

## Camellias

Q: I have a good friend that lives in Savannah and she has several beautiful camellia bushes. Are there varieties of Camellias that might grow well in our area? If so, what are they and what are tips to ensure successful growing in the landscape?

A: There was a great article from January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019 in the *Greeneville Sun* by Dr. Sue Hamilton, UT Gardens Director titled "Camellia Is UT Gardens Plant Of The Month".

[https://www.greenevillesun.com/business/agriculture/camellia-is-ut-gardens-plant-of-the-month/article\\_60f8774d-1840-5706-8641-0f459fdd8670.html](https://www.greenevillesun.com/business/agriculture/camellia-is-ut-gardens-plant-of-the-month/article_60f8774d-1840-5706-8641-0f459fdd8670.html) Here is an excerpt from her article:

*Camellia likes an acidic soil — a soil pH below 7.0 — with plenty of moisture and good to excellent drainage is essential. Water as needed in summer and in times of drought. Camellia will benefit from being fertilized in the spring with a fertilizer labeled for acid-loving shrubs. It thrives in a partial-shade location or a location with morning sun and afternoon shade, and it makes a good, large specimen plant. It can also be used in mixed screens in the garden. Only if needed, prune camellia within two months after it has finished blooming since next year's flower buds will soon begin to develop.*

As for which variety grows best in this area, here is a website to help you with your selection: <https://www.gardenia.net/compare-plants/camellias>. This page lets you pick your hardiness zone (I used zone 7 for the Tri-Cities), bloom season, height, width, light level, and other parameters to give you the camellia you want for your garden environment. I found more than 50 varieties that fit the criteria for our area. There is some great information on this website.

Camellias are lovely additions to gardens here. Thanks for this question!