



Gainesville Camellia Society

Affiliated with the American Camellia Society

Editor: Anna Langford

May 2026

President's Message

Another year has come and gone.

Our Facebook page is up and running again thanks to Cat. We now have our Tax ID# & insurance to protect us from frivolous suits thanks to all the hard work of our VP Charles Simon. We have had some very interesting programs and look forward to seeing what our Program Chair comes up with next year. We have signed several serious new members.

The board will meet over the summer and we will come back in September with new ideas to get our club out into the community.

Sunday we will have our year ending picnic and begin a three month summer break. Don't forget to keep your Camellias watered. This drought is wreaking havoc on them.



Blue Danube

*Capricci*

It has been an honor to be your President this year. It is a pleasure to work with this group. You are always willing to step up and do the work gracefully instead of waiting for someone else to do it. That's what makes our club great.

See you Sunday.

Debbie Ellis, President

Minutes for GCS Meeting – April 19, 2026

The Gainesville Camellia Society gathered for its monthly meeting at 2:15 p.m., called to order by President Debbie Ellis, with thirty members in attendance. Debbie warmly welcomed two new members to the society: Lori Speer, who recently purchased a home with established camellias on the property, and Maria Huff Edwards, founder of Dreamers Garden at the Grove Street Neighborhood Community Garden. Lori shared her excitement about learning how to properly care for her camellias, prompting a humorous remark from Sanford Porter that earned applause from the room. Maria invited members to visit Dreamers Garden, a Gullah Geechee-inspired sculpture garden featuring native plants and camellias located at 920 NW Fourth Street in Gainesville.

*Apollo 14*



Amabel Landsdell

Sanford Porter suggested another meaningful outreach opportunity by placing camellias and even spent show blooms in residential and assisted living facilities so residents can enjoy winter flowers and seasonal beauty. Members responded positively to the idea, and Debbie Ellis emphasized the importance of forming a committee to help organize and implement these community projects.



Charlean, variegated

The meeting moved directly into new business, where Charles Simon provided updates regarding the upcoming end-of-year party and shared observations from the 2026 ACS National Convention. Charles noted that many camellia societies around the country are seeing success through increased public outreach efforts and community visibility. Discussion followed regarding ways the Gainesville Camellia Society can expand its presence locally. Examples included planting camellias in public spaces, community gardens, roundabouts, and town centers. Members expressed enthusiasm for creating a committee focused specifically on public outreach and educational engagement within the community.



C. Handellii

A heartfelt moment occurred during the meeting as Debbie acknowledged the recent passing of GCS member Lois Taylor. Lois's daughter, Wendy, was present and deeply touched by the thoughtful discussion and support from the club. Members shared ideas to honor Lois's memory, including purchasing a memorial brick through the American Camellia Society and planting a camellia in her honor at Dreamers Garden. Wendy shared that her mother especially loved "splotchy" camellias such as Ferris Wheel and frequently visited Wilmot Botanical Gardens to enjoy the blooms.

Members also heard from Jill Reed regarding her candidacy for Atlantic Coast Regional Director with the American Camellia Society. Jill spoke humorously about how her name was submitted for consideration and expressed appreciation for the support of fellow members John Swanson and Jerry Hogsette. She encouraged members to participate in ACS voting and thanked everyone for their continued encouragement and confidence.

Debbie reminded members about John Swanson's upcoming air-layering party scheduled for May 1st at his Gainesville residence before turning the program over to Wally for the educational presentation of the afternoon.



Clown



Desert Moon

This month's educational speaker was Mary Reed, Assistant Bureau Chief with the Bureau of Plant and Apiary Inspection under the Division of Plant Industry. She is also the daughter of GCS members Jill and Ken Reed. Mary provided a fascinating and informative presentation covering Florida's extensive agricultural inspection and pest detection programs. She discussed the work of inspectors who regulate the movement of plants and plant products, monitor nurseries and stock dealers, inspect beekeeping operations, and respond to agricultural pest threats throughout the state.

Members learned about the department's fruit fly detection program conducted in cooperation with the USDA, including the placement of more than 25,000 traps across 33 counties. Mary explained how inspectors monitor for invasive species and respond quickly to eradicate pests before populations become established. She also described the Detector Dog Inspection Program, where trained canines identify agricultural products being illegally transported into the state.



Adolphe Audusson



Sawada's Mahogany

The presentation also covered apiary inspections and the challenges facing modern beekeeping operations, including pest management and interstate transportation of bee colonies. Mary shared insights into emerging threats such as the Two Spot Cotton Leafhopper, Conehead Termites, and the Yellow-Legged Hornet, all of which are being actively monitored by state agencies. Members asked thoughtful questions throughout the presentation, creating an engaging and educational discussion.

Mary Reed was warmly thanked and applauded for her excellent presentation, which concluded at 3:47 p.m.

Treasurer's Report:

Checking: \$18,328.90
Savings: \$5,208.85
Total: \$23,537.75

Cat Spurgeon, Secretary



White King

Flower photos are from the garden of John Swanson.

Date and place of meeting		Refreshments	
		Food	Drinks
5/17/26	Kanapaha Botanical Gardens	Summer Potluck Party Please bring a side dish or dessert to share. Meat will be provided.	Wally Belgard Bring wine to share if you like.

Dues
<p>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:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Merry Reid 7631 Monongahela Avenue Keystone Heights FL 32656 reidm729@gmail.com</p>

Follow Us on Social Media
<p>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/</p> <p>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 or 321.615.2229 for more information or to submit your photos.</p>

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 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 Reed
 Charlie Rye
 Ron Stevens
 Irma Velez

Monthly Meeting of the Gainesville Camellia Society

Date: Sunday, May 17, 2026, socializing at 1 pm, meal at 2 pm
Place: Kanapaha Botanical Gardens
Program: End of year party

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.