



Camellia Club of Mobile

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September 2025

Welcome Back from the President!

Well, here we are again—a new year for the Camellia Club of Mobile! I believe 2025–2026 will be outstanding, and we're looking forward to a fantastic show in January.

I hope each of you will attend our first meeting to get important information about the show. We do have a few updates, and we'll need volunteers to help with planning and day-of jobs. There are many good things in the works. We're aiming to offer around 400 camellias for public sale, and with your help we'll have a truly fantastic show.

We also have several matters to discuss and decide about the future of the club. Remember, this meeting is a potluck—please bring a favorite dish, and feel free to invite a friend. I'm excited to see everyone and to sample that wonderful food!

See you Sunday afternoon (9/14). I hope all is well and everyone is safe. Here's to a great camellia season!

Larry Heard
President

Monthly Meeting Info

September 14, 2025
Building opens 1:00 p.m.
Potluck prep 1:30 p.m.
Potluck Social 2:00 p.m.
Meeting begins 2:30 p.m.

Meeting Location

Jon Archer Agricultural Center
1070 Schillinger Rd. N
Mobile, AL 36608



Blooms: People have been posting pictures of early blooms on social media. Please bring your blooms to our meeting for show and tell.



2025 GULF COAST CAMELLIA SOCIETY CONVENTION

OCTOBER 24-25, 2025
GULFPORT, MISSISSIPPI

Courtyard Gulfport Beachfront

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Don't forget to register!
You should have received
your email invitation.



Hosted by the
Mississippi Gulf Coast
Camellia Society

Camellia Season Prep: August–September Care Tips

As we look forward to another beautiful bloom season, now's the time to give your camellias the attention they need. August and September mark a key transition in the camellia calendar:

- Stop fertilizing by late August to avoid encouraging tender new growth before cooler weather.
- Watch for bud formation, especially on early varieties like **Camellia sasanqua**, which begin blooming in October and November.
- This is the ideal time to mulch, remove suckers, and plan your fall planting.
- Look closely—swelling buds are a sure sign that bloom season is just around the corner!

A sampling of Sasanquas --



Cotton Candy



Strawberry Pizzazz



Leslie Ann



October Magic Ruby



Sparkling Brandy



October Magic Pink Perplexion

Disbudding Camellias: Bigger Blooms, Happier Plants

Disbudding camellias is a personal choice, but it's a reliable way to produce fewer, larger, showier blooms and to prevent crowded buds from bruising each other. Many growers don't disbud single-form blooms unless they're grooming for a show; single blossoms often look lovely in clusters. Large doubles and peony forms—think 'Frank Houser' and similar—benefit the most. When thinning, select the strongest, well-spaced bud on each spur and remove the extras with a gentle pinch or clean snip at the base. A handy tip for garden-grown plants is to leave the downward-facing bud; when it opens it sheds water more easily and the petals are less likely to spot or tear. For heavier disbudding, aim for one (or at most two) buds per limb, and avoid leaving side-by-side buds that will open into each other.

On the Gulf Coast, timing runs late summer into early fall—once buds are set and pea-sized, you can start and continue lightly through September. Go easy on young, stressed, or recently transplanted plants. As you work, remove any damaged or rubbing buds and toss trimmings in the bin to keep things tidy. A thoughtful pass now helps direct the plant's energy into a few standout blooms when the season begins.



‘Frank Houser’ in full, spectacular bloom. Photos courtesy of The Oyler's -- "Even at this stage, we still thin extra buds—leave the downward-facing bud, which sheds water and rides out cold better."



The Camille Statue and the Davis Family Legacy at Bragg-Mitchell Mansion



Nestled amidst the majestic oaks and camellias of Mobile's Bragg-Mitchell Mansion, the "Camille" statue stands as a timeless emblem of Southern elegance and resilience. This bronze statue, depicting a carefree Southern belle, captures the spirit of the antebellum South and serves as a poignant reminder of the mansion's storied past. For members of the Camellia Club of Mobile, the statue and the mansion's history, including its ownership by the Davis family, offer a fascinating glimpse into our city's heritage.

The "Camille" statue, named after the devastating Hurricane Camille of 1969, was installed on the mansion's grounds as a tribute to Mobile's enduring strength. Crafted to evoke the grace of a bygone era, the statue portrays a young woman in a flowing dress, her pose exuding both poise and playfulness. Positioned on the front lawn, "Camille" greets visitors touring the 13,000-square-foot Greek Revival mansion, built in 1855 by Judge John Bragg. The statue not only enhances the mansion's aesthetic appeal but also symbolizes the community's ability to rebuild and thrive after adversity, much like the camellia flower we cherish for its resilience and beauty.



The Bragg-Mitchell Mansion's history is deeply intertwined with Mobile's social and cultural fabric, and the Davis family played a significant role in its legacy. In 1902, Franklin P. Davis purchased the mansion for \$9,242.22, marking the only time the property was owned by native Mobilians. Franklin, along with his wife Corinne and their five children, brought a vibrant energy to the estate. The Davises were steeped in Mobile traditions, actively participating in Mardi Gras celebrations and founding the "Flower Club" of Mobile, a nod to their passion for horticulture. Franklin further contributed to the mansion's legacy by commissioning blueprints of the estate, providing valuable documentation that had previously been lacking.

During their tenure, the Davises transformed part of the property into a flourishing flower business, constructing two commercial greenhouses to support their ventures. After Franklin's untimely death in 1908, Corinne continued to oversee the property, residing there until her daughters were married. She later moved to New York City but retained ownership until 1931, renting the mansion to Minnie and Alfred Mitchell from 1925 onward. In 1931, Corinne sold the property to Minnie Mitchell for \$20,000, who lovingly restored it to its antebellum grandeur, ensuring its place as a Mobile icon.

Today, the Bragg-Mitchell Mansion, listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1972, welcomes visitors for guided tours and special events, with "Camille" standing as a beloved landmark. The Davis family's contributions—from their cultural involvement to their practical enhancements—helped preserve the mansion's legacy, making it a fitting subject for our Camellia Club newsletter.

For more information or to schedule a tour, click >> **Bragg-Mitchell Mansion**. Let's celebrate the enduring beauty of "Camille" and the Davis family's role in shaping this Mobile treasure.

Camellias on grounds of the Bragg-Mitchell Mansion



Sources:

Early history of the mansion>> **Encyclopedia of Alabama**

An interesting read on the history of the mansion >> **Belle on the Battlefield**

Bragg-Mitchell Mansion Facebook page >> **Bragg-Mitchell Facebook**

For additional information regarding
Camellia Club of Mobile please visit
our website:
<http://www.mobilecamellia.org/>

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