Snoopy Gems

Volume 52 Number 11 November 2026
Mississippi Gulf Coast Gem &
Mineral Society Inc.



Email: mgcgms@bellsouth.net

MGCGMS Established in 1974

Message from the President

Dear Members,

The MGCGMS show at the end of September was a success. I know we all needed some well-deserved rest after that weekend. Hopefully, we all enjoyed the show and also got a few treasures from the vendors. I really appreciate all those that helped with the show.
The holidays and end of the year are upon us. I hope all of us make time to enjoy family and friends during this time of the year. Remember that we will be observing our holiday party during our December meeting. If you are new to the club this year, the holiday party is celebrated with pot luck, dirty Santa and gem-themed Christmas ornaments. If you have any questions about this, let me know.
Also, remember that yearly dues are coming up with the new year. You can go ahead and pay for 2027 now if you wish. Dues must be paid by end of January to be eligible for the scholarship drawing.
As always, thank you for your support of the club and let me know if you have any issues, concerns or needs.

Regards,
Stephanie Hatcher
MGCGMS President

Workshops:

Our Wednesday classes from 11-4:00 in our room at the Mary C. All members are welcome!

Saturday 11/14/2026 Bouncy Christmas Tree by **Vicki Reynolds** kit $6



Materials:
Round wire
11/0 seed beads
Tools:
flat nose, round nose, & chain nose plyers, flush cutters, & ruler

Wednesday workshop open to the public 11/18/2026: **Stephanie Hatcher** is teaching hand wire wrapped christmas tree earrings. Kits will be $5.



Materials:
provided
Tools:
flush cutters, chain nose pliers, round nose, ruler

Machines: Members of our tool committee will be available to help with cutting and cabbing gemstones. As always, we will have the club machines available for metal & gemstone testing, gemstone cutting, and cabbing. There is a $3 tool maintenance fee to use the machines.

Meeting Minutes
GULF COAST GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY
Aug 2026 Minutes Not available at this time.

Upcoming Shows

Canaveral Mineral & Gem Society
November 14 – 15, 2026
The Melbourne Auditorium 625 E. Hibiscus Blvd, Melbourne FL 32901
11/14/26 Saturday 10am - 5pm, 11/15/26 Sunday 10am - 4pm
Admission Adults $5 (2 day pass) , Kids under 13 Free with a paying adult, Free Parking

Link(s):
Website: https://www.canaveral-mgs.com/
Facebook: Canaveral Mineral & Gem Society Cobb County Gem and MIneral Society

Cobb County Civic Center
November 20 – 22, 2026
Free admission and parking! 10-6 Friday/Saturday, 10-5 Sunday.

Link(s):
www.ccgms.org

Columbia Gem and Mineral Society
November 20 – 22, 2026
Jamil Temple 206 Jamil Road Columbia, SC 29210
The show is open Friday and Saturday from 10 am to 6 pm and Sunday from noon to 5 pm.

Link(s): www.cgms.rocks

Mobile Rock & Gem Society
November 27 – 29, 2026
Abba Shrine, 7701 Hitt Road, Mobile, AL 36695
Friday November 27: 1 pm to 6 pm; Saturday November 28: 9 am to 6 pm; Sunday November 29: 10 am to 5 pm

Link(s): https://www.mobilerockandgem.com/show-summary

Roanoke Valley Mineral & Gem Society
November 27 – 29, 2026
Salem Civic Center, 1001 Roanoke Blvd. Salem, VA
notes
Salem Civic Center, Salem, VA | (540) 375-3004, Box Office Hours M-F 8am-5pm
Show: Fri 2pm-6pm, Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 11am-4pm

Link(s):https://www.facebook.com/groups/RVMGS/



Happy September Birthday

Helen Daniel Bill Lince
Reba Shotts Bill White



TOPAZ



TOPAZ: The Science, Colors, Origins, and Uses of a Remarkable Gemstone

From the mineral-rich mountains of Brazil to the historic gemstone deposits of Russia, topaz is one of the most fascinating minerals in the world. Known for its brilliant luster, remarkable hardness, and beautiful range of colors, topaz has been treasured for centuries as both a gemstone and a collector's mineral. But beyond its beauty lies an interesting geological story involving volcanic activity, crystal formation, trace elements, and the unique conditions required for this mineral to develop.

Understanding Topaz: A Scientific Look at One of Nature's Most Beautiful Minerals

Mineral Composition and Crystal Structure

Topaz is a naturally occurring aluminum silicate mineral containing fluorine and, in some cases, hydroxyl groups. Its chemical formula is $Al_2SiO_4(F,OH)_2$. It belongs to the silicate mineral group and crystallizes in the orthorhombic crystal system.

