



# Gainesville Camellia Society

Affiliated with the American Camellia Society

*Editor: Anna Langford*

*January 2026*

## ***President's Message***

I would like to thank everyone who worked and/or exhibited in our show. I am very proud to be President of such a great club. Our show was very well organized and ran very smoothly. Everywhere that I go in the Camellia world people rave about how great our club is.

Our very own Philip Leilich won Best Treated Bloom in Show with an outstanding Ferris Wheel. Good job Phil! It is great to be at another show and look and see our members involved. John Swanson and kids, Jerry Hogsette, Jill Reed, and our Vice President and very own Show Chairman Charles Simon and wife Diane not only showed up but worked the show.



*January 2026 GCS Show*



*Doris Ellis*

I highly recommend supporting other clubs - that is how we all survive and thrive. This weekend we will be attending the annual show in Winter Park. The following weekend is the Ocala Show, which is held at a beautiful location that is very close, and I hope to see you there!

Our meeting is this Sunday January 18th! See you there!

***Debbie Ellis, President***

### ***Minutes for GCS Meeting – December 21, 2025***

President Debbie Ellis called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the meeting and holiday party.

#### Amendments to November Minutes

1. Affirmative votes were recorded approving the November meeting minutes.
2. Affirmative votes were recorded approving the Treasurer's Report.
3. The Board recommended philanthropic recipients and funding amounts; all recommendations were approved by affirmative vote.

#### Old Business

No additional old business was presented.



*Alice Creighton*



*Fragrant Pink*

Debbie noted the need for clean water containers, such as milk jugs or water jugs, to fill camellia vases. Members were asked to bring any available containers to Kanapaha on Friday or Saturday morning. She also mentioned the continued need for volunteers on Saturday to serve as show clerks and on Sunday to assist with cleanup.

New camellia “yard sale” signs were presented by Cat and distributed to volunteers for placement along local roadways. Appreciation was expressed to those who helped place signs in their communities, as advertising efforts contributed to the success of the camellia show and sale.

### New Business

Discussion then focused on logistics for the upcoming camellia plant sale and show, including scheduling, setup, and the transport of camellias from host properties. Plant Sale Committee members and volunteers will meet at Kanapaha Botanical Gardens on January 1 at 9:00 a.m. to set up the sale area and unload camellias. Gates will open at 9:00 a.m. and close promptly at 1:00 p.m. Volunteers will meet again on January 2nd at 9:00 a.m. to arrange camellias in alphabetical order. Members were encouraged to participate on both days, as additional volunteers are needed.



*Sandy Claus & Amy Elf*



Christmas party

Cat also reported that the new Gainesville Camellia Society website is live at <https://gainesvillecamelliasociety.com/>

Plans for the website include documenting the Society's history and timeline as an archival resource, identifying locally cultivated camellia varieties as a reference for area enthusiasts, and posting annual show results from previous years.

With no further business, Debbie Ellis adjourned the meeting and invited everyone to enjoy food, the holiday party, and the White Elephant gift exchange. Charles Simon once again served as "Sandy Claus," assisted by Amy Puccio as "Amy Elf." The Yodeling Pickle made a memorable appearance as one of the more popular gift selections.

***Cat Spurgeon, Secretary***

<b><i>Date and place of meeting</i></b>		<b><i>Refreshments</i></b>	
		<b><i>Food</i></b>	<b><i>Drinks</i></b>
1/18/26	Kanapaha Botanical Gardens	Allison Kemp	Phil Leilich & Margaret Sneeringer
2/15/26	Kanapaha Botanical Gardens	Mona Rippe	Rick Davis
3/15/26	Kanapaha Botanical Gardens	Charles & Diane Simon	Charles & Diane Simon
4/19/26	Kanapaha Botanical Gardens	Victoria & Amanda Watson	Linda & Howard Eckinrode
5/17/26	Kanapaha Botanical Gardens	Summer Potluck Party	Wally Belgard

## GCS Show Results January 2026

879 Blooms Exhibited

523 Attendees

38 Exhibitors

### SWEEPSTAKES

Gold Certificate (unprotected):

91 Blue Ribbons, Nancibeth Shealy

Silver Certificate (unprotected):

90 Blue Ribbons, Sarah Doctor-Williams

### OUTSTANDING BLOOM CERTIFICATES

Best Bloom in Show unprotected, untreated:

'Dancing Flame', J. D. & Kay Thomerson

Best Bloom in Show unprotected, treated:

'Ferris Wheel', Philip Leilich

Complete show results are posted on the  
American Camellia Society website.



Phil Leilich with his bloom, Ferris Wheel



### **2026 Show Schedule**

January 24-25, 2026	Ocala Camellia Society	Ocala FL
Jan 31-Feb 1, 2026	North Georgia Camellia Society	Atlanta GA
February 7, 2026	Quitman Garden Club	Quitman GA
February 28-29, 2026	Middle Georgia Camellia Society	Fort Valley GA

### **Follow Us on Social Media**

***The Gainesville Florida Camellia***

***Society <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61570106033309>***

***GCS Facebook Message***

***Board: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2046931395806031>***

***Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/gainesville\\_camellia\\_society/](https://www.instagram.com/gainesville_camellia_society/)***

If you have some photos you would like to share of your camellias, but are not on social media sites, consider sending them to Cat Spurgeon and she will get them posted for you. Ensure you include the variety and/or cultivar, if you have a short story regarding the camellia, you are invited to include that as well. The purpose of this is to create awareness of the local varieties that our members are growing. This also helps with getting more people interested and involved with identifying the camellias in their yard and around town. Contact Cat at [acsgville@gmail.com](mailto:acsgville@gmail.com) or 321.615.2229 for more information or to submit your photos.

### **Dues**

The annual dues for Gainesville Camellia Society are due at this time. The amount is \$15 for an individual or \$20 for a couple. Please mail a check for your dues to the Treasurer:

Merry Reid  
7631 Monongahela Avenue  
Keystone Heights FL 32656

[reidm729@gmail.com](mailto:reidm729@gmail.com)

## New GCS Shirts

Gainesville Camellia Society has official shirts available in two styles: Polo (light blue) and regular t-shirt (stone blue and white). Sizes available range from Small to 3XL for both styles. The cost for either shirt style is \$20. Please contact Cat Spurgeon at [acsgville@gmail.com](mailto:acsgville@gmail.com) or 321.615.2229 to get yours ordered.



### *Officers*

President: Debbie Ellis

1st VP & Show Chair: Charles Simon

2nd VP & Program Chair: Wally Belgard

Treasurer: Merry Reid

Secretary: Cat Spurgeon

### *Board Members*

Carter Brenneman

Rick Davis

Jay Ellis

Deborah Engquist

Jerry Hogsette

Phil Leilich

Sanford Porter

Jill Reid

Charlie Rye

Ron Stevens

Irma Velez

### Monthly Meeting of the Gainesville Camellia Society

**Date:** Sunday, January 18, 2026

**Place:** Kanapaha Botanical Gardens

**Program:** Brian Do, UF Graduate Student, speaking on his research

**The Gainesville Camellia Society** meets at 2 pm on the third Sunday of each month from September through May in the GRU Conference Room at Kanapaha Botanical Gardens. Any changes to meeting dates, times, or venues are posted in this newsletter.