



Gainesville Camellia Society

Affiliated with the American Camellia Society

Editor: Anna Langford

November 2025

President's Message



William Penn

Wow it's already November! Didn't this year just start?

Saturday Jay and I went to Boston, Georgia for the Wiregrass Club's Show. They have a very well organized show. The cooperation of the members of the Wiregrass Club was evident as I circulated inviting new judges to our show. It is with great pride that I listen to folk talk about our show and our plant sales.

Now is the perfect time to gib for our show. Sunday we will be covering all of the steps in show preparation: gibbing, bloom preparation, transport, and filling out cards.

We will be bringing gibberellic acid for those interested in gibbing for the show.

See you Sunday!

Debbie Ellis, President

Minutes for GCS Meeting – October 19, 2025

GCS President Debbie Ellis called the meeting to order at 2:11 PM and welcomed members to the October meeting. Approximately 30 members were present, including 2 new members.

No Treasurer's Report provided this month.

Old Business:

Charles Simon informed the group that our current bylaws were incongruent with how officer elections are currently passed in meetings. He motioned for elections to be every two years for officials. Motion passed. With regard to the upcoming show and sales, he requested that Cat Spurgeon be in charge of the publicity, and Jerry Hogsette in charge of acquiring judges.



Pink Icicle



April Remembered

New Business:

Rick Davis, head of the Plant Sale committee, provided an update on the upcoming event. The group will be going to Loch Laurel Nursery to pick up a couple of truckloads of camellias. These plants will be tagged and priced at a later date. Rick expressed his appreciation to everyone who has signed up to help with the selection and transport of the plants. Volunteers are always welcomed, so if you did not have a chance to sign up, contact Rick.

John Swanson gave an update from the Gulf Coast Regional Meeting. He and another member recommended a visit to Bonaventure Cemetery in Savannah, which he described as a must-see. John also reported that the Daddy Mac camellia sold for \$500 at the Gulf Coast plant auction. He also reminded members that there will be a Potting Party at his house on Nov 6-7. GCS members will be cutting and potting previously air layered camellias on Thursday and Friday. There are 485 camellias that will be potted. John recommended that those who air layered branches for their own gardens arrive early to ensure they find their cutting.

John also reminded the group that the International Camellia Society (ICS) is coming to the southeastern US for their annual meeting January 22 through February 4, 2027. He encouraged people to join ICS if they haven't already and to consider showing support for the meeting by registering for the event planned to be in Macon, GA.



Dragon Fireball



Jerry Hogsette discussed that he would like to mentor someone who is interested in learning how to work with judges and the requirements necessary to ensure a smooth running camellia show. A couple of members showed interest. If anyone else is interested in learning, please contact Jerry.

Jill Reid will take charge of the reception of participants and blooms this year, as well as managing the reception of participants and flowers and preparing the show report. It was also suggested that the club reach out to Master Gardeners for assistance at the event.

Irma Velez presented and distributed handy business card sized invitations to all members for the upcoming GCS meetings.

Guest Speaker:

Wally Belgard introduced Dr. Charlie Guy, the guest speaker for the month. Dr. Guy is a Professor of Plant Physiology and Biochemistry at UF. He has been a volunteer at Wilmot Gardens for the past 10 years, sharing his extensive knowledge and experiences. He explained that many people at the University of Florida are unaware of the existence of Wilmot Gardens, a 5-acre botanical garden featuring 10 specialty areas, including a state-of-the-art therapeutic greenhouse. Dr. Guy discussed the therapeutic horticulture program, which offers mental health benefits and serves individuals with disabilities. He also mentioned the historical significance of the garden, highlighting the Hippocrates bust found in the garden and a tree planted in Greece by Hippocrates, with a cutting now growing at Wilmot.

*Brooke**Governor Mouton*

Dr. Guy provided a brief history of the garden, explaining that it went dormant from 1986 to 2006 but was revived under the leadership of Dr. Tischer. He explained how Dr. Tischer convinced UF to remove Wilmot from their parking garage plans, and allow him to restore the gardens. He noted how the garden is centrally located to medical facilities for those who have medical appointments, and those who have some time and can walk through the gardens as a healing garden. They can engage in the gardens passively (walking through) or actively through the therapeutic horticulture program. Dr. Guy recognized the hard work Leah Diehl has put forth as the Director of Therapeutic Horticulture at Wilmot Botanical Gardens. She has been instrumental in this program since 2011.

He emphasized the importance of the garden for research, service, and education, and also described the construction of the BJ & Eve Wilder Outdoor Therapeutic Garden. He further elaborated on the therapeutic benefits of gardening, particularly for mental health, and shared how Wilmot Gardens provides a calming and healing space for patients, staff, and the community.

A discussion followed on the *Armillaria* root rot disease affecting plants at the garden, especially camellias, which are highly susceptible to this fungal infection. Dr. Guy mentioned that aluminum sulfate had been used as a treatment for the disease, though its effectiveness is still uncertain. The group discussed the challenges of managing this type of fungal infection and the limited options available for treatment.



Strawberry Limeade



Edna Bass variegated

In appreciation for his presentation, Dr. Guy was given a complimentary GCS membership.

Following the speaker's presentation, Jerry Hogsette opened the plant auction, presenting three plants for bidding.

Cat Spurgeon, Secretary



Volunteers who potted up over 400 camellia air layers on November 7th.

<i>Date and place of meeting</i>		<i>Refreshments</i>	
		<i>Food</i>	<i>Drinks</i>
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 Sneeriger
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	Volunteers needed

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.

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, November 16, 2025
Place: Kanapaha Botanical Gardens
Program: “Preparing to Show Blooms” by Jay and Debbie Ellis

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.