



Gainesville Camellia Society

Affiliated with the American Camellia Society

Editor: Anna Langford

October 2025

President's Message



Daikagura

The Camellias are starting to put on a show in our gardens and hopefully in yours as well. This is what we work for all year - to be able to go into the garden and watch them show off.

We have been in contact with Forest Latta, and he will be speaking to the Late Bloomers Garden Club in Jacksonville on January 27th - I think that is on a Tuesday. He is going to try and encourage them to form another Camellia Club in Jacksonville. I think that would be a good thing and I would like for some of us to get together and attend to show support. That will be after our show.

We will now be starting the planning for our show, and I would like to encourage everyone with questions to ask them. I feel that the only dumb question is the one that is not asked.

See you on October 19th.

Debbie Ellis, President

Minutes for GCS Meeting – September 21, 2025

GCS President Debbie Ellis opened the meeting at 2:07 PM with a bang of the Camellia Gavel and welcomed everyone to our first meeting of the season. There were about 30 people present.

Debbie asked if there were any visitors or new members present. Craig Tisher took this opportunity to introduce Jim Stribling, the new Director of Wilmot Botanical Gardens. Below is a reprint from Wilmot Botanical Gardens which Craig reiterated as an introduction.



Kiku Toji

“Jim is a Florida native with a passion for horticulture and landscape management. He earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Operations Management from the University of Florida in 1987. With extensive experience in managing commercial nurseries, landscapes, and public gardens, Jim has developed a keen expertise in sustainable practices and innovative design.

He has previously served as Director of Aberglasney Gardens in Wales, UK, and the Redland Fruit and Spice Park in Homestead, FL. Prior to making the transition to public gardens, Jim managed various horticultural nursery enterprises ranging from indoor foliage to tropical fruit.

He is committed to enhancing the beauty and functionality of outdoor spaces and encouraging human interaction with the natural world.”

Everyone welcomed Jim and we all look forward to continuing improvements at Wilmot Botanical Gardens under his direction.

Old Business

Craig Tisher reminded everyone that the Wilmot Gardens Fall plant sale is October 10-11, 2026 and on-line presales are underway. Jerry Hogsette asked any members who would like to help with this to contact him.

Charles Simon updated the group on the effort to form the Gainesville Camellia Society (GCS), Inc., a non-profit corporation in the State of Florida, obtain a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) and then register GCS, Inc. with the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(3)(c) non-profit corporation. As reported in the minutes, The Executive Board approved proceeding with this effort. Charles is still working on re-formatting the GCS constitution and bylaws into articles of incorporation and will be ready to send around the document for comments and review later this week.



Brooke



Early Autumn

Charles also reported that, as approved by the Executive Board, a one million dollar liability insurance policy covering GCS Officers and Executive Board members has been purchased at a cost of \$670/year and took effect on September 15, 2025.

New BusinessTreasurer's Report (by email from Merry Reid)

Savings: \$10,208

Checking: \$12,558

Total: \$22,766

Charles Simon announced committee needs for the 2026 Show and gave the following brief descriptions of the responsibilities of each of the twelve Show committees. He asked everyone to please consider which committee they would like to serve with. A few of the chairman positions have already been filled. Charles will pass a signup sheet at the next meeting. The Show requires participation by nearly the entire club for a smooth success.



Wilamina

Show Committees:

- (1.) Publicity** - Do on-line adverts as desired. Contact local public affairs announcement venues like WRUF and TV 20 and submit the Show and Plant sale information *separately*.
 - *The Plant Sale starts at 9 AM on Saturday January 3rd, 2026.*
 - *The Show starts at 1 PM on Saturday January 3rd, 2026.*
- (2.) Physical setup & dismantling** - Set up competition table and covers, Set up Bloom Prep area to include tables and chairs, jars, cups, trays, water jugs, bloom registration cards, and amenities.
- (3.) Education/ACS/GCS membership** (Merry Reid, Chair) - Set up posters and handouts, man the information desk.
- (4.) Judges** (Jerry Hogsette, Chair) - Secure judges from within and without the local clubs, GCS and OCS. Determine how many would like to attend a Judges Dinner.
- (5.) Judges Clerks** - Each judge team should have at least three trained clerks to place identifying labels and marks on bloom registration cards as the bloom is judged. Recruit from club members, Master Gardener's and Gainesville Garden Club. Clerks must be trained before judging starts.
- (6.) Hospitality & Hosts** - Setup coffee, tea and pastries for breakfast, get Publix subs for lunch, and make gift bags. Judges' dinner can be at a restaurant or at Jerry's house, if we have one. Be available to enact real-time solutions to any problems that arise at the Show. Schmooze when not otherwise occupied.
- (7.) Receiving** - Receive bloom entries from competitors and electronically record names and mailing addresses. We will have a lap top computer, printer and envelopes on site.

