

Summer 2023

News from the Tea Gardens At Camellia Forest



After a relatively cool spring (lovely tea picking weather), hotter temps have arrived, thankfully with plenty of rain to support the second flush harvest! We've had a great month of classes in June and look forward to our July events, a break in August, then back again in September. We had a special visitor at our First Flush Fest, Norwood Pratt - learn more in this newsletter about this long-term friend of Camellia Forest, supporter, and mentor (pages 2-3). This month we're launching a new series of YouTube videos (page 5) by our summer intern, Hannah Hankins. Come visit (in person or online) and enjoy tea with us in the garden. - Christine



Workshops

Tea Garden Introduction

Saturday, July 8 & 22

Saturday, September 9 & 23

2 pm - 4 pm

Harvesting and Processing Workshop

Sunday, July 23

10 am - 3 pm

Japanese Tea Ceremony

Sunday, July 30

9 am - 11 am

Tea 101

Saturday, September 16

2 pm - 4 pm

Events

Fall Tea for All

Sunday, October 29, 2023

10 am - 4 pm

Camellia Forest Nursery & Tea Gardens

620 NC Highway 54 West

Chapel Hill, NC 27516

Contact us: teaflowergardens@gmail.com

Instagram: [@camelliaforesttea](https://www.instagram.com/camelliaforesttea)

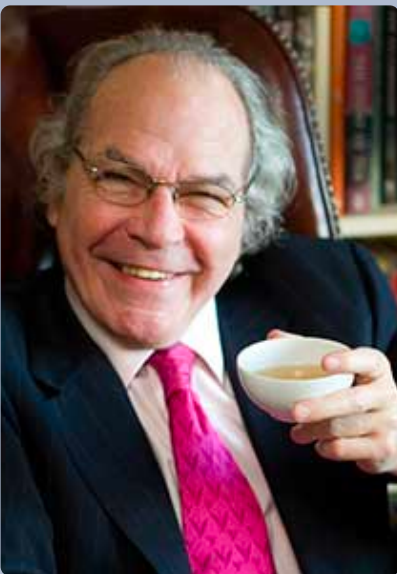
First Flush Fest 2023

Thank you so much for attending our First Flush Fest Tea Harvest celebration Sunday, May 28th. Despite the rain, we enjoyed visiting with lots of participants and were so glad to share our new tea studio porch with friends. Visitors in attendance were able to take tours of our gardens, connect with other community members, and even were the first to taste a variety of this year's First Flush Teas. Getting to know so many tea lovers and members of our wonderful community brought sunshine to our gardens on a drizzly day!



Friends of the Tea Garden | Tea Educator James Norwood Pratt

James Norwood Pratt has served the cause of tea around the world for more than 30 years. Since the first edition of his classic *Tea Lover's Treasury* appeared in 1982, he has been a presence on the international tea scene, becoming Honorary Director of America's first traditional Chinese tea house, International Juror of India's first-ever tea competition, "Best Tea Educator" for four successive years, and a John Harney Lifetime Achievement Award recipient at the 2015 World Tea Expo. He is the author of *James Norwood Pratt's Tea Dictionary*, the worldwide tea trade's seminal reference work, and is America's acknowledged "Tea Sage." Pratt is quite possibly the world's most widely read authority on tea and tea lore, thanks to books translated into multiple languages and numerous columns, articles and print and TV interviews in United States and overseas media. His *Tea Dictionary* was named Best New Publication by the World Tea Expo in 2010.



James Norwood Pratt

*Biography by Aaron Kiel,
Editor for Questex's World Tea News
Writer for Questex's Bar & Restaurant*

Friends of the Tea Garden | Tea Educator James Norwood Pratt

"Christine has created a new manifestation of the spirit of tea... a place to house its amazing spirit"

When did you first become involved with the tea community?

I had written a book about California wine, and writing about wine prepared me to understand tea. The next book I wrote was the tea lovers treasury, the first time in 50 years a serious book was written about the enjoyment of tea.

What first sparked your interest in tea?

I understood that it was the plant, the place, and the people who make tea so fascinating.

What is so special about tea?

I've written 6-7 books, but tea is my subject. It is those beloved (tea) communities that produce the best relationships- and nothing produces those relationships like tea



Norwood meets with Jarrah Passanisini

When asked about tea community; Norwood stated that *"we're trying to bring out the best of this leaf here, not only through the drink but through the knowledge that can be passed along."*



Norwood with our First Flush Fest volunteers

What is your favorite memory of drinking tea or being involved with the tea community?

