

Cultural Information- Camellia
(kuh-MEE-lee-a)

<u>Light:</u>	Full or partial sun, a southern, eastern or western exposure.
<u>Temperature:</u>	Although they are hardy in subfreezing temperatures as far north as zone 8 (zone 6 for the northern hardy varieties), maintain temperatures indoors above 35° and below 60° at night in the winter. Day temperatures can vary.
<u>Humidity:</u>	Maintain humidity levels at 50% or higher; however, lower levels will do no harm for short periods.
<u>Watering:</u>	Bring soil to a state of visual dryness between watering. When watering, thoroughly saturate soil until water comes through the bottom of the pot.
<u>Fertilizer:</u>	Little or no fertilizer, as they prefer low fertility. Too much would harm them! If you do use fertilizer, use it in the very beginning of the spring only. Cottonseed meal is an excellent fertilizer for camellias. A handful placed on the soil surface at the beginning of the growing season is adequate. As they need magnesium, two applications a year of Epsom salts at 1 tbl per gallon of water will amend their nutrient needs.
<u>Pruning:</u>	Prune after flowering. However, in pot culture, stems that are cut usually won't flower the following year and will need two growth cycles to form buds. It is important to pinch and prune young plants to develop a branching structure as they can become loose and open in their form.
<u>Insects and Disease:</u>	For the most part, insects or diseases do not bother them. When overfed and subject to damp soil conditions they do occasionally have difficulties with root diseases.
<u>Comments:</u>	Camellias are slow growing, needing cool nights in the winter to mature the buds. It's best to prune a young plant to form a branched structure and then let it grow out and form buds. Otherwise, they can get stalky as they get older. Periods of severe dryness can damage plants and disrupt the flowering, especially under too high soil fertility. They are prone to edge burn, which is browning of the tips of the leaves. This condition is not fatal but difficult to control.