

# Petal Tones

The newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of  
The Gesneriad Society

Volume 39, number 1

JANUARY 2008

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings-

Happy holidays everyone. As I write this we have about 10 weeks until our spring show. By now you should have a pretty good idea which plants have potential as entries. Now it's just a matter of which are in bloom for the show. Remember, if you've never gotten a blue ribbon in a show, you can enter up to 5 plants in the novice division, but you need not limit yourself to that. You can also enter plants and designs throughout the whole show. I'm hoping everyone enters at least one plant in the show- if that doesn't look to be possible, why not try your hand at design. The schedule has been written so you can begin to think about how to interpret these classes. We will be having a program on design at the February meeting, so come with your questions and ideas.

Happy growing,

Carol



*Nautilocalyx lynchii* growing at the Atlanta Botanical Gardens.

## February Little Show

Jim Roberts

The New Year will begin with a new way to conduct our Little Shows. Instead of members bringing in show plants for judging, we will all work together on learning how to grow and groom plants for show. It will be like having a year long unofficial Judge's School.

As for last year, a big thanks to all who participated. Carol won sweepstakes for the most Blue ribbons in Horticulture and Jim Roberts for the most Blue ribbons in the Design classes. But some of the highest scoring plants were brought in by other exhibitors. Jim Hipple with 100 points for his *Streptocarpus*, for example. It only takes one entry to win Best in Show. The Best in Show in the 2007 National Convention was won by a woman who only brought one plant with her to the show.

For February, we're going to work as a group learning how to assemble an arrangement for our show in March. The arrangement classes in March all have to do with winter sports, but for February we'll work on a Valentine's Day theme. The class title will be "Sing Me a Love Song" and will have a 12" x 12" x 12" size. The class description will be "A flowing design with a musical theme." So what image does the title bring to mind for you? Think about it for the next month and we'll discuss it all a little further in the February issue.

But for now, here are some things to think about. The scoring for arrangements is decided as follows:

**40 points are given for the Artistic Design.** The arrangement should have artistic unity. It should have an interesting spatial pattern, a satisfying ratio of components, without a disorganized or cluttered appearance. Points are taken off if the arrangement doesn't have a clear structural outline, or if the relationship between the container and the

arrangement is distracting. Sounds like judging a photo or painting, doesn't it?

**25 points are given for Distinction or Creativity.** The judges want to see how you interpret the design, and they want to see something truly unique. And they also want to see excellent craftsmanship in the way the design is all constructed. You're allowed to use glue, wire, pins, just about anything to hold it all together, but the judges don't want to see any of it.

**20 points are given for Suitability.** Does the arrangement illustrate the class title and description or is it just a nice looking arrangement with no ties to the title?

And finally, **15 points are given for the Condition** of the material. You must find a way to keep the plant material looking fresh and healthy. A well designed entry that is wilted by the time that the judges get to it won't score very well.

As in all Gesneriad show classes, judging is competitive. There will only be one blue ribbon awarded, even if all entries in a class score over 90 points. You must score at least 80 points to win a red, and at least 70 to win a yellow ribbon. However, points alone don't guarantee a ribbon. The top three entries get the ribbons, even if all three score over 90.

Don't be discouraged if you score 95 points and only get a third place ribbon. Judging is subjective, and all the judges get involved in picking the best artistic entry. The panel that judged your entry at over 95 made it eligible for a special award which is decided by ALL the judges, not just the panel that gave it a third.

The artistic classes in the show are very different than the horticulture classes. You need not be growing the plants for three months before the show. In fact, you can stop off at a greenhouse or flower shop, or even your local supermarket, and pick up the plant material on your way to the show. Gesneriads must predominate in the arrangement, but other plant material can also be used. Using petunia flowers with gesneriad leaves would not give the impression of gesneriad predominance. However, Saintpaulia flowers with some pussy willow branches probably would (assuming that the pussy willows are not overdone).

At the February meeting we will work together to put together individual designs. Between now and then, please look around for a suitable container. Whatever you bring, think about the theme: music, valentines day, singing, etc. A pot shaped like a car would not necessarily work, but maybe a simple red pot or candle holder, or even a red coffee jar lid. Whatever it is, it shouldn't be too large. Generally 1/4 to 1/3 the total size of the arrangement is reasonable. It can be short and squatty or tall and thin. We'll design something flowing around (or in) it. You might also look around for an accessory of some sort. A very tiny piano, small musical notes, a miniature saxophone.... Look at doll house furnishings and such.

Carol and I will bring various line materials, floral wire, tape, hot glue, and other necessities. Feel free to bring materials to share. And if you have extra flowers on plants that won't be entered in the March Show, bring them along. I'll go into this some more in the next issue of Petal Tones.



*Corytoplectus cutucuensis* growing at the Atlanta Botanical Gardens

### Things to do for the March show-

- continue to shape your plants. Individual leaves from plants growing in rosettes can be moved GENTLY and trained to grow in the desired location through the use of bobby pins or other restraining devices. You may want to let the plant dry out a bit first, so the leaves are a little flaccid and don't snap as you move them.

- likewise, if the leaves on your Chirita are reaching down and hugging the pot (Betty can do this), you can use a Styrofoam plate with a pot sized hole cut in the middle as a support to encourage them to spread out a bit more. Again, you may need to let the plant go a little soft before attempting this.

-check potential entries for potting up or down.

-it's not too late to root cuttings for the sale table, so if you find yourself trimming bits here and there, pot them up.

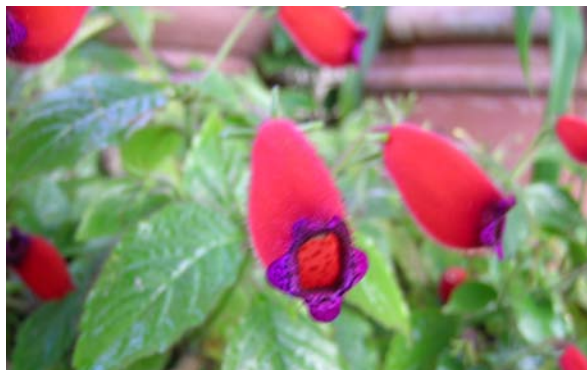
- continue to disbud Saintpaulia until 8 weeks before the show for double blossoms and 6 weeks for singles.

- if you have pets or sprayed for powdery mildew earlier, you may need to wash your plants to remove the dust and pet hair or spray residue that settles on them. Always use warm tap water- a drop of soap is optional, but must be rinsed off if used. I like to let the plants dry before returning them to the lights.

- begin to think about ideas for the designs. Ideally a design will fill the niche (reach up to the top as well as the sides without touching or going over). I like to do a dry run to see if things look sort of like what I was envisioning.

- I like to start my terrariums about a month before the show. This gives the plants some time to get acculturated and gives me plenty of time for revisions.

CH



Really interesting clone of *Seemannia purpurescens* growing at the Atlanta Botanical Gardens

### ***Newsletter Editor Needed!***

Sadly, Mark Zukaitis has let us know that due to some health issues, he is forced to resign as the editor of Petal Tones. Jim Roberts is putting together this issue, but if you've got some computer and artistic experience we'd love to get a new volunteer to take over this job. Carol and Jim will help in any way they can, but we really could use someone who can take over this job full time. Mark is hoping that his health will improve enough over

the next few months to get back into this; maybe as a Co-Editor?

### **Future Meetings**

February 9 – National Arboretum – 10:30 am

Jim Roberts and Carol Hamelink will show how to design an artistic arrangement. Everyone is asked to bring in flowers and plant material to use. Remember – arrangements are a part of the show in March and everyone can try their hand at one. If you've never entered an arrangement before you can enter in the novice class.

March 15-16 "Gesneriad Games"

This is our annual show (I don't know the technical term for alternating Spring/Fall dates). Please participate. We will be open on Friday afternoon for entries so that the judges can start on time on Saturday. If you can make it on Friday, please do. If not, no problem, we'll take all the entries we can get on Saturday morning too. Just be sure to bring something. The Schedule is posted on the web site and is also attached here for those who get a printed copy of the newsletter.



Unlabeled *Aeschynanthus sp.* growing at the ABG.

### **BRAZIL SEED CLUB**

Just a reminder that if you are a member of NCAC TGS and would like to participate in this seed club please send an e-mail to Mike Cagley at [Cagleys3@yahoo.com](mailto:Cagleys3@yahoo.com). Three or more times a year, Mike will get the seed availability list from the Brazil Plants web site. He then distributes this to everyone who has e-mailed him and asked to participate. Participants then select their top 6 seed orders and e-mail that to him. The rest of the protocol can be found in the April issue of Petal Tones.

Thanks again Mike!

## **Pictures Wanted**

Without Mark to help, I found this issue really difficult to put together. I have lots of photos of plants but doing this at the last minute I don't really have the time to sift through them to find the ones most relevant to this issue. So I thought it would be interesting to show plants that I've run across in my travels. If you have interesting plants that you've seen and photographed, send the photos to me for inclusion in future issues. Even plants that you find at Home Depot or Lowes are of interest to most of us.

### **Plant of the Month - Columnea**

To encourage more participation in the "Show and Tell" or "What's Blooming" part of the meeting, we will be doing things a little bit differently here too. Instead of random plants (which you're still welcome to bring in), we're going to have a selected genus for each meeting. In February I thought we'd go with Columnea. They're not too cold sensitive and this will give us a chance to give some last minute grooming tips to those who are thinking about entering the plants in the show.

Columnea is a very widely distributed genus, with a widely varied growth habit. In fact, at one time there were several different genera described that have since all been regrouped into one genus, thanks to DNA analysis. What were once Trichantha, Dalbergaria, Pentadenia, Bucinellina and Columnea are all just Columnea now.

An interesting fact is that even though they are all classed as Columnea now, hybrids between any of the two "genera" are sterile, while hybrids within the same "genus" are fertile. XDaltrichantha is sterile, but crosses between two Dalbergaria or two Trichantha are fertile. The same goes for all the other "intergeneric" hybrids within this genus: XColtrichantha and XColbergaria.

Bring in any and all plants that you can show or talk about. The more variety we have at the meeting, the more we'll all learn about these easy to grow plants.



## **Petal Tones Editor**

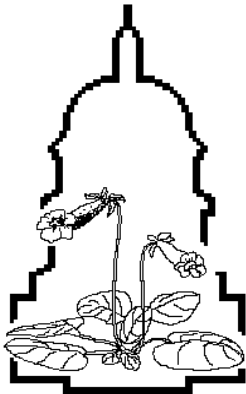
**Must be Computer Literate**

**Must have Lots of Spare Time**

**Should be willing to re-write and reformat Petal Tones often as new material comes in at the last minute each month**

**Apply at the February Meeting or send a request to Carol Hamelink or Jim Roberts**

Note: If you are reading Petal Tones on the National Capital Chapter website and would like to get a copy sent directly to your e-mail address, please send your request to [jim-roberts@hughes.net](mailto:jim-roberts@hughes.net). He will gladly add your name to the list of recipients.



# Gesneriad Games

Plant Show and Sale  
Sponsored by the

NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA CHAPTER  
of  
**THE GESNERIAD SOCIETY**

**March 15 & 16, 2008**  
**National Arboretum**  
**Washington, D.C.**

**Entries:**

**Friday, March 14, 2008**

1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

**Entries:**

**Saturday, March 15, 2008**

8 a.m. to 10 a.m.

