camellias which will tolerate our outdoor conditions. Many examples were pointed out on the tour.



Our day ended with a long visit to the warm and lush Main Greenhouse filled with orchids, begonias and so many other flowering plants, fruit and palm trees. We were transported into a pleasant climate despite the cold weather outside; plenty of sitting to take in the surroundings, warmth and catch up with friends.

Don't know if there are still camellias in bloom when you read this article, but worth a try. In the meantime, enjoy the pictures and dream of warm days and blooms to come.

