

2019 Festival of Camellias: Masee Lane Gardens' 50th Anniversary Event & Activity Schedule

Masee Lane Gardens celebrates a half century as one of the most prized camellia gardens in the nation, thanks to the generosity of Fort Valley, Georgia's David Coleman Strother, a founding member of the American Camellia Society. The 2019 Festival of Camellias will showcase the history of the genus *Camellia*, the history of the American Camellia Society, and the history of Masee Lane Gardens during the camellia blooming season with a live camellia plant sale, special events, tours, and box lunches. A history exhibit and art work by local students will be on display throughout the season.

February 4, 11, 18 & 25, 2019 Complementary Tea & Open Seven Days Each Week

Masee Lane Gardens is open every Monday in February, in addition to the regular hours of Tuesday through Sunday. A complimentary tea tasting each Monday in February will showcase one of the most famous camellias in the world—the common tea plant is the species *camellia sinensis*. Guests can tour the gardens and then enjoy a free cup of specialty tea from the Masee Lane Gardens Gift Shop. Tea plants will also be on sale so that you can start your own back yard tea garden.

February 1-3, 2019 Ikebana Exhibit by Master Instructor of the Ichiyo School of Ikebana Dee Boran

A special Ikebana exhibition will be hosted by the Ikebana International Middle Georgia Chapter. Dee Boran of Bonaire, Georgia, a Master Instructor of the Ichiyo School of Ikebana, will display a collection of Ikebana arrangements.

Ikebana translates to “making flowers alive”. It is the Japanese art of flower arrangement, and is also known as Kadō, which translates to the “way of flowers.” Camellias are a popular subject for Ikebana arrangements because their flower forms range from intricate—with striking colors and petal patterns—to simple single forms, with five or six petals embracing a center mass of stamens.

February 2, 2019 Festival of Camellias Kick Off with Free Admission

Peak blooming season kicks off with a celebration on Saturday, February 2, 2019 with a full day of fun. An easy to follow map of the 30-acre botanical garden and museum galleries allows guests to tour the seven specialty camellia gardens at their own pace.

Admission will be free from 10:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. and includes a live camellia plant sale, self-guided tours, free scavenger hunts with fun prizes for children, a camellia coloring activity, and a clay camellia-making art activity. An excellent selection of garden themed gifts is available in our gift shop, and all members receive a 10% discount on plant and gift shop purchases.

Scott Boys BBQ food truck will be offering lunch and snacks from 10:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Guests can enjoy buffalo, BBQ, or lemon pepper hot wings, pulled pork sandwiches, loaded fries, chili cheese fries and pulled pork sliders.

January 7, 2019 through March 1, 2019 Guided Tours and Box Lunches Available On Weekdays

Professionally guided tours can be scheduled for groups of ten or more Tuesday through Friday in January, and Monday through Friday in February (and March 1, 2019) for \$5 per person. Box lunches can be ordered with February tours for \$15 per person (includes tour guide and lunch).

Guests may pre-order sandwiches on artisanal bread with a choice of ham with lettuce and tomato, turkey with lettuce and tomato, chicken salad with lettuce and tomato, as well as vegetarian and gluten free options. Each lunch includes bag of chips, a pickle spear, a fresh fruit salad, a homemade cookie, and a chilled bottle of water.

Lunch is served between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Tours can be scheduled either before or after the meal. (Call toll free (877) 422-6355 to make reservations and payment.)

February 6, 2019 The Health benefits of Paulownia Tea by Lubana Shahin

A presentation on the health benefits of paulownia tea will be delivered at 11:00 a.m. February 6, 2019 by Lubana Shahin, a biotechnology graduate research assistant at Fort Valley State University.

Shahin is involved in research exploring two possible options for introducing the fast-growing Chinese tree, known as the "royal empress" tree, as a multipurpose crop that could help American farmers establish sustainable incomes. The research is currently in progress on FVSU's five-acre research plot containing approximately 2,600 paulownia trees.

Her research could provide another avenue for farmers to market the crop. She said people in China use different parts of paulownia, such as the flowers, bark, fruits and leaves, to make tea. There is no cost beyond garden admission, and advance reservations required. Call (877) 422-6355 or email amccleese@americancamellias.org for reservations for the paulownia tea presentation.

February 9, 2019 & February 13, 2019 Art in the Gardens: Painting, Photographing and Waxing Camellias

A camellia painting class using the "One Stroke" oil painting technique will be taught at 11:00 a.m. on February 9, 2019 by artist Shirley Rainwater of Lizella, Georgia. Rainwater holds a Level II Art Instruction Certification from Dewberry University in Orlando, Florida. She was taught by Donna Dewberry, who invented the one-stroke technique.

Registration is \$35 and participants will complete an 11 x 14 canvas painting. Advance registration is required by January 31, 2019, which includes class supplies and garden admission. Call (877) 422-6355 to make reservations and advance payment.

On February 9, 2019 at 2:00 p.m., professional portrait art photographer and photojournalist, Judy Robinson, will lead a photography walk through the garden. Robinson is the general manager and publisher of *The Leader Tribune* in Fort Valley, Georgia. She will give a brief introduction to basic outdoor photography principles, followed by a guided walk through the garden to take photographs. The class will be a fun opportunity for beginners as well as more advanced photographers. Guests can bring their choice of photographic device, from a simple cell phone to advanced digital cameras. There is no cost (beyond garden admission) for the class, and advance registration is required. Call (877) 422-6355 or email amccleese@americancamellias.org for reservations for the photo walk.