**Judging:**

11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Show & sale:**

1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

**Lecture:**

2 p.m.

**Awards Dinner:**

5:30 p.m. Colonel Brooks at 9<sup>th</sup> and Monroe NE

**Show & sale:**

9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Lectures**

10 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.

## DIVISION I HORTICULTURAL

### SECTION A

#### New World Gesneriads in Flower — Tuberos

- Class 1 *Sinningia speciosa* species or hybrids (upright or pendent flowers)
- Class 2 Other *Sinningia* species with rosette growth pattern
- Class 3 Other *Sinningia* species with upright growth pattern
- Class 4 Other *Sinningia* hybrids with rosette growth pattern
- Class 5 Other *Sinningia* hybrids with upright growth pattern
- Class 6 Other *Sinningia* species or hybrids (largest leaf less than 1" long)
- Class 7 *Chrysothemis*, *Nautilocalyx*, and other tuberos Gesneriads

### SECTION B

#### New World Gesneriads in Flower — Rhizomatous

- Class 8 *Achimenes*
- Class 9 *Gloxinia*, *Seemannia* and their intergeneric hybrids
- Class 10 *Kohleria*
- Class 11 *Smithiantha*
- Class 12 Other rhizomatous gesneriads less than 5" in any dimension
- Class 13 Other rhizomatous gesneriads

### SECTION C

#### New World Gesneriads in Flower — Fibrous-Rooted

- Class 14 *Codonanthe*, *xCodonanthus*
- Class 15 *Columnea* (*Dalbergaria*, *Pentadenia*, *Trichantha*)
- Class 16 *Episcia*, *Alsobia*
- Class 17 *Gesneria*
- Class 18 *Nematanthus*
- Class 19 Other fibrous-rooted gesneriads

### SECTION D

#### Old World Gesneriads in Flower

- Class 20 *Aeschynanthus*
- Class 21 *Chirita* species
- Class 22 *Chirita* hybrids
- Class 23 *Petrocosmea*
- Class 24 *Saintpaulia* species
- Class 25 *Saintpaulia* hybrids or cultivars classified as miniatures (max of 6" diam.)
- Class 26 *Saintpaulia* hybrids or cultivars classified as semi-miniatures (max of 8" diam.)
- Class 27 *Saintpaulia* hybrids or cultivars classified as standards (more than 8" diam.)
- Class 28 *Saintpaulia* trailer
- Class 29 *Streptocarpus*, caulescent (ssp. *Streptocarpella*)
- Class 30 *Streptocarpus* species, acaulescent
- Class 31 *Streptocarpus* hybrids, acaulescent
- Class 32 Other Old World gesneriads

### SECTION E

#### Gesneriads Grown for Ornamental Qualities Other Than Flowers

Decorative fruit and calyces are permitted, but no flowers or buds showing color. A plant should have some special quality of color, texture or growth habit to be entered in this section.

- Class 33 *Chirita*
- Class 34 *Episcia*
- Class 35 *Episcia* with pink-and-white leaf variegation
- Class 36 *Petrocosmea*
- Class 37 Other gesneriads with green-and-white leaf variegation
- Class 38 Other gesneriad species
- Class 39 Other gesneriad hybrids

### SECTION F

### **Club Challenge Plant: Columnea ‘Merlot’**

Cuttings of Columnea ‘Merlot’ were given out in September, 2007. These entries are the result of 6 months of growth and training.

- Class 40 In flower
- Class 41 Grown for foliage
- Class 42 Bonsai or trained

### **SECTION G**

#### **New Gesneriads**

This section is for introductions made within the last two years. Exhibitor must provide a card giving educational information such as name of hybridizer, collector, place of origin, special cultural requirements.

- Class 43 Species in flower
- Class 44 Species not in flower
- Class 45 Hybrids or named cultivars in flower
- Class 46 Hybrids or named cultivars not in flower

### **SECTION H**

#### **Lesser-Known Gesneriads Seldom Grown or Seen in Shows**

Exhibitor must provide a card giving educational information such as habitat, source, and special cultural requirements.

- Class 47 In flower
- Class 48 Not in flower

### **SECTION I**

#### **Collections of Gesneriads**

A grouping of 3 to 5 different plants in flower or grown for ornamental qualities, or in combination. (*Saintpaulia* must be in flower.) Exhibitor is encouraged to stage the plants as a unit since this is a consideration in judging this section. Exhibitor must provide a card with identification of plants. In Class 50, exhibitor must provide educational information on the card.

- Class 49 Plants of a single genus (species, cultivars or hybrids)
- Class 50 Kinship group — Hybrid(s) with one or more common parents; common parent(s) should be in the group

### **SECTION J**

#### **Trained or Sculptured Gesneriads**

An educational 3" x 5" white card should be included, stating what training the exhibit received and how the exhibit is to be viewed (all sides or from the front).

- Class 51 Bonsai, topiary, espaliered, or other style

### **SECTION K**

#### **Gesneriads Grown by a Novice**

A Novice is anyone who has never won a blue ribbon in the horticulture division of a Gesneriad flower show.

- Class 52 Gesneriads in flower
- Class 53 Gesneriads grown for ornamental qualities other than flowers (no flowers or buds showing color allowed)

## **DIVISION II ARTISTIC**

Gesneriads must predominate. No artificial plant material allowed. Other live and dried material permitted. Accessories are optional. *Saintpaulia* permitted in all classes. Plant material used must be identified on an accompanying card. Reservations for entries in classes 54 through 59 should be made with Laurene Jones, at [nccsinger@cox.net](mailto:nccsinger@cox.net) by March 1, 2008. Limit of 4 entries per class.

### **SECTION L**

#### **Arrangement of Fresh Cut and/or Growing Plant Material**

- Class 54 “**Figure Skating**” A small arrangement featuring curves. 8” x 8” x 8” niche.
- Class 55 “**Jamaican Bobsled**” An arrangement with a strong contrast (form, color, texture, etc.) 12” x 12” x 16” high niche.
- Class 56 “**Slalom**” An arrangement of mirrored elements. 18” x 18” x 18” niche.

### **SECTION M**

#### **Arrangement of Growing Gesneriads**

- Class 57 “**Snow, Snow, Snow**” A design featuring white. 12” x 12” niche (no height limit)
- Class 58 “**Hockey**” A design with crossing lines. 18” x 18” x 18” niche.
- Class 59 “**Ski**” A design with a diagonal line. 18” x 18” x 18” niche.

## SECTION N

### **Planting of Growing Material** (Artistically and horticulturally balanced)

- Class 60 Terrarium, straight-sided
- Class 61 Terrarium, curved
- Class 62 Tray landscape
- Class 63 Natural Garden—a planting in weathered wood, rock or other natural material
- Class 64 Recycled container
- Class 65 Other container, not the usual form of plastic or clay pot

## SECTION O **Artistic Entry by a Novice**

A Novice is anyone who has never won a blue ribbon in the artistic division of a gesneriad show.

- Class 66 Artistic entry suitable for any of the classes in Sections L, M or N. Exhibitor must identify, on a 3" x 5" card, the name of the class chosen and the plant material used.

## DIVISION III **THE ARTS**

All entries must feature gesneriads in some form. Each entry must have been made by the exhibitor.

## SECTION P

### **Photography**

The subject must be identified on the entry card. Prints should not exceed 8" x 10"; mats should not exceed 11" x 14". Exhibitors must provide an easel for prints 5" x 7" or over. Slides should be mounted for projection in a standard carousel projector. Limit of 2 entries per class per exhibitor.

- Class 67 Color transparency
- Class 68 Color print of Gesneriad(s) growing in a natural habitat
- Class 69 Color print of parts of a Gesneriad (flowers, fruits, foliage, etc.)
- Class 70 Color print of a whole Gesneriad plant
- Class 71 Black and white print
- Class 72 Digital display of gesneriad photo(s)

## SECTION Q

### **Crafts Representing Gesneriads**

- Class 73 Painting or drawing (easel must be provided by exhibitor)
- Class 74 Textile (exhibitor must provide a card giving the source of the design)
- Class 75 Other crafts

## DIVISION IV COMMERCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL

## SECTION R

### **Commercial**

- Class 76 Display table with a grouping of 10 or more gesneriads
- Class 77 Display table with a grouping of fewer than 10 gesneriads

## SECTION S

### **Educational**

- Class 78 Exhibit illustrating phases of scientific or historical research or gesneriad promotion
- Class 79 Exhibit of plant material. Exhibitor must provide a card giving educational information such as habitat, source, special cultural information, and reason for inclusion in this class
- Class 80 E-Gesneriads (computer exhibits) PowerPoint of other computer exhibit that provides educational information on gesneriads



## SHOW RULES

- Entries shall be in accordance with the schedule.
- Exhibitors need not be members of The Gesneriad Society.
- Entries will be accepted only during hours specified.
- An exhibitor is limited to one specimen of the same plant per class in the Horticulture Division. An exhibitor may submit more than one entry per class, provided each entry is a different species, cultivar or hybrid unless otherwise prohibited.
- Classes may be subdivided or consolidated by Show Chair after entries close.
- No entries may be removed from the showroom until the show closes.
- All plants in the Horticultural classes must be grown by the exhibitor and have been in the exhibitor's possession for at least three months prior to the show. This rule does not apply to plant material used in arrangement classes of Division II or Commercial or Educational exhibits in Division IV.
- No particular type of container is specified for the Horticulture Division. Whatever is used should be clean. Foil covering should be avoided. A protective container or cover made of transparent material to shield delicate plant material from dry air or cold drafts may be used for any exhibit requiring it. Such plants may be judged uncovered.
- All plants must be free of insects and disease. All will be inspected, including commercial and educational exhibits as well as entries for exhibit only.
- The Gesneriad Society standard competitive judging will be used. Awards will be made according to the following point scores:
  - 1st, blue ribbon, 90-100 points;
  - 2nd, red ribbon, at least 80 points;
  - 3rd, yellow ribbon, at least 70 points.Honorable Mention may also be awarded.
- There will be a Sweepstakes Award for the Horticulture Division and a Sweepstakes award for the Artistic Division. An exhibitor must win a minimum of 3 blue ribbons in that division to be eligible for the award.
- The award for Best Gesneriad in Show in the Horticulture Division is given for horticultural perfection. A plant must score 95 points or over to be considered for this award. Winner must be a member of The Gesneriad Society or a chapter member.
- The Chapter will endeavor to protect all exhibits but assumes no responsibility for loss or damage. Plants should be removed between 4 and 5 p.m. on Sunday.  
ther computer exhibit that provides educational information on gesneriads

National Capital Area Chapter (NCAC), a chapter of the Gesneriad Society, Inc. "The purpose of the chapter shall be to afford a convenient and beneficial association of persons interested in gesneriads; to stimulate a widespread interest in the identification, correct nomenclature, culture, and propagation of gesneriads; and to encourage the origination and introduction of new cultivars." (NCAC bylaws, revised April 1981)

NCAC meets four times a year, September through June, at 10:30 am on the second Saturday of the month. All are welcome. Please refer to the latest issue of Petal Tones, or contact our chapter president (Carol Hamelink) or publicity and membership chair (John Boggan) for more information.

