



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.



Gainesville Camellia Society

Affiliated with the American Camellia Society

Editor: Anna Langford

September 2025

President's Message



October Affair

Just a couple more weeks until our new season begins.

Hope everyone beat the squirrels to the camellia seeds. It's a fight every year. We will see what comes from the latest haul of seed.

We have new growth popping out everywhere. The camellias are starting to show out for the next season.

Jay did some really dramatic pruning on our camellias. They are so huge that they need it to become manageable. As always, we are also working on replacing water hoses. That is a nonstop job. We water with overhead sprinklers.

Some people have started gibbing retics for the Georgia National Show in October. As we know retics take longer.

Disbudding is always an ongoing thing but as we enter show season it is imperative for larger show blooms.

We can still fertilize through September!

See you at Kanapaha on the 21st !!

Debbie Ellis, President



Alabama Beauty

Minutes for GCS Meeting May 25, 2025

GCS President Jay Ellis welcomed everyone to our end-of year feast and brief meeting at 1:10 PM. There were 25 members present.

Educational Program

After our feast Wally Belgrade introduced our speaker, Deborah Engquist, who presented an eye opening recorded view of wildlife on her rural property. Deborah uses animal traps to rid her yard of nuisance armadillos, but occasionally traps an untargeted beastly.



William Penn



Shishigashira

Charles Simon reminded everyone about forming a non-profit corporation for GCS and said the Board will take up the issue at its meeting this summer.

New Business

There was no Treasurer's report.

John Swanson announced that the annual pot party for air layers will be held on November 6 (cutting) and November 7, 2025, (potting) at his property. Pots and soil will be provided and are paid for by GCS. There will be a pot-luck lunch at noon on November 7. (That's a lot of pot!)

The meeting ended at 3:40 PM.

Charles Simon, Secretary

The most astounding clips showed a bunny trapped in the cage followed by predators taking a close look and swipe or two at the caged meal. These included coyotes, her cat and dog, and a very frustrated owl that stayed on top of the cage for several minutes while the bunny trembled below his talons!

Deborah told us that she's had success using Trico Pro with sheep fat to keep deer from eating her camellia plants.

After this most entertaining presentation, Jay Ellis continued with a brief business meeting.

Old Business

A motion was made and seconded to accept the May, 2025 meeting minutes. The motion passed.



Sparkling Burgundy

Minutes for GCS Board meeting on June 27, 2025

The meeting was called to order by the new GCS President Debbie Ellis, at 2:10 PM. The following GCS Officers, Board members and other members were present:

Officers

Debbie Ellis - President
Charles Simon – 1st Vice President
Walter Belgrade – 2nd Vice President
Merry Reid – Treasurer

Board Members (There was a quorum present.)

Jay Ellis
Deborah Engquist
Ron (Steve) Stevens
Jill Reed
Phil Leilich
Irma Velez
Carter Brenneman
Jerry Hogsette

Other GCS members

Diane Simon
Charlie Rye
John Swanson

Old Business

Treasurers Report, by Merry Reid

Checking \$13,414
Savings \$10,208
Total \$23,622

Register GCS as a 501.(3)(c) non-profit corporation

Charles Simon reviewed the process for GCS to register as a 501.(3)(c) non-profit corporation and the associated costs. He presented the following handout that details the procedures and costs. Other Camellia garden clubs can follow this process to attain non-profit State and Federal corporate status.

Why register Gainesville Camellia Society as a 501(3)(c) corporation?

- Because GCS is accepting credit card payments at its annual plant sale that exceed \$5,000/yr, a Form 1099 will be generated by *SQUARE*, the credit card payment processor. This form should have a TIN attached to GCS.
- Our Bank account should be registered to GCS, Inc. instead of Merry Reid.
- GCS, Inc. can purchase an insurance policy to cover board members and officers.

How do we register GCS as a 501(3)(c) corporation?

