

# The Augusta Chronicle

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## COLUMNS

# Campbell Vaughn: A showcase for camellias coming soon to Aiken and Augusta

**Campbell Vaughn** Columnist

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It has been a camellia kind of season these past few weeks. I spoke to the Aiken and Augusta camellia societies at their respective December meetings and recently got to do a television interview with my friend Ana Christina in the middle of Pendleton King Park Camellia Gardens.

The number of blooms was amazing. And now we are getting into camellia show season in the Augusta area.

Show camellias are the true southern charm inflorescence. With large blooms in early winter through spring, these shade-loving Asian native evergreens can put on a display like no other. And the variety of colors of blooms is hard to fathom with more than 20,000 registered cultivars in the books.

Camellia shows have a long history in Augusta. In January 1932, at the home of Mrs. Alonzo Boardman on the corner of Walton Way and Peachtree Road, the Sand Hills Garden Club staged the world's first camellia show. According to Augusta Chronicle-Herald columnist and garden editor Florence Hill (mother of William Morris III) in the Jan. 26, 1958 edition, she noted that "long before any Chamber of Commerce in the country realized what 'Camelliana' could mean to a city, and years before the popularity of camellia books, prints and China became high style – the Sand Hills Garden Club of Augusta ventured out to glorify the aristocrats of the flower world for the very first time." I had to ask around to get an exact definition of the word "Camelliana" because Mr. Google could not even help me define it. My interpretation is "of and about camellias."

If you really love camellias, get ready because we are about to get back-to-back shows in Aiken and Augusta with both shows being sanctioned by the American Camellia Society.

This weekend in Aiken, the Aiken Camellia Society is having their show at St. Thaddeus Episcopal Church on 125 Pendleton St. SW. On Feb. 3, camellias will be the star attraction at the Augusta Camellia Show at Good Shepard Episcopal Church, 2230 Walton Way.

So, what is going to happen at these shows? Growers will bring their camellia blooms to be judged in a large variety of categories such as type of camellia hybrid, size of bloom, antique cultivars, and protected and unprotected blooms (grown in a greenhouse or outdoors).

**Campbell Vaughn:** When it comes to insecticides, you need to mix it up for maximum effect

One of the best features for camellia owners is the opportunity to bring in their personal blooms to have the cultivar identified by experts. If you ever wondered about the actual name of the camellia you have blooming in your landscape, both the Aiken and Augusta shows will be an excellent opportunity to make that happen.

If you are out and about, swing by and check the shows out. Admission is free and both shows should have some camellias to purchase to raise funds for their local chapters.

On another note, I saw something this past weekend that was a definite first. Riding down to fish with some buddies south of Vidette, Georgia this past weekend, I saw a big bird on the side of the road. I figured it was another buzzard eating a dead possum or something like that. The bird flew away quicker than I would have expected, because vultures usually wait until you get right next to them before fleeing the scene. When I drove up, I saw it was a deer that was freshly killed by someone's vehicle on the shoulder of the highway and the bird flying away was a fully mature bald eagle. A bald eagle scavenging a dead animal on the side of the road in south Burke County. I usually yell, "America," when I see our national bird, but it took me aback so much that I drove a half mile before I remembered to yell it. Who would have ever guessed?