**The Gesneriad Society website:** [www.gesneriadsociety.org](http://www.gesneriadsociety.org) **NCAC website:** [www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org](http://www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org)  
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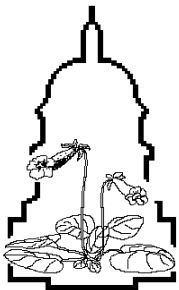
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# Petal Tones

The newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of  
The Gesneriad Society

Volume 39, number 2

February 2008

## President's Message

Hi all.

We're coming down to the wire for the spring show. By now you've probably got some plants in mind as possible show entries. Continue to watch them closely. I like to put my show plants in the front of the stand so I see them frequently and will be alerted quickly to any potential problems- wilting from wicks that have gone dry or flopping from inefficient staking, etc. Do try to enter as many plants as you can. Too often people will say they left a plant at home because they didn't think it was good enough, when in fact it is better than those sitting on the show tables. Don't be too concerned about how your plants will be scored by the judges. Think of it as a learning experience, and be assured that judges are trained to see the beauty before the flaws. One of the goals of a plant show is to educate the public on gesneriads. The more plants, the better the diversity, the better we do this. Remember too, that you can enter the design categories using plant materials that you pick up on the raffle table at this February meeting, or even at the sales table on Saturday morning before the show judging starts. See you all soon.

Happy growing,  
Carol



*Sinningia speciosa* Charles Lawn hybrid seedling

Grown by Carol Hamelink

## The Gesneriad Society

Many of us belong to The Gesneriad Society. This is the national group, of which The National Capital Chapter is a member. The National Capital bylaws state that members of the Chapter should be members of The Gesneriad Society. We don't force this issue, and welcome any and all who grow the plants that we all love so much.



*Petrocosmea forrestii* grown by Carol Hamelink

However, we should all consider joining the national society. In addition to a wonderful quarterly magazine, with articles about gesneriads written by growers and collectors from all over the world, there are some other benefits: a huge seed fund where you can get plants that aren't available anywhere else, publications such as lists of registered gesneriads with full descriptions, articles of clothing and other items with gesneriad artwork, access to

slide programs and PowerPoint presentations, etc. You will benefit greatly for low annual dues.

Nell Hennessy has obtained some membership packets from National that she will have at the February meeting. She'll also have them at the show. If you are interested in joining, please see Nell at the meeting. One of the new member benefits is a packet of mixed gesneriad seed. It's really fun trying to figure out what the various plants are as they grow and flower.

And there's one more benefit to being a member that can be found in the list of awards elsewhere in this issue.

### **Awards needed for the spring show**

Please let Carol Hamelink know if you would like to donate items or cash prizes for the upcoming March show. Here's the list of awards if you'd like to donate to a particular award. If I get multiples for the same category, I'll contact you about using your donation for something else, or you can specify your award to be as needed. Thanks!

Best in show

Best artistic

Horticulture sweepstakes- \$25 from the club

Artistic sweepstakes- \$25 from the club

Best in arts

Best educational

Best old world gesneriad

Best new world gesneriad

Best fibrous

Best tuberous

Best rhizomatous

Best ornamental

People's choice

Best novice in horticulture

Best novice in artistic

In addition to these awards, we have a large rosette given out to the "Best in Show" plant by The Gesneriad Society. All plants scoring over 95 points are eligible for Best in Show.

And here's something really special. As you know, National Capital is hosting the National Convention in 2009. As many of us as possible should attend the Denver Convention this year so that we can learn as much as possible about how these things run.

Jim Roberts is donating a round trip ticket on Southwest Airlines to the grower of a plant scoring

over 95 points. Two conditions are that the grower be a member of The Gesneriad Society and that he or she has intentions to attend the Denver Convention.

Hopefully the award will go to the Best in Show. But if that grower is not a member of The Gesneriad Society or does not intend to go to the Denver Convention, the judges will award the ticket to a different plant scoring over 95.

Entry cards of those who meet those qualifications will have a gold star on them to make the judge's job a little easier. You need not be a member of The Gesneriad Society or plan to attend the Denver Convention to win Best in Show, only to get the plane tickets.



Another Charles Lawn *Sinningia speciosa* seedling being grown by Carol. Too bad it wouldn't wait for the show in March!

### **Things to do to get your plants blooming their best for the show**

-Keep a close eye on your plants. There are a few things you can do to help maximize the number of blooms for the show. To increase the blooms if a plant is looking like it may peak a week after the show try either increasing the heat or the light. This may mean moving the plant to the top shelf of the stand and either raising it closer to the lights, or putting it in the center of the shelf where the light is the best. You can ramp up the light schedule if needed as well

-Likewise if I plant looks like it will peak a bit too early for the show try either decreasing the temperature or lights. Move the plant down to the bottom of the shelves, or if you have several different growing locations in your house move it to the coolest area. You can cut back on the lights if needed as well.

-Check for and replace any burned out bulbs or those starting to show signs of age with darkening at the ends.

-Continue to check for powdery mildew and spray if needed.

-Gently bathe plants as needed.

-A soft brush such as a woman's blush applicator can also be used to brush plants. Be extremely careful and if you are uncertain that your brush is soft enough only try it on a single plant and wait a couple of days. Scarring will show up overnight if you are too rough.

CH

***Note from the editor: Thanks, Carol, for sharing photos of the plants that you couldn't slow down to have ready for the show. It makes me feel better to know that none of us is perfect. Now, if only my mistakes could look as good as yours!!***

*jr*

### **BRAZIL SEED CLUB**

Just a reminder that if you are a member of NCAC TGS and would like to participate in this seed club please send an e-mail to Mike Cagley at [Cagleys3@yahoo.com](mailto:Cagleys3@yahoo.com). Three or more times a year, Mike will get the seed availability list from the Brazil Plants web site. He then distributes this to everyone who has e-mailed him and asked to participate. Participants then select their top 6 seed orders and e-mail that to him. The rest of the protocol can be found in the April 2007 issue of Petal Tones.

### **Future Meetings**

#### **February 9 – National Arboretum – 10:30 am**

Jim Roberts and Carol Hamelink will show how to design an artistic arrangement. Everyone is asked to bring in flowers and plant material to use.

Remember – arrangements are a part of the show in March and everyone can try their hand at one. If you've never entered an arrangement before you can enter in the novice class.

### **March 15-16 "Gesneriad Games"**

This is our annual show (I don't know the technical term for alternating Spring/Fall dates). Please participate. We will be open on Friday afternoon for entries so that the judges can start on time on Saturday. If you can make it on Friday, please do. If not, no problem, we'll take all the entries we can get on Saturday morning too. Just be sure to bring something. The Schedule is posted on the web site and is also attached here for those who get a printed copy of the newsletter.

### **Plant of the Month - Columnea**

Please bring examples of the genus Columnea to our February meeting. Many of the Columnea are from cool cloud forests and burst into bloom in the winter months. Others flower year round. Whether you have a small space on your light stand for an upright growing plant or have room for a huge, thick stemmed plant that grows horizontally, there is a Columnea for you.

Most have attractive berries, and some have very showy calyxes that are actually more attractive than the flowers they hold. Variegated leaves, bronze colored leaves, fuzzy leaves, leaves with red backs, leaves with cathedral window type patches on the backs that accentuate sun shining through them, weak trailing stems, strong horizontal stems and branching upright growers – these are the many forms of Columnea.



*Columnea feidleri* grown by Carol Hamelink

As we look at the various forms we'll discuss the best way to grow them for a show. This part of the meeting will take the place of our "Little Show" this year. At least until we get a few more judges in the group. So bring in your plants. The more the merrier. And if it's something that you're considering for the show next month, maybe we'll be able to give you that one grooming tip that will turn your plant into a blue-ribbon winner.



*Columnea hirta* 'Light Prince' grown by Carol Hamelink

### **Petal Tones Editor**

We may have a new editor for Petal Tones, starting with the March issue. I won't spill the beans, but we hope to make an announcement at the February meeting.

### **Arrangements – The Artistic Part of our Show.**

By Jim Roberts

I've swiped three photos here from the magazine Appraisal, which is the publication for Gesneriad Society Judges. They appear on the next page. Next to each photo I've put a crude tracing of the "line" of the arrangement. I mentioned that word in the last issue, but here I want to get into more detail on what "line" actually does for the arrangement itself.

Line is a structural element that moves the eye. If the arrangement title has a solid theme, the line should move the eye to the focal point in a very straight forward way using straight lines and sharp curves. Something like a V shape with the focus at the bottom, or otherwise very straight lines converging at a point.

The arrangement that we're going to be putting together at the meeting calls for a flowing design.

The class title will be "Sing Me a Love Song" and will have a 12" x 12" x 12" size. The class description is listed as "A flowing design with a musical theme." The three photos I have here all contain flowing type line materials. That is to say, the material carries the eye to the focal point and then continues on. It keeps the eye moving and/ or captures it in different areas of the total space that the arrangement fills and helps it find the focus.

We're going to work with a number of different materials to create our design, and I venture to say that no two will look alike. The workshop will help you learn the basics of construction and scale, but no one is going to tell you what materials to use or what shape to put them in. We'll play with glue guns, sticky clay, wire, floral tape, soda straws, eye droppers, and other miscellaneous tools that we arrangers carry with us in our tool boxes.

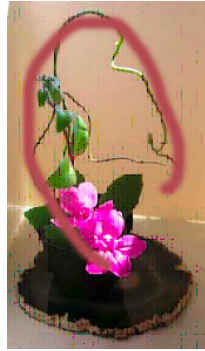
At the end of the workshop we will then have the judges amongst us give some helpful advice for the show, going through the arrangement classes listed in the schedule. But the most important thing to remember is that arrangements are judged partly on their uniqueness. Structure, line, construction all count, but if your arrangement looks just like someone else's in the show, neither is going to score well. If you enter more than one arrangement, be sure to use different materials and ideas.

We're going to work on a 12" x 12" x 12" size. Bring a ruler. The arrangement should come close to filling the niche size but should not touch the sides. Better to be slightly too small than touch the sides and get disqualified!

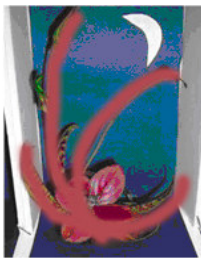
Above all – have fun with it. Arrangements are something that everyone can enter in the show. You can lose every plant in your collection a week before the show and still end up with several blue ribbons and some nice special awards.

This should be an interesting meeting!

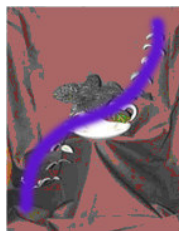
Note: If you are reading Petal Tones on the National Capital Chapter website and would like to get a copy sent directly to your e-mail address, please send your request to [jim-roberts@hughes.net](mailto:jim-roberts@hughes.net). He will gladly add your name to the list of recipients.



"Massachusetts" - Best in Artistic – Marcia Kilpatrick  
Notice the "line" in this arrangement. It captures the eye and brings it right to the Streptocarpus flowers.



"Moon Over Miami" – Jill Fischer  
Here too, the "line" carries the eye to the very interesting focal point. Here the flower is actually the backs of a cluster of leaves, and some of the line material itself is the leaf backs of an Aeschynanthus. Imagination scores big!



