Camellia japonica 'Volunteer'

Planting a Camellia japonica 'Volunteer' are woodland, acid-loving plants. While they will love the excellent drainage of Inglewood's Bassendean dune sand, they will quickly starve, dehydrate, and suffer from yellowing leaves (chlorosis) if planted directly into it without significant moisture-holding, acidic soil modifications.

The best soil mix you can buy from **Bunnings Warehouse** to completely transform your native sand for this camellia is the **Scotts Osmocote Rose, Gardenia & Azalea Premium Potting Mix**.

Pick a Semi-Shaded Position: As a *Japonica* variety, 'Volunteer' features stunning ruffled, bicolour pink-and-white blooms that will scorch and bleach in the harsh Perth afternoon sun. Plant it where it receives **morning sun and afternoon shade**, or under the dappled light of a taller tree canopy.

Dig a Wide, Shallow Hole: Camellia roots spread outward rather than deep. Dig a hole **three times wider** than the nursery pot, but roughly the same depth.

The 60/40 Soil Blend: Mix **60% of the Scotts Osmocote Rose, Gardenia & Azalea Mix** with **40% of your native sand**. To boost moisture retention in Inglewood sand further, aggressively blend in half a bag of composted cow manure or rich organic compost through the hole.

Plant on a Slight Mound: Just like the lavender, set the plant so the top of its root ball sits **2 to 3 cm higher than the surrounding natural ground level**. Backfill with your soil blend, firm down gently to remove large pockets, and water deeply.

Thick Acidic Mulch (Crucial Step): Protect those delicate, shallow roots from the dry Perth wind and sun. Apply a **5 to 7 cm thick layer of pine bark mulch or leaf litter** across the planting zone. Pine bark naturally helps maintain the soil acidity camellias love. Keep the mulch a few centimetres away from the main trunk to avoid collar rot.

