



Gainesville Camellia Society

Affiliated with the American Camellia Society

Editor: Anna Langford

December 2025

President's Message



Air layer roots

Here we are again almost show time! Where has this year gone?

If you haven't signed up to help yet, contact Charles Simon and see where you can help. Remember it's our show and only as good as we make it.

Yesterday and last night we got some much needed rain. We just got 20 Camellias in the ground and that 1 4/10 inch of rain picked the perfect time to come.

Wally Belgard harvested half of the air layers that he did on our big plants in May and June. The root system was phenomenal.

Our Annual Christmas Party is December 21st. Bring a side dish or dessert to share. We will supply the meat. Don't forget to bring a gag gift for the gift exchange. This is always a great time!!

See you at the party!!

Debbie Ellis, President

Minutes for GCS Meeting – November 16, 2025

GCS President Debbie Ellis called the meeting to order.

Treasurer's Report:

Checking \$10,292.75

Savings \$10,208.58

Total \$20,501.33

Amendment to October Minutes:

1. Jill Reed's last name was misspelled (i.e. Reid).
2. Jill Reed will be in charge of finalizing the Show Report.
3. Martha Campbell-Thompson will be in charge of the plant show sizing utilizing Richard Buggeln's Master Sizing program.



Yuletide



April Remembered

Old Business:

Charles Simon discussed the process of Letters of Incorporation and stated the Officers need to read and comment back regarding these articles immediately. Effective date of January 1, 2026, per state guidelines.

Debbie Ellis discussed the Board's final decision on the donations from GCS (Grow Hub, ACS brick, UF scholarship, and Kanapaha).

New Business:

Rick Davis provided an update on the upcoming plant sale. We have 240 camellias recently unloaded at Bill Hayes's property. Several GCS members came out to assist with unloading, arranging, tagging, and pricing all of the camellias. Thank you to all who came out to assist with this major task!

Anna Langford has a list circulating for those who are interested in being a host/hostess for a table at the Holiday Party on December 21. If you are interested in hosting a table, bring a tablecloth, utensils, centerpiece, and table setting for 6-8 people. Contact Anna if you have further questions.

John Swanson updated the group on how many air layers were completed at his house last month—a whopping 511 air layers were clipped and potted! Fifty of these will be taken to Wilmot Gardens, and the remaining will be cared for at a few GCS members' properties for the next year.



Ave Maria



Debutante

Phillip Leilich discussed wanting to enter a category for heirloom or vintage varieties for the upcoming Show. It was briefly discussed and decided that it could be potentially added for next year's Show (2027), but the specifics for this judged category would need to be hammered out well in advance.

Regarding the upcoming Show, Michele from Kanapaha will set up the tables and take down their tables. Our tables will be arriving at noon. Charles Simon noted that our GCS signs need to reflect our "camellia sale", not just a "plant sale." He stated there were several people upset to learn it was not a Kanapaha plant sale, rather a camellia sale. New signage will be amended and ordered to reflect Camellia Sale.

Martha Campbell-Thompson asked about fertilizer, whether it should be for sale at the camellia sale. Rick responded that it may not occur due to the problems with manganese and the percentage available in a bag for that element. John Swanson discussed Harrell's fertilizer, they supply the little green pellets in the camellias from Mark Crawford. Oftentimes found in citrus, manganese is an element that could be toxic (400ppm) to camellias. Dr. Craig Tischer said speaking to Mark Crawford would be a great source regarding fertilizer. The discussion went back and forth regarding the pros/cons of specific fertilizers. The financial aspect was brought up and whether or not it was worth the risk and effort to provide fertilizer. Rick will get with the committee and discuss. John discussed Holly-tone fertilizer, and the fact that camellias are acid tolerant, not acid loving plants. He said Gene Phillips from Gene's Camellia World uses Holly-tone and finds it to be the best fertilizer. It is made from processed poultry manure, and it's great for beginners.



Mathotiana , variegated



Jay Ellis disbudding plant

Educational Program:

Wally Belgard introduced Jay and Debbie Ellis who are demonstrating how to apply gib (Gibberellic acid) on plants. They also discussed and demonstrated how to disbud camellias for show purposes and for the application of gib. Jay removes the adjacent leaf to a bud, twists it off, and applies the gib to the cup area. Jay informed the group that Gib lasts years if kept refrigerated. Jay offered Gib to all of the members. He colors it red so it is easier to see. One drop is all it needs.

While Jay was disbudding a camellia branch for the group, Debbie discussed their "Camellia Go Bag" they keep handy when attending Shows. This Go Bag includes the following: nomenclature book, extra cards, pens, tweezers, Q-tips, freezer bag, water picks, and the Show Program that includes the classes/divisions.

Jay stated it is great to pre-fill out information on the card to save time. Debbie discussed how to fill out the card utilizing the program and noted that it is not consistent show to show. It is necessary for all entrants to have their complete address on their bloom tags to ensure prizes can be mailed to the winners if they are not present at the time of the awards. Charles chimed in and said that he will be getting addresses for all of the competitors.

Debbie continued to show the Go Bag and how they use the water picks for their chosen blooms. They put a floral preservative in their water pick to keep their blooms through the duration of the show. They purchase this preservative from a local floral shop. Debbie said they need about 50 to 60 1/2 gal to 1 gal jugs (cleaned) for transporting water for the show.



Leaf bud next to flower bud



Leaf bud removed, gib applied (red dot)

Wally asked how long you can keep a bloom before a show. Jay said it depends on the temperature and type of bloom. Formal doubles keep fairly well. He used to start cutting on Sunday for a Saturday show. Now he cuts Tuesday through Friday before a Saturday show. Jay uses a spray by Design Master called Clear Life to extend the life of his camellia blooms.

This concluded the program around 3:22.

Jerry Hogsette auctioned four camellias to GCS members, and refreshments were served.

Cat Spurgeon, Secretary

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

<i>2026 Show Schedule</i>		
January 3-4, 2026	Gainesville Camellia Society	Gainesville FL
January 10, 2026	Lakeland Camellia Society	Lakeland FL
January 10-11, 2026	Tallahassee Camellia Society	Tallahassee FL
January 17, 2026	Camellia Society of Central Florida	Winter Park FL
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

<i>Dues</i>
<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

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, December 21, 2025
Place: Kanapaha Botanical Gardens
Program: Christmas party – come at 1 pm to socialize and we will eat at 2pm.

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.