"Seven Eleven" – Best in Artistic – Rosemary Platz  
You've maybe heard of the "Classic S" line. Here it's carried out perfectly.

## 2009 Convention Update

Although it's still a year and a half away, the 2009 Gesneriad Society Convention is beginning to come together. The dates have been set: June 30 to July 5, 2009. We'll be hosting the convention at the Hilton Silver Spring, just blocks from the Silver Spring Metro Center. The hotel is located at 8727 Colesville Road in the newly revitalized Silver Spring Downtown area.

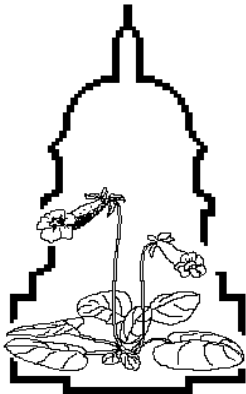
Thanks to Carol Hamelink and Jim Roberts for their help in identifying and checking out potential hotels. Paul Susi, the Gesneriad Society Convention Chairperson, and Jeanne Katzenstein, Gesneriad Society Convention Coordinator, made the final choice.

The convention will last six days. Activities include:

- Tuesday: Board of Directors meeting.
- Wednesday: opening breakfast, Judging School and judges workshops, various special interest groups, Host Chapter reception.
- Thursday: trip(s) to local horticultural points of interest, Flower Show entries, opening of plant sales and auction viewing.
- Friday: Flower Show, Annual Membership Meeting, lectures, Awards Banquet.
- Saturday: lecture(s), the live auction (at the luncheon), and the final event/dinner, preferably held outside the hotel.
- Sunday: Board of Directors meeting.

Our chapter will be responsible for the Host Chapter reception on Wednesday, July 1; organizing the trips on Thursday, July 2; and the final event on Saturday, July 4.

Those of you who haven't been to a Convention before may want to check out this year's convention website (<http://www.gesneriadsociety.org/conv2008/index.htm>). We're hoping that many of our Chapter members will be able to attend the 2008 Convention in Denver to get ideas for our convention next year. This year's host chapter, the Gloxinia Gesneriad Growers of Denver, has planned trips to the Denver Botanic Garden and Hudson Gardens, as well as the Denver Aquarium.



# Gesneriad Games

Plant Show and Sale  
Sponsored by the

NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA CHAPTER  
of  
**THE GESNERIAD SOCIETY**

**March 15 & 16, 2008**  
**National Arboretum**  
**Washington, D.C.**

**Entries:**

**Friday, March 14, 2008**

1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

**Entries:**

**Saturday, March 15, 2008**

8 a.m. to 10 a.m.

**Judging:**

11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Show & sale:**

1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

**Lecture:**

2 p.m.

**Awards Dinner:**

5:30 p.m. Colonel Brooks at 9<sup>th</sup> and Monroe NE

**Show & sale:**

9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Lectures**

10 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.



## DIVISION I HORTICULTURAL

### SECTION A

#### New World Gesneriads in Flower — Tuberos

- Class 1 *Sinningia speciosa* species or hybrids (upright or pendent flowers)
- Class 2 Other *Sinningia* species with rosette growth pattern
- Class 3 Other *Sinningia* species with upright growth pattern
- Class 4 Other *Sinningia* hybrids with rosette growth pattern
- Class 5 Other *Sinningia* hybrids with upright growth pattern
- Class 6 Other *Sinningia* species or hybrids (largest leaf less than 1" long)
- Class 7 *Chrysothemis*, *Nautilocalyx*, and other tuberos Gesneriads

### SECTION B

#### New World Gesneriads in Flower — Rhizomatous

- Class 8 *Achimenes*
- Class 9 *Gloxinia*, *Seemannia* and their intergeneric hybrids
- Class 10 *Kohleria*
- Class 11 *Smithiantha*
- Class 12 Other rhizomatous gesneriads less than 5" in any dimension
- Class 13 Other rhizomatous gesneriads

### SECTION C

#### New World Gesneriads in Flower — Fibrous-Rooted

- Class 14 *Codonanthe*, *xCodonanthus*
- Class 15 *Columnea* (*Dalbergaria*, *Pentadenia*, *Trichantha*)
- Class 16 *Episcia*, *Alsobia*
- Class 17 *Gesneria*
- Class 18 *Nematanthus*
- Class 19 Other fibrous-rooted gesneriads

### SECTION D

#### Old World Gesneriads in Flower

- Class 20 *Aeschynanthus*
- Class 21 *Chirita* species
- Class 22 *Chirita* hybrids
- Class 23 *Petrocosmea*
- Class 24 *Saintpaulia* species
- Class 25 *Saintpaulia* hybrids or cultivars classified as miniatures (max of 6" diam.)
- Class 26 *Saintpaulia* hybrids or cultivars classified as semi-miniatures (max of 8" diam.)
- Class 27 *Saintpaulia* hybrids or cultivars classified as standards (more than 8" diam.)
- Class 28 *Saintpaulia* trailer
- Class 29 *Streptocarpus*, caulescent (ssp. *Streptocarpella*)
- Class 30 *Streptocarpus* species, acaulescent
- Class 31 *Streptocarpus* hybrids, acaulescent
- Class 32 Other Old World gesneriads

### SECTION E

#### Gesneriads Grown for Ornamental Qualities Other Than Flowers

Decorative fruit and calyces are permitted, but no flowers or buds showing color. A plant should have some special quality of color, texture or growth habit to be entered in this section.

- Class 33 *Chirita*
- Class 34 *Episcia*
- Class 35 *Episcia* with pink-and-white leaf variegation
- Class 36 *Petrocosmea*
- Class 37 Other gesneriads with green-and-white leaf variegation
- Class 38 Other gesneriad species
- Class 39 Other gesneriad hybrids

## SECTION F

### Club Challenge Plant: *Columnnea* 'Merlot'

Cuttings of *Columnnea* 'Merlot' were given out in September, 2007. These entries are the result of 6 months of growth and training.

- |          |                   |
|----------|-------------------|
| Class 40 | In flower         |
| Class 41 | Grown for foliage |
| Class 42 | Bonsai or trained |

## SECTION G

### New Gesneriads

This section is for introductions made within the last two years. Exhibitor must provide a card giving educational information such as name of hybridizer, collector, place of origin, special cultural requirements.

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| Class 43 | Species in flower                        |
| Class 44 | Species not in flower                    |
| Class 45 | Hybrids or named cultivars in flower     |
| Class 46 | Hybrids or named cultivars not in flower |

## SECTION H

### Lesser-Known Gesneriads Seldom Grown or Seen in Shows

Exhibitor must provide a card giving educational information such as habitat, source, and special cultural requirements.

- |          |               |
|----------|---------------|
| Class 47 | In flower     |
| Class 48 | Not in flower |

## SECTION I

### Collections of Gesneriads

A grouping of 3 to 5 different plants in flower or grown for ornamental qualities, or in combination. (*Saintpaulia* must be in flower.)

Exhibitor is encouraged to stage the plants as a unit since this is a consideration in judging this section. Exhibitor must provide a card with identification of plants. In Class 50, exhibitor must provide educational information on the card.

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| Class 49 | Plants of a single genus (species, cultivars or hybrids)   |
| Class 50 | Kinship group — Hybrid(s) with one or more common parents; common parent(s) should be in the group |

## SECTION J

### Trained or Sculptured Gesneriads

An educational 3" x 5" white card should be included, stating what training the exhibit received and how the exhibit is to be viewed (all sides or from the front).

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| Class 51 | Bonsai, topiary, espaliered, or other style |
|----------|---|

## SECTION K

### Gesneriads Grown by a Novice

A Novice is anyone who has never won a blue ribbon in the horticulture division of a Gesneriad flower show.

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| Class 52 | Gesneriads in flower  |
| Class 53 | Gesneriads grown for ornamental qualities other than flowers (no flowers or buds showing color allowed) |

## DIVISION II ARTISTIC

Gesneriads must predominate. No artificial plant material allowed. Other live and dried material permitted. Accessories are optional.

*Saintpaulia* permitted in all classes. Plant material used must be identified on an accompanying card. Reservations for entries in classes 54 through 59 should be made with Laurene Jones, at [nccsinger@cox.net](mailto:nccsinger@cox.net) by March 1, 2008. Limit of 4 entries per class.

## SECTION L

### Arrangement of Fresh Cut and/or Growing Plant Material

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| Class 54 | " <b>Figure Skating</b> " A small arrangement featuring curves. 8" x 8" x 8" niche.  |
| Class 55 | " <b>Jamaican Bobsled</b> " An arrangement with a strong contrast (form, color, texture, etc.) 12" x 12" x 16" high niche. |
| Class 56 | " <b>Slalom</b> " An arrangement of mirrored elements. 18" x 18" x 18" niche.  |

## SECTION M

### Arrangement of Growing Gesneriads

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| Class 57 | " <b>Snow, Snow, Snow</b> " A design featuring white. 12" x 12" niche (no height limit) |
| Class 58 | " <b>Hockey</b> " A design with crossing lines. 18" x 18" x 18" niche.                  |
| Class 59 | " <b>Ski</b> " A design with a diagonal line. 18" x 18" x 18" niche.                    |

## **SECTION N**

### **Planting of Growing Material** (Artistically and horticulturally balanced)

- Class 60      Terrarium, straight-sided
- Class 61      Terrarium, curved
- Class 62      Tray landscape
- Class 63      Natural Garden—a planting in weathered wood, rock or other natural material
- Class 64      Recycled container
- Class 65      Other container, not the usual form of plastic or clay pot

## **SECTION O      Artistic Entry by a Novice**

A Novice is anyone who has never won a blue ribbon in the artistic division of a gesneriad show.

- Class 66      Artistic entry suitable for any of the classes in Sections L, M or N. Exhibitor must identify, on a 3" x 5" card, the name of the class chosen and the plant material used.

## **DIVISION III      THE ARTS**

All entries must feature gesneriads in some form. Each entry must have been made by the exhibitor.

## **SECTION P**

### **Photography**

The subject must be identified on the entry card. Prints should not exceed 8" x 10"; mats should not exceed 11" x 14". Exhibitors must provide an easel for prints 5" x 7" or over. Slides should be mounted for projection in a standard carousel projector. Limit of 2 entries per class per exhibitor.