- (8.) Placement** - Transport blooms to nomenclature/classification inspection, then to appropriate competition site.
- (9.) Classification and Nomenclature** - Inspect bloom entries just prior to placement to assure proper classification and nomenclature are listed on the registration card for each entry.
- (10.) Awards and Door Prizes** - Secure a large plant for raffle, issue checks or cash on the spot to bloom winners who are present, prepare check mailings for winners not present. All of this activity is to be completed by the end of the Show on Sunday. We'll have a lap top computer, printer and envelopes on site.
- (11.) Recording** (need Excel savvy person) - Determine Sweepstakes winners, record all winners and bloom data electronically on ACS spreadsheet. Complete by end of the Show on Sunday.
- (12.) Finances** (Merry Reid, Chair) - Collect all proceeds from plant sales, raffles and membership dues.

Plant sales will be chaired by Rick Davis. Members interested in helping with this effort should contact Rick at rhDavis54@gmail.com. Rick will also pass a signup sheet at the next meeting.



Mark Chason

Educational Program

Wally Belgrade introduced our guest speaker, Jasper Dewey (JD) Thomerson,. JD's lecture topic was "Older, exciting, overlooked and new camellia varieties."

JD proceeded to wow us with photos and stories of over one hundred varieties that fit these descriptors. We were treated to his in-depth knowledge of the cultivars, species, breeders, histories of variety names and camellia culture for 90 minutes! Some of the many fascinating bloom varieties showcased were Ville de Nantes, Herme, Mathotiana Supreme variegated, Tiffany, Magic City, Lauren Tudor, Happy Birthday, Princess Masako, Spring Daze, Lavender Lady, Frost of Fire, Astro Nova, Showboat and Carol Ann to name a few. (Now JD knows my list!) There was even a camellia variety named "Jasper Dewey". ☺

There were many questions throughout the lecture and after. Professor Thomerson is always a welcome speaker at any gathering of camellia lovers, and was thoroughly enjoyed at our event!

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by a BANG of the Camellia Gavel at 3:45, followed by a plant auction and refreshments.

***Charles Simon for
Cat Spurgeon, Secretary***



Lillian Gordy

<i>Date and place of meeting</i>		<i>Refreshments</i>	
		<i>Food</i>	<i>Drinks</i>
10/19/25	Kanapaha Botanical Gardens	Jill Reed	Bill Hayes
11/16/25	Kanapaha Botanical Gardens	Jay & Debbie Ellis	John Swanson
12/21/25	Kanapaha Botanical Gardens	Christmas Potluck Party	Steve Stevens
1/18/26	Kanapaha Botanical Gardens	Allison Kemp	Phil Leilich & Margaret S.
2/15/26	Kanapaha Botanical Gardens	Volunteers needed	Rick Davis
3/15/26	Kanapaha Botanical Gardens	Charles & Diane Simon	Charles & Diane Simon
4/19/26	Kanapaha Botanical Gardens	Volunteers needed	Volunteers needed
5/17/26	Kanapaha Botanical Gardens	Summer Potluck Party	Volunteers needed

Camellia Air Layering Event

The camellia air layers (450-500) at the Swanson residence will be cut and soaked on Thursday afternoon, Nov. 6th, and potted on Friday, Nov. 7th, from 9 a.m. to 12:30 (more or less). Lunch on Friday will be a pot-luck meal. The host is providing the meat dish and drinks. Other GCS members should bring a side dish, salad, or dessert. Pots and soil will be provided by GCS. Additional water buckets would be welcome, and should be marked by name of owner to be taken home after the potting.

If you air layered plants for yourself, you should consider going to the Swanson's prior to the 6th or 7th in order to simplify the process for you, as the cutting on Thursday afternoon will be "inclusive" of all remaining air layers. Plants not cut prior to the 6th will be cut and soaked overnight in buckets.

Call John at (352) 672-2644. if you can come and get your air layers cut to avoid searching for them after general potting.

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

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/

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.

E-MAIL SCAM ALERT

Increasing emails from con artists have been sent to our members requesting payments to be made in various forms. GCS will *never request payments of any kind from members via email.*

Always check the sender's email address by clicking on the sender name and looking closely at the full address. Sometimes even this can be compromised. You'll know it's a scam if there is any form of request for any form of payment on behalf of GCS or any other person or entity. Don't fall for this. Just delete the email. Never open up an attachment from these thieves.

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 Reid
 Charlie Rye
 Ron Stevens
 Irma Velez

Monthly Meeting of the Gainesville Camellia Society

Date: Sunday, October 19, 2025
Place: “My Time as a Volunteer at UF’s Wilmot Botanical Gardens”
 by Dr. Charlie Guy, Department of Environmental Horticulture,
 University of Florida

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.