

January

Resume gibbing (applying a solution of gibberellic acid to a growth bud adjacent to a bloom) . Pick up, remove, destroy all dead blooms. Put them in trash bags and then into your trash container. DO NOT put these dead blooms into your compost pile. A good time for grafting.

February

A good time for grafting. Continue picking up those dead blooms. A good time to attend camellia shows, visit camellia gardens, and capture blooms with a photo!

March

You may begin to prune plants that have stopped blooming, or wait until April. Also a good time to capture your blooms with a photo!

April

Pick up, remove, destroy all dead blooms to avoid petal blight (a fungal disease). Put them in your garden trash container. DO NOT put these dead blooms into your compost pile. Prune to control interior growth and plant height, after plant has quit blooming and before new growth begins.

Apply an Azalea/Rhododendron/Camellia fertilizer, e.g., Vertagro 16-4-8, or Holly Tone, or your favorite organic. Follow fertilizer instructions, e.g., for a large plant (6 ft or higher), sprinkle 1 cup of fertilizer at the drip line. Water in the fertilizer after application.

Check pH of soil and add necessary chemicals to keep in the 6.0-7.0 range - sulfur to lower pH (more acid) and dolomitic lime to raise it (more alkaline).

If scale or other insect problems are observed, spray plants with dormant oil (All Season, NEEM, or Volck).

A prime time for air-layering (a propagation technique).

Also a good time to plant new or indoor over-wintered camellias, after the last frost.

Mulch plant base or bed as desired.

May

Also a time for air-layering. Now and through the summer, water if two weeks pass without rain. Mulch plants, away from the trunk, with 2-4 inches of pine straw . If you want to root new growth cuttings, May through August is the best time to do it.

June

Follow May instructions if you have not already done those things.

July

Fertilize with an organic or a low nitrogen fertilizer (4-8-12) and water it in. It's now too late to prune without cutting off bloom buds for the coming season. Check airlayers. If damaged and moss is dry, spray with water and re-wrap.

August

Water during long dry spells. A reliable indicator is if your azalea leaves are beginning to droop, you need to water.

September

Begin Gibbing early in the month. DO NOT gib more than 4 or 5 bloom buds per plant at a time. Repeat every other week through November. Begin debudding if blooms are overcrowded, leaving 1 bud on the terminal end of a branch. If you want to root hardened growth cuttings, September through November is the best time to do it.

October

Continue gibbing. Check airlayers. They can usually be taken off of the mother plant by now. Put them in small pots with an appropriate growing medium (no fertilizer) and leave them in pots for 1 year. Fertilize your landscape plants, if desired for root health, with 0-0-22. Now is a good time to plant new camellias.

November

Continue gibbing. Take off airlayers if you have not done so.

December

A good time to spray for scale and insects if problems are observed. Most of all - ENJOY YOUR CAMELLIAS FOR THE HOLIDAYS - OFTEN CALLED THE WINTER ROSE!