- Class 67      Color transparency
- Class 68      Color print of Gesneriad(s) growing in a natural habitat
- Class 69      Color print of parts of a Gesneriad (flowers, fruits, foliage, etc.)
- Class 70      Color print of a whole Gesneriad plant
- Class 71      Black and white print
- Class 72      Digital display of gesneriad photo(s)

## **SECTION Q**

### **Crafts Representing Gesneriads**

- Class 73      Painting or drawing (easel must be provided by exhibitor)
- Class 74      Textile (exhibitor must provide a card giving the source of the design)
- Class 75      Other crafts

## **DIVISION IV COMMERCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL**

## **SECTION R**

### **Commercial**

- Class 76      Display table with a grouping of 10 or more gesneriads
- Class 77      Display table with a grouping of fewer than 10 gesneriads

## **SECTION S**

### **Educational**

- Class 78      Exhibit illustrating phases of scientific or historical research or gesneriad promotion
- Class 79      Exhibit of plant material. Exhibitor must provide a card giving educational information such as habitat, source, special cultural information, and reason for inclusion in this class
- Class 80      E-Gesneriads (computer exhibits) PowerPoint of other computer exhibit that provides educational information on gesneriads

## SHOW RULES

- Entries shall be in accordance with the schedule.
- Exhibitors need not be members of The Gesneriad Society.
- Entries will be accepted only during hours specified.
- An exhibitor is limited to one specimen of the same plant per class in the Horticulture Division. An exhibitor may submit more than one entry per class, provided each entry is a different species, cultivar or hybrid unless otherwise prohibited.
- Classes may be subdivided or consolidated by Show Chair after entries close.
- No entries may be removed from the showroom until the show closes.
- All plants in the Horticultural classes must be grown by the exhibitor and have been in the exhibitor's possession for at least three months prior to the show. This rule does not apply to plant material used in arrangement classes of Division II or Commercial or Educational exhibits in Division IV.
- No particular type of container is specified for the Horticulture Division. Whatever is used should be clean. Foil covering should be avoided. A protective container or cover made of transparent material to shield delicate plant material from dry air or cold drafts may be used for any exhibit requiring it. Such plants may be judged uncovered.
- All plants must be free of insects and disease. All will be inspected, including commercial and educational exhibits as well as entries for exhibit only.
- The Gesneriad Society standard competitive judging will be used. Awards will be made according to the following point scores:
  - 1st, blue ribbon, 90-100 points;
  - 2nd, red ribbon, at least 80 points;
  - 3rd, yellow ribbon, at least 70 points.Honorable Mention may also be awarded.
- There will be a Sweepstakes Award for the Horticulture Division and a Sweepstakes award for the Artistic Division. An exhibitor must win a minimum of 3 blue ribbons in that division to be eligible for the award.
- The award for Best Gesneriad in Show in the Horticulture Division is given for horticultural perfection. A plant must score 95 points or over to be considered for this award. Winner must be a member of The Gesneriad Society or a chapter member.
- The Chapter will endeavor to protect all exhibits but assumes no responsibility for loss or damage. Plants should be removed between 4 and 5 p.m. on Sunday.  
ther computer exhibit that provides educational information on gesneriads

National Capital Area Chapter (NCAC), a chapter of the Gesneriad Society, Inc. "The purpose of the chapter shall be to afford a convenient and beneficial association of persons interested in gesneriads; to stimulate a widespread interest in the identification, correct nomenclature, culture, and propagation of gesneriads; and to encourage the origination and introduction of new cultivars." (NCAC bylaws, revised April 1981)

NCAC meets four times a year, September through June, at 10:30 am on the second Saturday of the month. All are welcome. Please refer to the latest issue of Petal Tones, or contact our chapter president (Carol Hamelink) or publicity and membership chair (John Boggan) for more information.

**The Gesneriad Society website:** [www.gesneriadsociety.org](http://www.gesneriadsociety.org) **NCAC website:** [www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org](http://www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org)  
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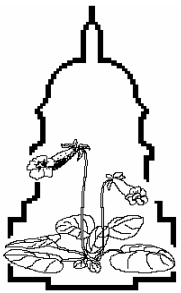
Jim Hipple  
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NCAC/AGGS  
c/o Mark Zukaitis  
422 George Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201



# Petal Tones

The newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of  
The Gesneriad Society

Volume 39, number 3

March 2008

## President's Greeting

Greetings everyone,

With just a short time left before our show, I'd like to encourage everyone to enter either a horticultural specimen or attempt a design entry. As our club is quite small, we need as much participation as possible to make a great show. Remember to let Laurene Jones know which design categories you will be entering, so you can have your niche reserved (nccsinger@cox.net). I will try to bring in some of my sale plants on Friday as well, so if you're looking for something to put in a design, come take a look.

Although it may seem intimidating to enter a plant that will be JUDGED by others, there is no penalty for entering plants that may not end up being considered to be blue ribbon potential. You may have the only entry of that species or cultivar, so that will help to let the public see the diversity of the gesneriad family of plants. If you plan to have more than 5 entries, please contact me for a pre-registration sheet if you don't already have one (hamelinkc@yahoo.com). This will help us to streamline the plant entry process. Don't worry if you show up without this - we won't turn you away!

Please let me know if you'd like to contribute to the awards for the show as well. No donation is too small. It can be monetary or something plant related. Also, as a reminder, if you can bring a side dish for our pot luck on Saturday, that will help balance out the KFC lunch. I'm looking forward to seeing all of you and your beautiful entries!

Happy growing,  
Carol

*Sinningia* 'Gabriel's Horn'  
grown by Carol Hamelink



A few of the raffle table plants at the February meeting.



### Upcoming Events:

Show and Sale: March 15-16, 2008 (flyer on p.8)

Next meeting: May (details will be in the April issue of *Petal Tones*)

## Show Update

by Jim Roberts

By now we're all agonizing over our plants. Is this one good enough to bring? Which of these two will the judges like? I can't bring this one; it's not big enough! Well, forget all that. Remember these three simple rules about entering in a show:

1) **Size doesn't matter.** Plants in a Gesneriad Show are judged on how well they are grown. Small plants in perfect condition can easily outscore larger showier plants because they have less for the judges to fault. The Best in Show is usually not the biggest or showiest entry. It's the BEST. When I judged the Long Island Chapter Show last spring, the Best in Show was a *Phinaea* in a small bubble bowl. Perfectly grown, but no where near as showy as the big *Kohleria* and other plants on the awards table.

2) **Shows are to educate the public.** Yes, we want to bring home an award or two, but if you have a plant that you think will make an educational contribution to the show, bring it. You may not think that the 6 open flowers on it are enough to get you a ribbon, but judges have been known to surprise. When I won Best in Show at the Convention in Baltimore in 1991, my plant only had 3 open flowers. A week later it had 30 or 40, but those first 3 flowers opened the day before the Convention. I brought it anyway since it was something that hadn't been seen in a show before. The judges loved it.

3) **There's only one blue per class.** That's true, but with all the classes that we have in our shows, you should be thinking "Wow! I can win a blue in every class I enter." Remember, you might have the only *Nematanthus* or the only *Nautilocalyx* in the show. Don't worry about competing against others. Assume your plant is all that's going to be there. And don't let the size and perfection of some of the plants that you've seen in our Little Shows scare you away. Those plants are probably sitting in a compost heap somewhere by now. Every show is a chance to shine.

This is our practice run before convention. Let's impress the judges (and ourselves). We have four teams (12 judges) coming down to look us over. Give them something to talk about.

And let's make sure that they have something to bring home with them to remember us by too. As you groom your plants, put the extra leaves and stems in baggies for the sale table. It's too late to try to root them now, but keep them in a cup of water so that they don't dry out and put them in a baggie the day before the show. Don't wrap the ends in anything. They'll actually last better if they're a little on the dry side.

The sale table is a good place to share extra seedlings and plants that have outgrown your lights. Plants that you have too many of. Plants that don't do well under your conditions or that you've simply grown tired of. Bring them in.

Out of plant tags? A basic window blind can be cut up to make hundreds of plant tags. They reportedly hold up very well too!

Make sure that your plants are priced in whole dollar amounts. We don't want to have to start making change. \$1, \$2, \$5 . . . any amount that works for you. Just no decimal points. Make sure that all plants have two tags. If one is a sticker with the name of the plant, the other should have your name (or initials) and the price on it. The volunteers working behind the table shouldn't have to search for the tag. If you use two tags in the pot, make them identical so that the volunteer can pull out either tag and not worry about removing the name of the plant from the pot and having the buyer grow a plant of "Judy Smith." Volunteers will help you price plants if you don't know what to charge. Donations are also accepted if you aren't interested in getting anything back when the monies are divided up. Remember, we have to pay sales tax and the Arboretum first, then the remainder gets split 60/40 (grower/club).

See you all on the 15th! Let's have a really great show!

JR

Thanks to Aarti Shah for putting together a colorful flyer for the show. Would it look nice on a bulletin board near you?

## Two New *Petrocosmea*

by Jim Roberts

Back in the day when I grew and sold just about everything, I used to get a number of really nice plants from a friend who worked at the Hiroshima Botanical Gardens. He was able to obtain many new *Chirita* species from China, and shared a lot of them with me. I just got back in touch with him (thank you internet!!) and found out that Nagahide Nakayama is still growing and hybridizing some really neat stuff. It was fun catching up on our lives after all these years. His son is 17 years old and planning on going to an Engineering College next year. He didn't have a son when I last corresponded with him.

Anyhow, he shared pictures of two *Petrocosmea* hybrids that he's selected. The really interesting things about these two hybrids, at least to me, is that they are so very different and yet they both come from the same seed pod, and that the parents are both species. This really shows the value of growing on every seedling that you get when you hybridize.

As you know, *Petrocosmea* is not an easy genus to hybridize with, or even set seed on. Nagahide crossed *P. flaccida* onto *P. nervosa*. Out of one successful crossing he was able to grow on 50 seedlings. According to Nagahide, all of the seedlings were slightly different. One seedling produced many more flowers than the others and he named this one *P. 'Asa Blue'*. Very nice.



© 2008 N. Nakayama

*Petrocosmea* 'Asa Blue', grown by Nagahide Nakayama

However, it's the other seedling that he selected that should have the entire Gesneriad World clambering for a leaf. He hasn't named this one yet, but is still using the id #25 on it. What's so special? It produces flowers with a very ruffled edge when grown under cool conditions, and when also fed well, the flowers will sometimes be doubles!



© 2008 N. Nakayama

*Petrocosmea* cv. 25, grown by Nagahide Nakayama

And I now have both plants growing at home. This will be a challenge plant for all of us to grow for the 2009 Convention. And we should sell everything that we can propagate for the 2009 Convention Sales Room. I'll start sharing plants as soon as I can. Let me know if you're interested in growing either one. By the way, *Petrocosmea* 'Momo' was also his hybrid.

JR



© 2007 A. Ray

At left, a young plant of *P. 'Momo'*, grown by Amy Ray.

*Petrocosmea flaccida* and *nervosa* both hail from the Sichuan and Yunnan provinces of China.



## What to Do With New Plants

by Kyoko Imai

When you're new to gesneriads, the sales table can be a little confusing, what with the bags of cuttings and leaves and rhizomes, and the pots with dangly string and all. Here's a quick primer on what to do with your new acquisitions. I'll try to hit some of the common questions and include some tips. The generalized propagation tips should be taken just so – the details will vary from plant to plant, and from grower to grower.

- **Plants in pots.** Some of the plants will be established flowering-size plants, while others will be seedlings or cuttings. Especially with the seedlings and cuttings, it helps to know whether the plant has been growing in a humid enclosure – a sudden move into dry air could dehydrate the plant. It also helps to check if the plant has a good root system. Without roots, the plant cannot draw up water from the potting mix. Gently check your plant to see if it has roots (a gentle tug might do the trick), and if not, keep it in a humid environment such as under a humidity dome, in a terrarium, or even in a clear plastic bag (such as a Ziploc freezer bag).