Art fun continues on Wednesday, February 13, 2019 at 11:00 a.m. with a camellia waxing demonstration by Jo Ann Dankle of Fort Valley, Georgia. Many camellia lovers will wax their favorite camellias right before a freeze, or to prepare a large number of blooms for festive

decorations. Dipping camellias in a wax and mineral oil mixture preserves the blooms for days (and sometimes weeks). It gives camellias from the garden a sheen that makes them look like perfect porcelain sculptures. Waxed blooms do not need a vase or water. They can be displayed on a plate, elegant bowl, or lined up on a table top. The waxing demonstration is free with garden admission, and advanced registration is required. Call (877) 422-6355 or email amccleese@americancamellias.org for reservations for the camellia waxing demonstration.

February 16, 2019 Tea in the Garden

Celebrating the enjoyment of tea will continue on Saturday, February 16, 2019 at 11:00 a.m. with a presentation by Debbie Odom, co-owner of Tsubaki Tea, the CamelliaShop Nursery, and Gene's Nursery of Savannah, Georgia. Odom will share easy steps for growing your and harvesting your own tea—*Camellia sinensis*. Odom will answer questions about harvesting tea leaves and preparing them for brewing. There is no cost beyond admission for this program. Call (877) 422-6355 or email amccleese@americancamellias.org for reservations for the tea growing and harvesting presentation.

Paint a tea mug in your favorite design at 2:00 p.m., on February 16, 2019. Peach Palette Pottery of Perry, Georgia will host a mug painting class. Mugs will be fired at Peach Palette Pottery and then returned to Masee Lane Gardens for participants to pick up about a week later. An email will be sent to each participant to notify when mugs are ready for pick up. Registration is \$30 and includes the mug, paint, and firing, as well garden admission. Advanced registration required. Call (877) 422-6355 to make advanced reservations and payment for tea mug painting class by February 15, 2019.

February 20, 2019 Camellia Care and Culture Education Day

February 20, 2019 will be an educational day, chock full of camellia know how. Jim Pruckler, a retired Center for Disease Control microbiologist and Vice President of the North Georgia Camellia Society, will give a presentation highlighting the “New Grafted Camellias at Masee Lane Gardens” at 11:00 a.m. Pruckler is an active volunteer at Masee Lane Gardens has been working on grafting important varieties onto existing large root stock in the species garden with remarkable success. He travels extensively and collects scions from camellia plants in need of preservation. Pruckler has been helping re-introduce camellias to gardens including Woodlands Garden in Decatur, Georgia, Magnolia Plantation in Charleston, South Carolina, as well as Masee Lane Gardens. Pruckler's workshop will help home gardeners who may wish to preserve a particular variety, or to use an existing plant as root stock for a new or more desirable variety. The workshop is free with garden admission. Call (877) 422-6355 or email amccleese@americancamellias.org for reservations for the grafting presentation.

Peach and Taylor County Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent, Jeff Cook, will follow at 1:00 p.m. on February 20, 2019 with a presentation on soil sampling and site preparation for camellia gardens. Cook, of Butler, Georgia, holds a bachelor's degree in plant pathology and hosts a local cable show called "Backyard Basics", which features tips on topics such as pruning and planting. The quick quips that make the show stand out are what attract viewers of all ages. Cook didn't grow up on a farm, and he never considered a career in agriculture until he enrolled in a college botany class. That led him to a bachelor's degree in plant pathology and to a career with UGA Extension. Despite serving farmers and homeowners with disparate needs and spread across two counties, Cook is always accessible and understands the impact he has on others. Cook's workshop is also free with garden admission and advanced

registration. Call (877) 422-6355 or email amccleese@americancamellias.org for reservations for the site preparation presentation.

February 23-24, 2019 Middle Georgia Camellia Society and Flint Energies Camellia Show

The Middle Georgia Camellia Society and Flint Energies are hosting a competitively judged camellia show on February 23 and 24, 2019. Growers from all over the Southeast will bring thousands of camellia blooms to be judged by American Camellia Society accredited judges. A special novice show class is available for home gardeners to enter blooms and compete for prizes. There is no cost to enter blooms and experts are available to help identify and prepare blooms for entry. Bloom entry is from 7:30 a.m. until 10:30 a.m. The show opens to the public on Saturday from 1:00 p.m. until 4:30 p.m. and Sunday from 1:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m., and there is no cost to view the show.

March 2, 2019 Zen in the Gardens

Finally, on Saturday March 2, 2019 at 2:00 p.m., wind down with an hour and a half of yoga in the gardens. Nikki Hadbavny will provide mats and lead the class in the beautiful Fetterman Museum Gallery. The yoga class is free with garden admission.

Registration, Reservations & Location

Visit www.americancamellias.com/news-events and click Festival of Camellias to view and print a full schedule, reservation details, and special event costs. Call (877) 422- 6355 toll free to make reservations for Garden Tours, Luncheons and Art Classes. All major credit cards accepted.

Massee Lane Gardens is located seven miles south of Fort Valley, Georgia, off Georgia Highway 49, at 100 Massee Lane, Fort Valley, Georgia 31030. www.americancamellias.com/massee-lane-gardens/visiting-the-gardens/massee-lane-hours-admission-and-directions. Visit our website for driving directions. For questions, more information, and reservations, call (478) 967-2358 or email ask@americancamellias.org.

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