Topaz crystals commonly develop as elongated, prismatic forms with well-defined crystal faces. They may have striations running lengthwise along the crystal, and their terminations can display a variety of geometric faces. Some crystals are remarkably large, making them particularly attractive to mineral collectors.

One of the most interesting characteristics of topaz is its hardness. It measures 8 on the Mohs hardness scale, placing it among the harder naturally occurring minerals. For comparison, quartz has a hardness of 7, corundum (sapphire and ruby) measures 9, and diamond measures 10.

Despite its impressive hardness, topaz has a significant weakness: perfect basal cleavage. This means the mineral can split relatively easily along a specific crystallographic plane. A sharp impact or sudden pressure in the wrong direction can cause a crystal or faceted gemstone to fracture or separate cleanly. This is particularly important for jewelers, lapidary artists, and mineral collectors when cutting, setting, or handling topaz.



Other important physical properties include:

• Crystal system: Orthorhombic

• Chemical composition: Aluminum fluorosilicate

• Mohs hardness: 8

• Specific gravity: Approximately 3.4–3.6

• Luster: Vitreous (glass-like)

• Transparency: Transparent to translucent

• Cleavage: Perfect basal cleavage

• Fracture: Uneven to subconchoidal

• Streak: White

Topaz has a relatively high refractive index, giving properly cut stones attractive brilliance and light reflection. It is also pleochroic, meaning that different crystal directions can display slightly different colors. This optical characteristic can be important when a gemstone is being oriented for cutting.

How and Where Does Topaz Form?

Topaz forms under specific geological conditions, particularly in environments associated with granite and other silica-rich igneous rocks. Fluorine plays an important role in its formation.

As magma cools beneath the Earth's surface, the remaining molten material becomes concentrated in elements and substances that do not readily enter the early-forming minerals. Fluorine can become enriched in these late-stage fluids and melts. When the right combination of aluminum, silica, and fluorine is present, topaz crystals can develop.

Topaz is commonly associated with several geological environments:

Granite Pegmatites: These are exceptionally coarse-grained igneous rocks that form from the final portions of slowly cooling, mineral-rich magma. Pegmatites can contain large, well-developed crystals of quartz, feldspar, mica, tourmaline, beryl, and topaz.

Rhyolite Deposits: Rhyolite is a fine-grained volcanic rock with a chemical composition similar to granite. Topaz can form in cavities and fractures within rhyolite, particularly where fluorine-rich volcanic gases and fluids are present.

Greisen Deposits: Greisen forms when hot, chemically active fluids alter granite. These deposits are particularly interesting to mineral collectors because they may contain topaz, quartz, mica, fluorite, cassiterite, and other minerals associated with tin and tungsten mineralization.

Hydrothermal Deposits: Topaz may also crystallize from hot mineral-rich fluids moving through fractures and cavities in existing rocks.

After the host rock weathers and erodes, topaz crystals may be released and transported by streams and rivers. Because topaz is relatively hard and resistant to weathering, it can accumulate in stream gravels and alluvial deposits. These secondary deposits are often called placer deposits.

Important Topaz-Producing Locations Around the World

Topaz is found in many countries, but certain localities are particularly famous for their exceptional crystals, unusual colors, and gemstone quality.

Brazil

Brazil is one of the world's most important sources of gem-quality topaz. The state of Minas Gerais, particularly the area surrounding Ouro Preto, is internationally famous for Imperial Topaz.

Brazilian deposits produce beautiful yellow, golden-orange, reddish-orange, pink, and peach-colored crystals. Some of the finest Imperial Topaz specimens in the world have come from this region.

The Vermelhão and Capão mines are particularly well known. Brazilian topaz can occur in large crystals, although fractures are common in some specimens.

Pakistan

Pakistan is another important source of beautiful topaz. The Katlang area in the Mardan District is particularly famous for pink topaz. Specimens from this region can display delicate rose-pink, peach, champagne, and reddish hues.



Collectors also value Pakistani topaz for its well-developed crystal forms and attractive mineral associations.

Russia

The Ural Mountains have historically produced significant quantities of topaz. Russian specimens are known for their clear, colorless, pale blue, and occasional pinkish colors.



The Ilmen Mountains are especially notable for mineral specimens, including topaz crystals associated with other pegmatite minerals.

United States

Topaz occurs in several American states, making it an interesting mineral for domestic collectors.