Plants from the sales table in 2005. Clockwise from upper left: *Kohleria* 'Silver Feather', *Kohleria amabilis*, *Petrocosmea forestii*, *Kohleria* 'Laura' and *Chirita* 'Stardust'.

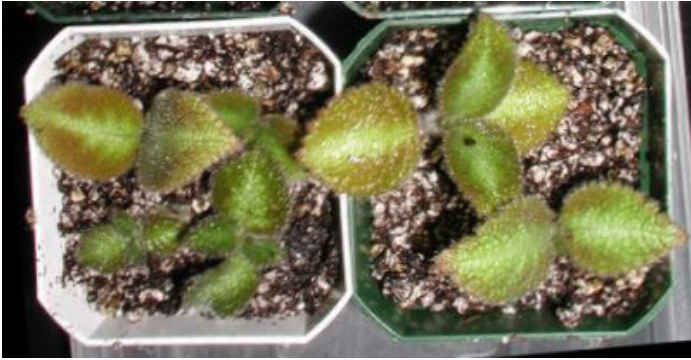
- **Pots with string.** If there is a short piece of string hanging out of the pot, then that plant was probably wick-watered. In other words, the string dangled into a reservoir of water, and the pot was automatically watered as a result of the wick pulling water up from the reservoir. The potting mix used for wick-watering is usually lighter (less water-retentive) than a non-wicked mix, so you'll find that it dries out very quickly if not set up with a water reservoir.
- **Rhizomes.** Many gesneriad rhizomes need to be stored moist, or they will shrivel up and die. They can be broken into pieces and covered lightly with potting mix, or even broken up into individual "flakes" or "scales" and sown on the surface of the mix. The April 2007 issue of *Petal Tones* has a great article on propagating from rhizomes.



*Phinaea* rhizomes

- **Keep crowns dry.** Whether it's a plant or cutting, keep the crown or growing tip dry. The crown is where the newest leaves come out, and water in the crown can be a cause of rot. If it gets wet, try sopping up the water by touching a corner of a piece of kitchen paper to the crown – it will soak up the water without harming the plant.
- **Cuttings.** If the cutting looks dry, it may help to soak it in room temperature water before planting it. Also, I always re-cut leaves and stems under water. Most gesneriad cuttings will root well when placed in moist potting mix. If the cuttings are big, then you may want to cut it up into smaller pieces first. For example, I usually cut *Episcia* into 4-leaf stolons with about an inch of stem. With *Streptocarpella* and *Columnea*, I bury two or three leaf nodes, and use a very light mix. I prefer to put down

*Codonanthe* and *Aeschynanthus* as two-leaf cuttings rather than bury 1 or 2 leaf nodes.



Episcia stolons (cuttings)



Two 2-leaf cuttings of *Aeschynanthus* in the back, and a small tip cutting in the foreground.

- ***Isolate the plants and leaves.*** This is a general rule of thumb for any new plant - keep new plant acquisitions isolated and monitor them for pests and other problems. Even if the plants were inspected before the sale – indeed, even if the plants have been pest- and disease-free for months – it's always safer to keep them isolated. Common houseplant problems include mealybugs, mites, and powdery mildew, and early detection will help you deal with the problem.

## February Meeting Wrap-Up by Kyoko Imai

### Workshop: Sing Me a Love Song

Thanks to Jim Roberts for an excellent hands on workshop. Jim brought in lots of line material:



and containers:



and tools:



and more tools and some thematic material:



Here's Jim expounding on lines and containers and balance:



Glue guns and little plastic containers do the job behind the scenes.



Together with more plant material brought in by Carol H., NCAC members tried their hand at making their own:



## Greetings From Your New Editor

### Plant of the Month: *Columnea*

Jim and Carol also brought in lots of examples from the genus *Columnea* (from South and Central America), including species such as *sanguinea*, *cruenta*, *glicensteinii*, *schimppfii* and *ulei*. What a treat to see so many examples side-by-side. There's quite a range in the genus, including big red-tipped (on the underside) leaves, narrow leaves, and fuzzy leaves, with some suitable for baskets and others for pots. As I didn't manage to take photos this time, perhaps there is a *Columnea* article in our future.

### You Have to See it in Person!

Do you remember the *Sinningia speciosa* photo in the February issue? Of Charles Lawn's breeding? Carol brought the plant in and I was astonished at the size of the flowers – and this is a young plant! Here's a hand in the frame for perspective:



As you know, Mark Zukaitis had to step down as Editor of *Petal Tones* on account of health issues. I'm sure we all continue to wish him a speedy recovery, and I hope he'll be back to take up the reins again. In the meantime, I am honored and delighted to serve as Editor. *Petal Tones* was one of the reasons I joined NCAC, and I truly hope we can keep it going as the wonderful newsletter that it is.

I'll be reinstating the "Desperately Seeking..." listings so - NCAC members - send me your wish lists. I'm also looking for "what's blooming" and "what's growing" write-ups, travel notes, photographs, articles, growing notes, culture questions, article requests, and any suggestions you may have. Visiting a grower? Ask to take some photos and do a little write-up. Stopping by a conservatory? I know you'll be keeping an eye open for gesneriads, so why not bring back a photo to share? Doing some plant maintenance? Tell us if you see something interesting or learn something new.

If you don't have a digital camera, I've got one you can borrow. If you can't email your submission to me, call me with the short ones (like wish lists), flag me down at a meeting, or mail it to me. I went back through the 2007 issues of *Petal Tones* and saw the same authors' names over and over - let's change that this year.

*Kyoko*

What's growing on my shelf:



Alien-looking new leaves on *Conandron ramondioides*



## PLANT SHOW AND SALE MARCH 15 AND 16, 2008 *GESNERIADS*

Beautiful blooming gesneriad house plants will be on show and available for sale, including African violets, Chiritas, Kohlerias and many more.

Time: Saturday March 15 from 1pm-5pm, Sunday March 16 from 9am-4pm  
Location: National Arboretum Administration Building, Washington DC,  
3501 New York Avenue NE, Washington DC.

Sponsored by the **National Capital Area Chapter of the Gesneriad Society**. Club members will be on hand to answer questions and give advice. Informational lectures and tours of the show are scheduled for Saturday afternoon and Sunday. For more information visit the web site <http://www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org/>.



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NCAC meets four times a year, September through June, at 10:30 am on the second Saturday of the month. All are welcome. Please refer to the latest issue of *Petal Tones*, or contact our chapter president (Carol Hamelink) or publicity and membership chair (John Boggan) for more information.

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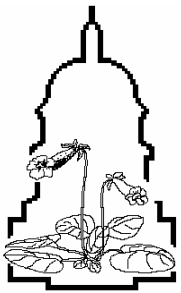
**WEBSITE**

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NCAC/AGGS



# Petal Tones

The newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of  
The Gesneriad Society

Volume 39, number 4

April 2008

## President's Message

Greetings everyone! I think the club can be congratulated on a highly successful show last month. We filled up our show tables with many lovely plants and designs. I was pleased to see that we had 8 club members and one judge enter items in the show totaling 84 entries with 26 blue, 29 red, and 16 white ribbons with 1 honorable mention. Not only did we enter 30 horticultural classes, with *Sinningias*, *Streptocarpus*, *Saintapaulias*, *Chiritas*, *Kohlerias*, and *Episcias*, to name a few, thanks to Jim Roberts we also had an entry into every design class. We had 8 plants that were given a score of 95 or higher- and congratulations go to Jim Roberts for his best in show entry of *Columnea* 'Broget Stavanger'. My favorite plant was the new *Sinningia* sp. 'Florianopolis' with its pebbled leaves and hairy undersides. I also enjoyed the natural planting in a sea sponge and Lee Linett's beautiful tray garden. What was truly amazing was how fast our sale table emptied out.



Above: Best in Show: *Columnea* 'Broget Stavanger' by Jim Roberts.

Right: Natural Sponge Garden by Jim Roberts.



*Sinningia* sp.  
'Florianopolis'  
by Carol  
Hamelink



Tray  
Landscape by  
Lee Linnett



Many thanks to Brian Connor, Jim Hipple, Mike Cagley and Aarti Shah for efficiently running the sales and emptying the table in record time. Special thanks are also in order for Jim Roberts and Kyoko Imai for photographing all class winners, to Jim Christ for writing the computer software program for the entries, to Larry Skog, Frank Daspit, and Carl Taylor for setting up the show room and placing the plants, and to Lee Linett for organizing the judges. Thanks everyone for pitching in and helping out where needed. We pulled it off fairly smoothly despite the traffic mess that managed to ensnare a few society members. I'd say we had a good practice for our upcoming hosting of the national convention next summer.

Happy growing,  
Carol

## Upcoming Events:

Next Meeting: May 17, 2008 at 10:30 am, at the National Arboretum, Washington, D.C.



**...more talk about the next meeting**

Needless to say, I'm really looking forward to the next meeting. And I'm very glad that Carol got an early start because she took a photo so good I had to give it a whole page. (I almost did a two-page spread!)

As Carol says, bring in your blooming plants to the next meeting, and let's see what we can come up with. If you have something that won't hold its flowers until the meeting, consider storing the pollen. I haven't experimented enough to have tips for how to do this, but one suggestion I've heard is to fold the pollen in glossy magazine paper and then put that in an airtight container in the refrigerator. (If anyone has advice on storing pollen, please send me an email!)

**Next Meeting....**

**Kitchen Hybridizing**

Next month we'll have a hybridizing party at our bi-monthly meeting. This is a great idea suggested by Kyoko Imai. Everyone can bring in plants that are blooming and we'll spread a little pollen around. With everyone's contributions we may come up with some cool new plants. I was so inspired by this idea that I started early. I gathered up a handful of *Sinningias* this past weekend and began the fun. Hopefully by next month at the meeting, I'll have some seed pods forming. I've got 3 *Sinningias* that are somewhat unique – *Sinningia* sp. Florianopolis, a new species with the desirable traits of pebbled leaves and extremely hairy undersides; *Sinningia* 'Gabriel's Horn' with fancy almost double blossoms and a couple of micro minis. As I also had several of the small *Sinningias* blooming now as well, so I spread pollen from the three mentioned above in the hopes of getting something different. Hybridizing isn't difficult. It's really just transferring pollen from one plant to another. The most important thing is to keep careful records of pollen donor and recipient. Labels can be tied around each blossom to keep things organized.

- Carol

[See Carol's photo on the next page. – ed.]



Did you notice at the show? This *Sinningia* was noted to be a new hybrid. *Sinningia* HCY's Fire Raindrops.

I inquired and learned that it is a cross between *S. sellovii* and a miniature *Sinningia*. I think the flower color, flower count, and stature of the plant are wonderful.

Getting back to Carol's photo (on the next page), I spent some time staring at the tags and wondering what kind of plants might result- imagining Florianopolis' influence is quite a trip! I have my fingers crossed that they'll take and the seed will be viable. Note also all the tools of the hybridizer at the bottom of the picture.

- Kyoko

Top left mosaic: pollen, stigma, seed pods and seed.

At right: my "pod" tags.





