

NANCY BIRD – The Camellia



The camellia named after Nancy Bird Walton, *Nancy Bird*, is described as a *Camellia japonica*, large, semi-double flushed pale rose pink over white to near white at edge of petals with splashes of silvery rose. It is free flowering, mid-season, strong and sun-resistant.

Nancy Bird is a sport of *Jean Lyne* (semi-double white with silvery rose stripes), and the sister sport of *Edith Linton* (semi-double silvery rose). A 'sport' occurs when a variant flower appears, and when propagated by cuttings remains constant and fixed, and then becomes a different cultivar.

Jean Lyne was a seedling raised by Alexander Hunter. Alexander served his apprenticeship with Shepherd & Co at their Chatsworth Nursery at Rooty Hill, west of Sydney, and started his own nursery 'Camellia Grove' about 1870 in Liverpool Rd, Ashfield, in the inner west of Sydney.

In 1884 Alexander became a citrus grower at Somersby, on the central coast of NSW. He took with him a number of camellia plants and seedlings. In 1920 Alexander Hunter retired, and sold his property to G.C. Linton who arranged for the Hunter seedlings to be propagated. The Hazlewood Bros catalogue of 1941 lists *Jean Lyne* and *Edith Linton*.

This historic garden and property is now 'Linton Gardens Reception and Function Centre' 611 Wisemans Ferry Rd, Somersby, and many old camellias still grow there.

It is unclear when and where the sport of *Nancy Bird* originated – whether in her own garden or at Somersby, but it was named by Walter Hazlewood in 1952, and features in the Camellia Grove, St Ives, catalogue for 1954, and the Hazlewood Bros catalogue for 1956.

"Mr and Mrs C. F. Walton", Nancy Bird and her husband Charles, were members of the NSW Camellia Research Society for about 20 years circa 1965 to 1985, and Charles registered three camellias -

113. *C. japonica* 'Annemarie Walton'. Originator and applicant: Mr. C.F. Walton, 136 Mona Vale Rd., St. Ives, N.S.W. A chance seedling planted about 1960 and first bloomed in 1968. The informal double 3.2 to 4 inch diameter flowers are

produced on an open spreading vigorous growing plant. It flowers from midseason to late. The mid-green leaves are 4 x 1.8 inches, ovate with slightly pointed apex and not twisted. Registered 30/10/69.

114. *C. japonica* 'Annemarie Holman'. Originator and applicant: Mr. C.F. Walton, 136 Mona Vale Rd., St. Ives, N.S.W. A chance seedling but the originator is of the opinion that both No.114 and No.115 may be seedlings of *C. japonica* 'Jean Lyne'. The seed was planted in 1960 and first flowered in 1968. The flower is a 4 inch diameter, white, semi-double sometimes with a few petaloids and an occasional pink or red streak on the petals. It is a midseason bloomer on a spreading, rather open plant of medium vigor. The mid green 4.5 x 2.2 inch leaves are ovate, slightly twisted and with a small pointed apex. Exhibited at a Camellia Show in Gordon 26/9/69. Registered 30/10/69.

115. *C. japonica* 'Kirsi'. Originator and applicant: Mr. C.F. Walton, 136 Mona Vale Rd., St. Ives, N.S.W. A chance seedling. The seed was planted in 1962 and first flowered in 1967. The flowers are 4 to 4.5 inch diameter, light red semi-double and are produced midseason to late on a rather slow compact growing plant. The flowers last well and are suited to floral arrangements. The dark green 4 x 2.5 inch leaves are broadly ovate, bluntly pointed with the apex twisted downwards and with medium serrations. Exhibited at Gordon Camellia Show 1969. Registered 30/10/69.

Nancy Bird, *Annemarie Walton* and *Kirsi* appear in other listings, such the American Camellia Society's Southern Californian 'Camellia Nomenclature'. *Nancy Bird* is rarely propagated today, but it is available from Parkers Camellias at Glenorie. www.camelliasrus.com.au. (02) 9652 2879.

Flowers of *Nancy Bird* are on display at the NSW Camellia Society's annual Show in July each year.



Nancy Bird Walton opening the July Show with Simon Coventry, President

We meet in the Baptist Church Hall, cnr Park Avenue and Garden Square, Gordon at 7.45pm on the 3rd Monday of each month. Visitors are most welcome to discuss camellia problems and bring blooms for identification. We have guest speakers, a camellia display, supper, trading table and library. Inquiries 9489 4482, nswcamellias@hotmail.com or go to www.camelliasnsw.org