• Utah: Topaz Mountain in the Thomas Range is one of the best-known American localities. The area produces beautiful topaz crystals, often with a natural amber, sherry, or golden-brown color. Some crystals become colorless or pale blue after exposure to sunlight.

• Texas: Mason County is famous for natural blue topaz. Blue topaz was designated the official state gemstone of Texas in 1969.

• Colorado: The Pikes Peak region and surrounding areas have produced topaz crystals, sometimes associated with amazonite and smoky quartz.

• California: Several pegmatite localities have produced collectible topaz specimens.

• New Hampshire: Topaz occurs in certain granite pegmatites and is of interest to mineral collectors.



Other Countries

Additional sources include Australia, Mexico, Namibia, Nigeria, Madagascar, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, and Zimbabwe.

The mineral occurs in different geological settings around the world, and the color and quality of the crystals can vary considerably depending on the conditions under which they formed.

The Many Colors of Topaz

One of the most fascinating characteristics of topaz is its remarkable color range. Although many people associate topaz with golden yellow or blue, the mineral occurs naturally in several colors.



The color of topaz is influenced by its chemical composition, trace elements, structural defects, and exposure to natural radiation. Some colors can also be produced or enhanced through laboratory treatments.

Colorless Topaz

Colorless topaz is relatively common and is sometimes called white topaz. It has excellent clarity and can be cut into brilliant gemstones. Because of its high hardness and attractive luster, it is sometimes used as an affordable alternative to diamond.



Blue Topaz

Blue is one of the most popular colors in commercial jewelry. Natural blue topaz exists, but much of the vivid blue topaz sold today begins as colorless or pale-colored material that is treated through irradiation and subsequent heating.

There are several commonly recognized shades:

• Sky Blue: A light, delicate blue.

• Swiss Blue: A brighter, more saturated medium blue.

• London Blue: A deeper, darker blue with a rich, sometimes slightly grayish appearance.

The blue color results from changes in the crystal's electronic structure, which affect how it absorbs and transmits light



Yellow and Golden Topaz

Yellow topaz ranges from pale straw yellow to rich golden hues. These colors are often associated with natural color centers and trace chemical components within the crystal.

Golden topaz has historically been popular in jewelry and is sometimes referred to as precious topaz.



Imperial Topaz

Imperial Topaz is among the most valuable and sought-after varieties. It is best known for its rich orange, golden-orange, reddish-orange, and pinkish-orange colors.

The most desirable examples have a strong reddish or orange-red appearance. Natural Imperial Topaz from Brazil is particularly prized.

The term Imperial Topaz is generally reserved for the naturally occurring colors associated with this famous variety rather than ordinary treated blue or yellow stones.



Pink and Red Topaz

Natural pink and red topaz are uncommon and highly desirable. These colors can range from soft rose and peach-pink to intense reddish-pink.

Chromium can contribute to pink and red coloration by substituting for aluminum in the mineral's crystal structure.



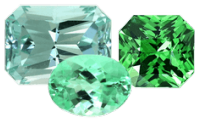
Brown and Sherry Topaz

Brown topaz can display shades of cinnamon, champagne, honey, and sherry. Some specimens from Utah are particularly well known for their attractive sherry-colored crystals.



Green Topaz

Natural green topaz is uncommon. It generally displays pale or subtle green tones. Some green-colored topaz available commercially has been treated to enhance its color.





Purple and Violet Topaz

Purple and violet topaz are rare and are especially interesting to collectors. Some examples have reddish-purple or pinkish-violet hues.

It is important to remember that not every topaz color is necessarily natural. Treatments can significantly change the appearance of this mineral, so collectors and jewelry buyers should ask whether a gemstone has been treated.





Understanding Topaz Treatments

Modern gemological treatments have made it possible to produce a wide range of attractive colors from relatively inexpensive colorless topaz.

Two of the most common treatments used to produce blue topaz are irradiation and heating.

During irradiation, the gemstone is exposed to controlled radiation that changes the arrangement or behavior of electrons within its crystal structure. These changes create color centers that absorb certain wavelengths of light and allow others to pass through.

Heating may then be used to modify or stabilize the resulting color.

Different treatment methods and exposure conditions produce different shades of blue. The treatment process is carefully controlled, and treated gemstones must meet applicable radiation-safety requirements before they are released for commercial use.

Other treatments include heating certain naturally colored topaz specimens to modify their color and applying thin metallic oxide coatings to produce rainbow-like or iridescent effects. These coated stones are sometimes marketed as Mystic Topaz.

Mystic Topaz is not a naturally occurring rainbow-colored variety. Its colorful appearance comes from an artificial surface coating.