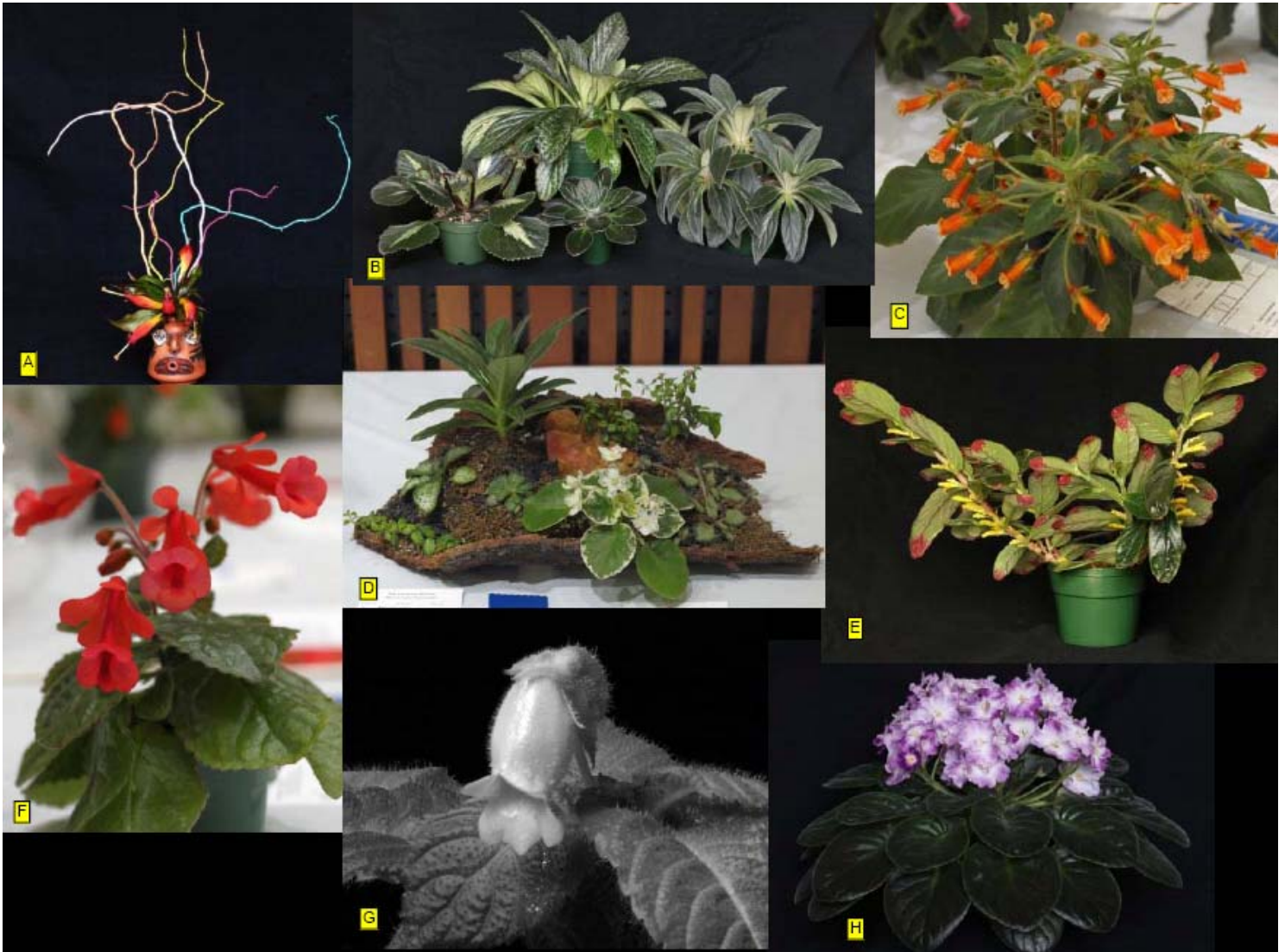


©2008 Carol Hamelink.

The *Simningias* pictured from left to right – back row: S. sp. 'Florianopolis', S. 'Texas Zebra', S. 'Gabriel's Horn'; front row: S. 'Los Angeles', S. 'Miriam G.', S. 'Georgia Sunset', S. 'Pink Sparkler', S. 'Georgia Sunset'

**Gesneriad Games – Awards Summary  
March 15 & 16, 2008**

	<u>Photo</u>
Best in Artistic: Jim Roberts, Class 55, "Jamaican Bobsled".....	A
Second Best in Artistic: Carol Hamelink, Class 63, Natural Garden.....	D
Best in Arts: Jim Roberts, Class 71, Black and White Print, <i>Gasteranthus villosus</i> .....	G
Best in Horticulture: Jim Roberts, Class 37, <i>Columnnea</i> 'Broget Stavanger'.....	Page 1
Second Best in Horticulture: Carol Hamelink, Class 49, Chirita collection.....	B
Best in Section A, Tuberous: Carol Hamelink, Class 5, <i>Sinningia</i> 'Gabriel's Horn'.....	F
Best in Section B, Rhizomatous: Carol Hamelink, Class 10, <i>Kohleria</i> 'Green Goblin'.....	C
Best in Section C, Fibrous: Carol Hamelink, Class 15, <i>Columnnea orientandina</i> .....	E
Best in Section D, Old World: Carol Hamelink, Class 27A, <i>Saintpaulia</i> 'Ness' Jesse'.....	H
Best in Section E, Ornamental: Jim Roberts, Class 37, <i>Columnnea</i> 'Broget Stavanger'.....	Page 1
Sweepstakes in Horticulture: Carol Hamelink with 12 First, 16 Second and 5 Third place	
Runner up to Sweepstakes in Horticulture: Jim Roberts with 3 First	
Sweepstakes in Artistic: Jim Roberts with 3 First, 3 Second and 4 Third	
Sweepstakes in the Arts: Jim Roberts with 4 First and 1 Second	



...more from the show



**Left column, top to bottom:** *Drymonia serrulata* 'Bronze' by Jim Roberts; arrangement by Denise Whitman; recycled container by Lee Linnett

**Center column:** sales table; *Kohleria amabilis var bogotensis* 'El Crystal' by Brian Connor, with *Kohleria Manchu* by Carol Hamelink in the foreground; arrangement by Jim Roberts

**Right column:** *Epicia* 'Pink Dreams' by Carol Hamelink; *Saintpaulia* show table; *Streptocarpus* collection by Brian Connor; Judges and clerks, Jeanne Katzenstein, Ben Paternoster, Wallace Wells, Denise Whitman, Judy Houcke, Rosemary Platz (standing), Karyn Cichocki, Jill Fisher, Paul Susi and Brian Connor. Missing are Charlene Marietti and Stephne Maciejewski. (Photo courtesy of Paul Susi.)

### Garden Visit: The New York Botanical Garden

In March, I visited the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory at the New York Botanical Garden. The NYBG is about a 20-minute train ride north of Grand Central Station, and sits on 250 acres, including 50 acres of forest.

The Conservatory opened in 1902, and underwent major renovations from 1994-1997. Covering 55,000 sq ft, the Victorian style conservatory – complete with dome - is architecturally gorgeous.

As for gesneriads, *Corytoplectus cutucuensis* was growing fairly tall in deep shade:



Although that was the only one I saw, I know that others have been spotted – thanks to Van Swearingen for the rest of these photos.

- Kyoko

### *Gesneria pedicellaris*



©2006 Van Swearingen

### *Gloxinia sylvatica*



©2006 Van Swearingen

### *Gesneria ventricosa*



©2005 Van Swearingen

### *Saintpaulia groetii*



©2005 Van Swearingen

Have you visited the Gesneriad Society's online forum lately? Q: Does *Sinningia speciosa* bloom better when fed with bloom booster fertilizer?

Some Growing Notes...

**Micro Mini Sinningias**

This isn't pretty, but I thought I'd share it with you anyway. A pot of "one" *Sinningia pusilla*:



My first micro mini *Sinningia* came from NCAC potted in long fiber sphagnum. I didn't take the hint and I grew them in a peat-based mix for a while before trying them in long fiber sphagnum again. I was amazed at how much better they did in the moss:



*Sinningia pusilla* 'White Sprite', two months after potting almost leaf-less tubers into a cookie jar lined with LECA and long fiber sphagnum.

About a year ago, I decided to try one outside of a terrarium. I potted one tuber of *S. pusilla* in long fiber sphagnum in a clear colorless 3 oz plastic cup. I put that on a tray among various other (bigger) plants under fluorescent tubes on a grow shelf. I watered sporadically (as I am prone to do). Winter came, and with it the very dry ambient air. I watered even more sparingly.

On Saturday night during the show, I came home looking for plants for the Sunday sales table. One of the things I found was that cup of *S. pusilla*. Yes, it's the one pictured at left - clearly not in show-able condition. Pulling the sphagnum out of the pot, I found seedlings galore, all the way down to the bottom. The main tuber had about tripled in size. A couple of seedlings had bloomed and a couple more were close to blooming size. Most of the leaves in the picture are attached to tubers which are now potted in a compost. Also, before I unpotted it, I trimmed off several seed pods still full of seed. It was quite the "haul".

By the way, next to this pot was another tuber in a peat mix. That one is still tiny and although it put on a few flowers over the year, it hasn't grown and there are no seedlings.

On a tangential note: do you know what the roots of a micro mini *Sinningia* look like? Here's a close up of the roots (as grown in long fiber sphagnum) of *S. sp.* 'Rio das Pedras'.



-Kyoko

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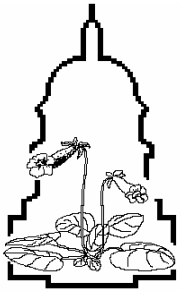
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NCAC/AGGS



# Petal Tones

The newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of  
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Volume 39, number 5

May 2008

## President's Message

Greetings all!

I hope everyone has gotten all of their new plants from the show and sale settled in. It's about time for our next club meeting. With this year's show behind us, it's time to start focusing on the 2009 Convention which we are hosting. Now that you've had a chance to see how much fun the plant show can be, perhaps you're ready to help out with some of the positions that are still open. Our convention chairs will give us an update at the meeting.

For this meeting's program we wanted to try some pollination to see if we can come up with some new and interesting hybrids for the Convention. We still have a couple of weeks, because our meeting is later than usual this month. So, if something is in bloom now, try saving the pollen and bring it with you.

I'm happy to report that the hybridizing that I did with the Sinningias last month was at least partially successful. From three different crosses with *Sinningia* sp. "Florianopolis" as the pollen donator, I have 3 seed pods that ripened and gave me seed. With luck, the seed will be viable and I'll be asking for your help in growing them all out. Some of the other mini Sinningias are now coming into bloom so I'll repeat the process with them.

Happy growing,  
Carol

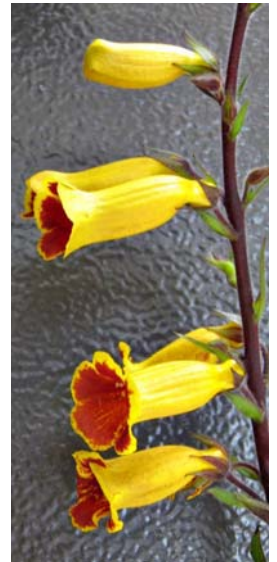
**Convention 2008**  
**July 1 – 5, Denver, Colorado**

If you're thinking of going to The Gesneriad Society's convention in Denver, don't forget to make your plans soon. The registration fee will be going up on June 2. For details, see <http://gesneriadsociety.org>.

