

ainesville Camellia Society

Affiliated with the American Camellia Society

Editor: Anna Langford *November 2026*

President's Message

Well folks it's November already and the Camellias are showing off.

It's time to start all the Holiday planning, but don't forget OUR SHOW. If you haven't signed up it's now time to do so.

It's time to sign up for table decorating for our Christmas party. I'm sure that the sign up sheets will be circulating.

There have already been four Camellia Shows and there will be two more during the month of December and then it's our turn. Let's make this our best show yet!

See you next week!

Your President Debbie Ellis



Wildwood

Minutes for GCS Meeting – October 18, 2026



Alabama Beauty

Call to Order

President Debbie Ellis called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m. Approximately 22 members and one new visitor were in attendance.

Old Business

Antique and Heirloom Classifications
Philip Leilich requested clarification on the dates defining the Antique and Heirloom classes. Jill Reed reported that Charlie from the American Camellia Society (ACS) had added these classifications to the GCS Show Schedule:

- **Antique:** Pre-1900
- **Heirloom:** 1900–1950

Philip also asked whether bloom size applies to these classes. Jill clarified that neither class is divided by bloom size.

Preserving Established Camellia Collections
Frank Fletcher noted that several properties with significant camellia collections have recently been offered for sale. Deborah Engquist asked whether such properties could be registered with ACS to help prospective buyers identify and preserve the plants. The discussion included the Ritter property. It was suggested to check with ACS regarding this query.

ACCS Report

Jill Reed shared highlights from the ACCS meeting, including plans to move the meeting to North Augusta.



Brooke



Frank Houser variegated

She discussed two presentations:

- **Hybridizing:** Grant Montana presented on hybridizing and is making his talk available on Facebook.
- **Garden Mapping:** A presentation involving Magnolia Gardens addressed digital mapping of plant collections. Wally identified the platform as "Garden Explorer," which allows visitors to locate and learn about plants in participating gardens. The Magnolia Gardens information was not yet available online at the time of the meeting.

Jill also reported that J. D. Thomerson had resigned as editor of the ACCS journal. An outside person has been hired to assemble the publication, but members are needed to provide content.

Members were encouraged to submit articles about their gardens, observations, plant care, and the outcomes of their growing efforts. Submissions may be sent to ACCS President Tommy Alden (tommy@countylinenursery.com).



Blue Danube



Tomorrow's Dawn

Plant Acquisition and Potting Party

Plant Delivery

John Swanson reported that he would attend the Gulf Coast Camellia Society meeting that week, followed by the potting party the next week. Loch Laurel Nursery is expected to return with approximately 150 plants, which will be delivered to the Simons' property.

Potting Party Schedule

- **Thursday, October 29, beginning at 1 p.m.:** Cut the plants that were air-layered in April.
- **Friday, beginning at 9 a.m.:** Remove the aluminum foil, inspect root development, and pot the plants.

A potluck lunch is planned. The host will provide meat and drinks, and attendees should bring a side dish. Weather permitting, lunch will be held on the patio; indoor space will be available if needed.

Supplies and Personal Plants

Participants should bring clippers, gloves, and a box cutter or scissors to remove the air-layering coverings. Anyone with extra buckets should label them with their name and bring them to John's house. Pots are already available at the house.

Members who air-layered plants for themselves were encouraged to attend Thursday and identify their plants early, before they become mixed with the larger group.

Members also discussed methods for stacking and transporting plants in trucks and SUVs.



Bobbie Fain variegated



Ann Blair Brown variegated

Plant Selection and Pickup

In response to a question about the quality of County Line plants, Jill explained that Tommy Alden does not have space to set plants aside for extended periods. Orders placed in August but collected in December may be limited to the remaining inventory. She recommended picking up plants as soon as possible after ordering, while acknowledging the challenge of finding space to hold them.

Jill noted that the plants received by OCS had been beautiful. Members also discussed Mark Crawford's plants, which are approximately four years old, and the recommendation to keep them in pots for a year before planting them in the ground.

A visitor asked about the purpose of the plant purchases and philanthropy. Wally explained the society's plant sources, including purchased plants and John's air-layered plants.

Plant Auction

Jerry conducted the plant auction. Plants up for auction were 'Jean Clere' a Japonica, described as a red and white sport of 'Espacia McCarter'. 'Tom Knudsen' and 'Dixie Knight Supreme' were also offered and quickly sold.

Treasurer's Report

Account	**Balance**
Checking	$10,787.21
Savings	$5,209.11
Total	**$15,996.32**



Tomorrow



Educational Program: Botanical Pigments

Alexa Heilman, therapeutic horticulture coordinator at Wilmot Gardens and a registered horticultural therapist, presented a program on creating art with botanical pigments. Her experience includes work with Grow Hub, Eldergrow, and memory care programs.

Alexa discussed pigments from roselles and marigolds, encouraging members to explore the colors plants produce and observe how those colors change over time. She noted that marigolds readily transfer pigment to paper and are frequently used in botanical art.

She demonstrated using parchment paper to hold plant material in place and a mallet to transfer the pigments onto paper. Members then divided into two groups for the activity. Group members were seen (and heard) hammering away at their selection of flowers. Plant material transferred onto the postcard sized paper with ease in some cases. In other cases, a camellia member would hammer more vigorously to achieve the desired goal.

It was a very fun hands-on activity for all GCS members! Thank you, Alexa for showing us a therapeutic technique that is great for all ages!

Meeting was adjourned at 3:50pm.

Cat Spurgeon, Secretary



Flower photos are from the garden of John Swanson.

Air Layer Potting Day



Steve Stevens, John Swanson, and Jill Reed relaxing after all the hard work.



Some of the completed pots.

Date and place of meeting		Refreshments	
		Food	Drinks
11/15/26	Kanapaha Botanical Gardens	Merry Reid	John Swanson & Phil Leilich
12/20/26	Kanapaha Botanical Gardens	Christmas pot luck party	Linda & Howard Eckenrode
1/17/27	Kanapaha Botanical Gardens	Allison Kemp	Carter Brenneman
2/21/27	Kanapaha Botanical Gardens	Victoria & Amanda Watson	Kathy Hoskins
3/14/27	Kanapaha Botanical Gardens	Charles & Diane Simon	Wendy DeVito
4/11/27	Kanapaha Botanical Gardens	Mona Rippe & Anne Clark	Wally Belgard
5/16/27	Kanapaha Botanical Gardens	End of Year pot luck party	Rick Davis

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.



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.

Officers		***Board Members***
President:	Debbie Ellis	Carter Brenneman
1st VP & Show Chair:	Charles Simon	Rick Davis
2nd VP & Program Chair:	Wally Belgard	Jay Ellis
Treasurer:	Merry Reid	Deborah Engquist
Secretary:	Cat Spurgeon	Jerry Hogsette
		Phil Leilich
		Sanford Porter
		Jill Reed
		Charlie Rye
		Ron Stevens
		Irma Velez

Monthly Meeting of the Gainesville Camellia Society

Date: Sunday, November 15, 2026
Place: Kanapaha Botanical Gardens

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.