For mineral collectors, distinguishing between natural color and treated color is important. A beautiful blue or rainbow-colored specimen may be perfectly genuine topaz, but its color may not be natural.







Topaz in the Lapidary and Jewelry World

Topaz is an excellent gemstone for faceting because of its hardness, clarity, and ability to take a beautiful polish.

It is commonly cut into oval, round, emerald, pear, cushion, and other traditional gemstone shapes. Because topaz crystals frequently develop in elongated forms, cutters often select shapes that maximize the finished gemstone's weight.

Large topaz crystals are particularly exciting for lapidary artists because they can produce substantial faceted gemstones.

However, cutting topaz requires considerable care. Its perfect cleavage makes it vulnerable to damage from impact, uneven pressure, and excessive force during cutting.

For lapidary artists, several precautions are important:

- Avoid sudden temperature changes.
- Use controlled pressure during sawing and grinding.

• Support the stone carefully when dopping.

• Avoid excessive pressure when preforming and polishing.

• Be particularly cautious around cleavage planes.

• Protect finished gemstones from sharp impacts.

Topaz can be polished to a very high luster, producing attractive reflective surfaces. Properly oriented and carefully faceted stones can display excellent brilliance.

Although topaz is sometimes used in cabochon jewelry, it is more commonly faceted because of its transparency and optical qualities.

For jewelry designers, topaz offers a wide variety of colors that coordinate beautifully with silver, gold, and other precious metals. Blue topaz is especially popular in earrings, pendants, rings, and bracelets.

Even though topaz is hard enough for everyday jewelry, its cleavage makes protective settings particularly important for rings and other pieces exposed to frequent impacts. Bezel settings and protective designs can help reduce the risk of damage.

Industrial and Scientific Uses

Although most people recognize topaz as a gemstone, it also has industrial and scientific significance.

In certain deposits, topaz is recovered as a mineral resource for industrial applications. Its chemical composition makes it useful in some specialized manufacturing processes.

Industrial applications include:

Refractory Materials: Certain topaz-bearing materials can be used in the manufacture of refractory products designed to withstand high temperatures. These materials are important in furnaces, kilns, and other high-temperature industrial environments.

Ceramics and Glass: Topaz-bearing raw materials may be used in specialized ceramic and glass manufacturing processes.

Fluorine Compounds: Because topaz contains fluorine, it has potential value as a source material in certain industrial chemical processes.

Geological Exploration: Topaz is also useful to geologists as an indicator mineral. Its presence can provide clues about the geological conditions that existed during the formation of granite-related mineral deposits. In particular, topaz may be associated with deposits containing tin, tungsten, lithium, and other economically important elements.

These industrial applications are more specialized than its use as a gemstone, and topaz is not generally the primary commercial source of fluorine.

Topaz and Its Historical Significance

Topaz has been valued for thousands of years. Its name is traditionally connected to Topazios, the ancient Greek name for an island in the Red Sea, now known as Zabargad.

Interestingly, that island was historically associated with peridot rather than the mineral we recognize today as topaz. In ancient times, the name topaz was sometimes applied broadly to yellow gemstones, and many stones were misidentified.

Ancient Egyptians associated golden topaz with the sun god Ra and believed its golden color reflected the power of the sun. The ancient Greeks also believed topaz could provide strength and protection.

For centuries, topaz was associated with royalty and treasured as a decorative gemstone. As mineralogy and gemology advanced, scientists developed better methods for distinguishing true topaz from other yellow gemstones.

Today, topaz remains an important gemstone for both jewelry designers and mineral collectors.

Birthstone and Modern Gemstone Traditions

Topaz has an interesting place in modern birthstone traditions.

Precious topaz, particularly yellow and golden varieties, is recognized as the traditional birthstone for November. Blue topaz is recognized as a December birthstone in modern birthstone lists.

Topaz is also associated with anniversaries. Imperial Topaz is traditionally associated with the 23rd wedding anniversary, while blue topaz is associated with the fourth anniversary.

Interesting Topaz Facts

Here are a few interesting facts to share with fellow rockhounds and mineral enthusiasts:

1. Topaz is harder than quartz, measuring 8 on the Mohs hardness scale.

2. Despite its hardness, topaz can break relatively easily because of its perfect cleavage.

3. Some topaz crystals grow to enormous sizes, weighing many kilograms.

4. Brazil is famous for producing some of the world's finest Imperial Topaz.

5. Texas designated blue topaz as its official state gemstone in 1969.

6. Much of the blue topaz used in commercial jewelry begins as colorless material and is treated to produce its blue color.