- First, GCS must register as a non-profit corporation in the State of Florida. We can use the name “Gainesville Camellia Society, Inc.”. Charles Simon will act as the initial

registered agent and use his SSN and address to set up the corporation. Our current bylaws can be reformatted as needed and serve as the articles of incorporation. They currently include a dissolution clause that directs any remaining funds to another non-profit, the American Camellia Society, a requirement for non-profit status.

- After GCS, Inc. is formed, we can file for a taxpayer identification number (TIN).
- After being assigned a TIN, GCS, Inc. can file form 1023-EZ to apply for 501(3)(c) status as a “Garden Club”.

What does it cost to setup and maintain this status for GCS?
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Initial filing costs:

- \$35 for filing the Articles of Incorporation.
- \$35 for registered agent designation.
- \$8.75 for each Certificate of Status (only need one)
- No cost to file for a TIN
- No cost to file for (501)(3)(c) status.

Recurring costs:

- The annual filing cost for a non-profit corporation in Florida (on Sunbiz) is \$61.25.
- Annual tax filing is a one page on-line form, no cost.

Insurance costs (not required):

- A one million dollar liability policy to cover all board members and officers costs \$656/yr. – recommended. (Nature Coast Insurance Agency)
- A two million dollar commercial policy for GCS, Inc. costs \$877. (Note: GCS does not own property or structures and has assets totaling <\$1,000. Our activities take place at Kanapaha Botanical Gardens (which has its own insurance coverage.) Not recommended.

<i>Total cost for setup and first year of member-only insurance: \$735</i>
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<i>Recurring annual cost for registration and member only insurance: \$717</i>
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After this presentation there was a detailed discussion of the pros and cons of doing this, and the consensus of the group was in favor of registering as a non-profit corporation and purchasing insurance to cover the officers and board members. There was still a question of whether or not GCS should charge Florida Sales Tax on sales. Jill Reid will find out who to contact in the Florida State system and Charles Simon will draft a brief letter requesting clarification on this issue.

A motion was made by Charles Simon and seconded by Jay Ellis to register GCS as a non-profit 501(3)(c) corporation. The motion passed unanimously. A motion was made by Charles Simon

and seconded by Jerry Hogsette for GCS to purchase the referenced liability insurance coverage for officers and board members. The motion passed unanimously. Charles will proceed using his personal information as the designated registered agent to register GCS as a non-profit corporation in the State of Florida, obtain a Taxpayer Identification number (TIN) and then file for 501(3)(c) status

New Business

Camellia Conventions

John Swanson presented a detailed summary of the upcoming Regional and National Camellia Society Conventions. The ACS Convention for 2026 will be held in Charleston, SC on February 19-22, 2026. The entire Middleton Gardens lodge will be reserved for the Convention. Most activities will be held at Middleton and Magnolia Gardens. Jim Fitzpatrick from the Southern California Camellia Society is the ACS President for the next two years.

The Atlantic Coast Camellia Society Convention will be held in Savannah, GA on October 3-4 2025. Interested members can go to the ACCS website for registration and lodging arrangements.

The Gulf Coast Camellia Society Convention will be held in Gulfport, Mississippi on October 22-25 at the Gulfport Beachfront Hotel.

Two-for-one memberships

John explained that several clubs are offering dual membership for new members in both the local club (\$15-\$20) and on-line ACS membership (\$10). Sometimes a \$5-\$10 discount is offered for both registrations combined. A discussion followed and a Board member noted this offer would be for the first year only and members would continue in subsequent years on their own. Jill Reed said that the Ocala Camellia Society (OCS) does this. It was agreed to bring this up at the September meeting for discussion by the membership,

Dreamers Garden

This is a small garden located at 920 NW 4th Street in Gainesville. The manager of the volunteer garden asked John if GCS would like help them obtain 5-6 more Camellias. John recommended several varieties and suggested that we also discuss this with the membership at the September meeting. We may be able to donate a few plants to this Garden.