I have a million favorite experiences, one particular memory was seeing the dawn sunshine on the peak of Kanchenjunga from Darjeeling, India, in the middle of the night: I woke up and it must've been 4 AM. Looking out, I could see the sun already illuminating this mountain. It was already glowing, just the mountain top.

How do you think a life oriented around tea shaped the way you view and interact with the world around you?

I would like to believe it has made me kinder and somewhat more patient.

From the Tea Gardens | *What have we been up to?*



Summer Workshops



This season's workshops are in full swing; the perfect kick-off to a busy summer in our gardens! During our *Introduction to Tea* workshops, guests are given an educational tour of our gardens and taste a selection of our First Flush teas while learning about growing tea. Our *Harvesting & Processing* workshops provide hands-on instruction and experience harvesting and making tea alongside tea-sampling breaks. During our lunch break for our first class in June, participants picked up (or brought) their lunches and snacks to enjoy in the Shady Grove while getting to know one another. At the end of the day, our group left with samples of Black and Green teas they made to finish drying and enjoy at home.

Starting in June, we began harvesting second flush growth, and we're making black and green tea, as well as oolong! We're also harvesting flowers, including lavender, bee balm, and more!

The Tea Studio

The upstairs has already been used for various classes and the rainy open house event - so wonderful! But it gets hot, and we are working on something really special. Together with Jeff Reilich (EQCinc.org), a friend of Camellia Forest Nursery, we've designed a system for maintaining needed temperatures for comfort and tea processing, minimizing electricity input. This includes insulating the upstairs room with dense-pack cellulose - investing in the future.



Planning for a cooler future!

Pick Your Own Tea!

Our gardens continue to grow throughout August. For participants in our Harvest and Process workshop, we offer *Pick Your Own* for \$15/per 100 grams plucked (to make about 20 grams finished tea at home) . If you have taken the workshop, look out for our invitation, or email us at teaflobergardens@gmail.com to reserve a time. Join our private Facebook group: Tea Gardens Community to talk about growing and making your own tea with other students.

Speaking of Tea

Christine is excited to be presenting at the Northwest Tea Festival in September, held at the Seattle Center (home to numerous arts venues and the Space Needle). You can read more at <https://www.nwteafestival.com/>. Her talk, "Growing local tea - from garden to cup," will include background on historic and recent trends in U.S. grown tea, highlights of growers in the Pacific Northwest, and an intro to tea gardening for home growers. Locally, we're also excited to host a group of new farmers from Moore County, NC in August - one of our favorite things to do!



Patreon

Since she started writing her book, *Grow Your Own Tea*, Christine sought ways to educate and empower growers with "beyond the book" information and content for visual and auditory learners. The Patreon platform supports and helps fund these efforts.

New resources in June include tea gardening guidance, excerpts from her World Tea Expo talk, and our informal monthly online Sip & Chat/Q&A session, where patrons login to discuss all things tea.

We offer various membership tiers and have just launched our most expansive tier yet! First Flush Patrons have access to everything offered at other tiers- as well as invitations to special events at the tea gardens,

seasonal tea samples shipped to you, and much more! Click the Patreon icon to the left or search Camellia Forest on Patreon to become a member!



YouTube

We know you can find all sorts of information on youtube these days. But there is still relatively little practical guidance for aspiring tea gardeners. As we continue to expand the ways in which we share and teach from our gardens we will be posting free content on our youtube channel ranging from workshop highlights, brief educational videos, and the some of the beautiful moments we experience in our gardens.

Our newest video will follow our most in-depth workshop: Harvesting & Processing. Click the icon to check-it out!



Tea Garden Tips

Summer work in the garden:

- Pluck new growth and make tea!
- Fertilize *no later* than July, based on soil test if possible
- Keep vines and larger weeds away from base of the tea plants. Take care not to disturb the roots!
- Water as needed especially if hot and dry. This will help the plants put out new shoots as well.
- Adding mulch when needed or as it washes away (as seen in the right photo after five inches of rain)



Garden C mulch washed down the walkways after a heavy rain



Talk to you again soon!



Connect With Us:



Camellia Forest



Camellia Forest
Tea Gardens



teaflowergardens@gmail.com



@CamelliaForest
TeaGardens



@camelliaforesttea



teaflowergardens.com