7. Topaz can be naturally colorless, yellow, orange, pink, red, brown, blue, green, and violet.

8. Topaz can be pleochroic, displaying slightly different colors when viewed from different crystal directions.

9. Mystic Topaz gets its rainbow appearance from an artificial coating rather than natural coloration.

10. Topaz is not the same mineral as citrine. Citrine is a variety of quartz, while topaz is an aluminum fluorosilicate mineral.

A Mineral Worth Appreciating

Topaz is much more than a beautiful gemstone. It is a mineral that tells us a great deal about the geological processes taking place deep within the Earth. Its formation provides clues about fluorine-rich magmas, hydrothermal fluids, and the development of important mineral deposits.

For mineral collectors, topaz offers an impressive variety of crystal forms, colors, and geological associations. For lapidary artists and jewelry designers, it provides a durable gemstone with excellent clarity and a brilliant polish, although its cleavage requires careful handling.

Whether found as a naturally formed golden crystal in Utah, a magnificent Imperial Topaz from Brazil, a delicate pink specimen from Pakistan, or a treated blue gemstone in a jewelry setting, topaz is a wonderful example of the beauty and scientific complexity found in the mineral world.

The next time you see a topaz specimen, take a closer look at its crystal structure, color, and luster. There is an entire geological story behind that beautiful piece of nature.

A note for mineral collectors: One of the most important things to remember about topaz is that hardness and toughness are not the same thing. Although it ranks 8 on the Mohs scale, its perfect cleavage makes it susceptible to breaking. This is an especially useful distinction when discussing topaz at a mineral society meeting or demonstrating lapidary techniques.

Article by Barbi Beatty

Sources: Gemological Institute of America (GIA): Topaz — https://www.gia.edu/topaz

- GIA, Topaz from Mason County, Texas — https://www.gia.edu/gems-gemology/winter-2023-texas-topaz
- Geoscience Australia: Topaz — https://www.ga.gov.au/education/minerals-energy/australian-mineral-facts/topaz
- U.S. Geological Survey: Gem Stones of the United States, Topaz — https://pubs.usgs.gov/bul/1042g/report.pdf
- Geology.com: Topaz — https://geology.com/minerals/topaz.shtml

List of upcoming class dates:

Sat-Nov 14th- Vicki Reynolds; Christmas Tree
Wed-Nov 18th- Stephanie Hatcher; earrings
Sat-Dec 12th- Christmas Party
Wed-Dec 16-Open

We always welcome new members!



Date_____ Misssissippi Gulf Coast Gem and Mineral Society

http://www.mgcgms.org **Application for Membership**

Individual: $20.00 Individual +1 relative Same Address: $30.00 Junior Under 18: $6.00

Name: _____ Cell: _____

Name: _____ Cell: _____

Address: _____ Home Phone. _____

City: _____

State: _____ Email 1: _____

Zip: _____ Email 2: _____

Members Birthdays

Adult: _____ Birthday M/D: _____

Adult: _____ Birthday M/D: _____

Junior: _____ Birthday M/D/Y: _____

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Please Check All Applicable Interests

- ○ Beading
- ○ Chain Mail
- ○ Field Trips
- ○ Fossils
- ○ Others:_____
- ○ Cabbing
- ○ PMC
- ○ Faceting
- ○ Wire Wrapping



- ○ Jewelry Making
- ○ Lapidary
- ○ Minerals
- ○ Silver Smithing

How did you hear of us?_____

Please check the following:

- ○ I understand that my picture or likeness may be used in Society promotions.
- ○ I authorize MGCGMS to include my contact information be included in Society listings for members to contact each other only.



Signature:_____

Signature:_____

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Annual dues are:
$20 Individual
$30 (2) Members in same house hold
$6 Junior

2026 Workshop 10am/ Meeting 1pm & Dates

January 10 Mary C. 9:30-4:00
February 14 Mary C. 9:30-4:00
March 14 Mary C. 9:30-4:00
April 11 Mary C. 9:30-4:00
May 9 Mary C. 9:30-4:00
June 13 Mary C. 9:30-4:00
July 11 Mary C. 9:30-4:00
August 8 Mary C. 9:30-4:00
September 12 Mary C. 9:30-4:00
October 10 Mary C. 9:30-4:00
November 14 Mary C. 9:30-4:00
December 12 Christmas Party Mary C. 11:00am-3:30pm

Dates subject to change.
Be sure to check each month!

December will be our
Christmas Party and Installation of Officers

November 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

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The Mississippi Gulf Coast Gem & Mineral Society is a Non-profit Organization Dedicated to Education, Science, and the Lapidary Arts and Crafts

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