Plant Inventory

The 2025 plant sale included over 100 plants, out of 850 total, that were sold to ACS conventioners. All plants were sold the first day. For the 2026 sale Charles Simon recommended targeting 700 plants and not to worry if we acquire 750+ plants. He said we typically order ~150 plants each from County Line and from Loch Laurel Nurseries. John Swanson has 150 club plants ready for this sale (and another 50 plants to be donated to Wilmot Gardens for their sale). Jerry Hogsette has ~170 plants for our sale, and Jay Ellis has ~75 plants for the sale.

Charles Simon mentioned that he'd like to purchase ~50-100 plants from John's Nursery. The \$12 price for 3-gallon potted plants is attractive. Some discussion followed about the pros and cons of John's Nursery plants. They have limited varieties, they put multiple plants in one 3-gallon pot and they trim off all buds to promote foliage growth. Jill Reed said OCS sold these plants last year and were not very happy with them due to the lack of blooms. She also mentioned that Wilmot Gardens has a source for low cost plants.

Charles mentioned that he's been disappointed with the quality of many plants from County Line. Jill said that OCS orders a total number of CL "best plants" with no more than 5 of any variety. They always get nice plants when doing this. Charles suggested that we try this type of ordering scheme this year.

Philanthropic giving

GCS expenses for the upcoming season are estimated as follows:

Plant purchase for 2026 sale:	\$9,000
Kanapaha rent for meetings and Show:	800
Show expenses (table rental already paid):	4,000
Liability Insurance:	700
Miscellaneous:	<u>1,000</u>
Total	\$15,500

This leaves \$8,000 for philanthropic giving, which is similar to last year. After a discussion, A motion was made by Charles Simon and seconded by Irma Valez to present the following list of donations to the membership at the September meeting.

UF/IFAS Env. Horticulture:	\$3,000 for two senior level or graduate students, unrestricted use
Kanapaha Botanical Gardens:	\$2,000 for support of the Camellia Garden and other Camellias on site
American Camellia Society:	\$2,000 to include purchase of a large custom brick with name/logo
Grow Hub:	\$1,000 for tools, plants and supplies to support the Camellia Garden

Sanford Porter will coordinate the UF scholarships and request that last year's recipients present a lecture on their research at a GCS meeting. Cat Spurgeon will be tasked with creating a design for the ACS memorial stone.

Guest Speakers for the 2025-2026 season

Wally Belgrade asked for help getting speakers for our educational lectures this season. Jill Reed suggested Charles Guy at Wilmot Gardens, past Chair of the IFAS Environmental Horticulture Department. She also suggested Marge Hendon of the Florida Garden Association.

She said a lecture on Caladiums, an excellent companion plant for Camellias, could be given by a vendor.

The meeting ended at 3:50 PM.

<i>Date and place of meeting</i>		<i>Refreshments</i>	
		<i>Food</i>	<i>Drinks</i>
9/21/2025	Kanapaha Botanical Gardens	Anna Langford	Debbie & Jay Ellis
10/19/25	Kanapaha Botanical Gardens	Volunteers needed	Volunteers needed
11/16/25	Kanapaha Botanical Gardens	Volunteers needed	Volunteers needed
12/21/25	Kanapaha Botanical Gardens	Christmas Potluck Party	Volunteers needed
1/18/26	Kanapaha Botanical Gardens	Volunteers needed	Volunteers needed
2/15/26	Kanapaha Botanical Gardens	Volunteers needed	Volunteers needed
3/15/26	Kanapaha Botanical Gardens	Volunteers needed	Volunteers needed
4/19/26	Kanapaha Botanical Gardens	Volunteers needed	Volunteers needed
5/17/26	Kanapaha Botanical Gardens	Summer Potluck Party	Volunteers needed

<i>Dues</i>
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

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Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/gainesville_camellia_society/

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Secretary: Cat Spurgeon

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Rick Davis
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Jerry Hogsette
Phil Leilich
Sanford Porter
Jill Reid
Charlie Rye
Ron Stevens
Irma Velez

Monthly Meeting of the Gainesville Camellia Society

Date: Sunday, September 21, 2025
Place: Kanapaha Botanical Gardens
Program: “Great Older, Newer, and Overlooked Camellia Varieties”
by J.D. Thomerson

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