## Next Meeting

Please bring pollen and flowering plants for the **hybridizing party!** Take a look at your plants and see what is getting ready to bloom. Requests for pollen can be emailed to the Editor ahead of the meeting.

And the "**Plant**" of the **Month** is hardy (and hardy with a little help) gesneriads, like *Ramonda*, *Haberlea* and *Conandron*, *Titanotrichum oldhamii* (photo at right), and others like *Sinningia tubiflora*, *S. sellovii*, and even some Achimenes. Growing one of these? Please bring it with you!



## Website Update!

Many thanks to Jim Hipple for updating our website with Show photos and the dates for our fall meetings!

### ***In this Issue.....***

Hybridizing for green-flowered Saintpaulia! How to store pollen. Cultural notes for growing Chiritas. Hybridizing 101 (aka "It's not a daunting task, really it isn't"). Wish Lists.

### **Upcoming Events:**

Next Meeting: May 17, 2008 at 10:30 am, at the National Arboretum, Washington, D.C.

## Go for Green!

by Dale Martens, Illinois

If you want long lasting flowers, go for green! What started my hybridizing efforts to create green flowers was that a few years ago I had entered Heinz's Harbour Lights (Heinz Dornbusch, hybridizer) at my local club's show in mid-April and entered it again after removing only 3 flowers at the AVSA convention at the end of May. That means some of my flowers were already 10 weeks old at the time of the local show and then 16 weeks old by the time of the AVSA convention. I grew it on the bottom shelf, so it had cool conditions and mostly 65 degrees at night and 85 in the day time. After the AVSA convention I removed all of the flowers because I didn't want to lose the center of the plant as it was totally blocked from light due to the massive head of flowers. Had I left them on the plant, I bet they would have lasted for weeks longer. I gave away zillions of leaves right there at the convention.

*Saintpaulia* 'Heartland's Lime Sherbet'



©2008 Dale Martens

I had consulted Dr. Jeff Smith about chimeras and he told me that the dominant color would be the center stripe. I used the green/white stripe chimera 'Emerald City' and the green/lavender stripe chimera 'Yukako' in the parentage of my hybrids in order to get longer lasting flowers. The big problem with green AVs is that they often are not cooperative for breeding. Some have tiny pollen sacs without pollen. I'm thinking 'Irish Flirt'. I've also had challenges using the green flowers as mothers. It's strange because some of them seem to self . . . yet after a "false pregnancy" of 6 months or so, there are no

seeds in the pods. Even using 'Yukako' as a mother, I got few seeds. Out of nine seed pods, only two had seeds. As far as 'Yukako' is concerned, selfing it proved that nine out of ten seedlings dominated with green color, proving Dr. Smith right about the genetic dominance of the center stripe color. The only purple one to flower had a strange dull green cast to it.

So far I've named 3 hybrids. The parentage of 'Heartland's Lime Sherbet' and 'Heartland's Heirloom Lace' are ('Emerald City' x 'Louisiana Lagniappe'). When I selfed 'Yukako' I named the most unusual one 'Heartland's Lime Bubbles'. On April 19, 2008, the Quad Cities African Violet Society had a big show and sale. My entry of 'Heartland's Heirloom Lace' won Best in Show! I got Best in Class for 'Heartland's Lime Bubbles'. The public went wild over my hybrids, and I could have been rich had I had young plants for sale.

*The piece below is re-printed with Dale Martens' kind permission. The Gesneriphiles email list can be found at:*

<http://lists.ibiblio.org/mailman/listinfo/gesneriphiles>

### Storing and Sending Pollen

From: Dale Martens  
To: Gesneriphiles  
Date: Wed, Apr 16, 2008

I promised someone I'd send him pollen from *Streptocarpus* 'Dale's Scarlet Macaw'. When I send pollen, I use a non-white paper so that the pollen shows easier when the recipient attempts to use it. In this case I found some blue colored wrapping tissue, the type used to gift wrap clothing inside a box. One would not want to use wax paper as that is not absorbent. I cut a 2 inch section and fold it as if I were sending seeds to someone. These folded papers can then be placed in small glassines (as used for stamp collectors) or in normal envelopes and labeled with the name of the plant and the date. I was able to successfully pollinate *Sinningia pusilla* with pollen from Karyn Cichocki of *Sn. sp.* "Santa



Teresa" that had been stored for a month at room temperature, although it probably should have been stored in the refrigerator. Not sure how long pollen keeps, so a study could be done on that.

I also like to include filaments on the anthers. By the time they arrive at the hybridizer's house, the filaments are dried out. In this case with *Streptocarpus*, think of the anthers with filaments attached as "wish bones" on a turkey. When the anthers are pulled apart, there is a puff of pollen released in the air.



©2008 Dale Martens

The hybridizer can pick up the dried filament with a pair of tweezers and directly touch the pollen containing side of the anther to the stigma of the potential mother. If the pollen has spilled onto the paper, then the hybridizer can either scrape pollen off the paper with a finger nail or with an artist's brush.

Many of my hybrids were created because someone sent me pollen in the mail. This includes 'Dale's Scarlet Macaw' because Helen Bortvedt sent me pollen from her *S. dunnii* which I placed onto 'Texas Hot Chili'.

What excited me about this particular photo was that DSM's anthers have a bright crimson color on them!

Dale in Illinois

## "Plant" of the Month – Cold Hardy Gesneriads

by Kyoko Imai

Now that our last frost date is gone and summer's around the corner, no doubt many of you are gardening outdoors. Do you have any gesneriads in your perennial beds? Please share your experiences at the next meeting, and bring plants to show-and-tell if you can.

Most of this area being in zones 7-8, there's a good selection of gesneriads that could grow outside, some with a little extra care (especially protection from sleet and winter rain). Even commercial nurseries are offering some *Achimenes* for zone 7b, and some *Sinningia* for zone 8.

My outdoor space is a balcony which is a zone or two colder than the ground. Even here, *Titanotrichum oldhamii* has no problem spending the winter outside, potted right next to toad lilies and Solomon's Seal. *Sinningia leucotricha* and *S. 'Tampa Bay Beauty'* x self were over-wintered inside but have been happily living outside for the past few weeks. If I could put a cold frame on my balcony, I'd probably leave them outside. I also put *Sinningia tubiflora* tubers out a few weeks ago, but now I'm fretting that the mix was too heavy for the "potatoes" to withstand our last round of cold **wet** nights on a balcony without turning to mush. I have my fingers crossed....

Since there's still no sign of my *Titanotrichum*, I'm bringing you a photo of *Sinningia tubiflora* breaking dormancy in the garden of Kevin Jones in South Carolina (zone 8):



©2008 Kevin Jones

## Growing Chiritas

by Carol Hamelink

Chiritas are one of my favorite gesneriad genera because they are fairly easy to grow and don't have any dormant period. Of course, not all Chiritas are equal and some are more difficult to grow than others. As well, there are many ways to grow all of these plants, so think about your own situation if you are considering making any changes.

My basic soil mix for all of my gesneriads is half Pro-mix and half perlite with a generous handful of horticultural charcoal thrown in. That's probably half a cup of charcoal for each gallon of mix. Charcoal is supposed to keep the soil "sweet", although there is debate over whether it does anything useful. I've not found it to be harmful and do like the way it keeps the bottom of the bowls that I sometimes grow episcias in from turning green. So I mix it into all my soil- just to keep things simple.

The thing probably said most about Chiritas is that they like to be under potted, slightly dry and not too hot. This is great because it means they can survive occasional neglect. I wick everything I grow, since they tend to die from excessive neglect if I don't. I even wick Chiritas. This can be a bit of a challenge, since they can get too wet this way. My options are to lighten the soil even further, by adding more perlite, or occasionally take the wicks out of the reservoirs. I usually end up watching them as they are growing so I can dry them out on occasion by removing the wicks from the reservoirs. I try to grow all of my Chiritas on the bottom shelf of my grow stands. That way I see them easily to notice when they're wilting, or otherwise not happy. It is easier to revive a wilted plant than an over watered plant.

This also means that I fertilize these plants continuously. I use the traditional ¼ teaspoon of a balanced fertilizer for each gallon of water. [*Carol reports that ¼ teasp. of 20-20-20 is not too strong. -Ed.*] "Balanced" refers to an equal ratio of the 3 main ingredients: nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. As two of my light stands are on the second floor of the house, it tends to get a bit warm in the summer. During the summer months when the plants are going through rapid respiration, I use only 1/8 of a teaspoon of fertilizer per gallon. A plant that is getting too much fertilizer will need to find a

way to get rid of it. This can be seen as small orange crystals attached to the hairs of the leaves, which is most noticeable in the very center of the crown. Excessive fertilizer can cause poor growth and stunting in the crown. I've heard it said that it is a good idea to rotate the brand of fertilizer that you use, since they all have differing amounts of the trace elements such as zinc, copper and magnesium. I try to rotate through 3 different brands, although it's not a rigid schedule and I often use whichever one is handy. I also don't leach my plants, which is suggested for the wick-watering method. This involves running plain unfertilized water through the plant pot once a month to flush out fertilizer build up. I do, however, try to wash the reservoirs every three months which may help to keep the fertilizer from becoming excessively concentrated in the trays due to evaporation of the water. Although it's a lot of work, the plants seem to perk up right after I do this, so when plant growth seems to be stagnating, I'll take a weekend and clean all of the reservoirs. That usually means that I'm also spraying them all. I have an ongoing battle with powdery mildew. Every season change will bring it on again. So, while I have the plants off of the stand to do the tray cleaning, I also spray all of the plants.



©2008 Carol Hamelink

Top left to right: *sinensis* (dwarf), USBRG 98-083, 'Hisako'  
Bottom left to right: 'Betty', 'Diane Marie', *schlerophylla*, tamiana, 'Little Dragon'

Propagation of chiritas is usually done from a single leaf. If it's a large leafed variety like *sinensis*, I trim the leaf so it is about 1 inch square leaf blade with about ½ inch of stem. This tends to make the leaf focus its energy on producing prodigy instead of growing the leaf bigger. I submerge the stem up to the leaf portion in my usual potting mix, no more

than a half inch of mix in the bottom of a solo cup. Some of the fleshier varieties like 98-083 tend to be a little bit harder to propagate in this manner, but if you're lucky and have stolons, you can propagate from those as well. I always cover the propagation trays to help keep the humidity a bit higher and because I tend to under water these trays and can lose leaves if I don't. Once the leaves have visible babies I remove the domes from the trays to increase the light. I put all newly separated baby plants back under the covered trays for a couple of weeks to help them survive the trauma I've inflicted on the roots. After that they are ready to join the wicking community. I give them their own tray to begin with because I tend to see the fertilizer crystals in the centers if I start them on my usual ¼ teaspoon fertilizer per gallon water. I usually start them on the reduced 1/8 teaspoon fertilizer per gallon for two weeks (about the length of time my reservoir lasts).

If you missed Carol's article on growing under lights, check out the September 2007 issue, available on our website. It includes some great information on growing Chiritas.

\*\*\* Wish Lists \*\*\*

Jim Roberts:

- Gasteranthus* - any
- Gesneria cuneifolia*
- Gesneria reticulata*

Brian Connor:

- Phinaea multiflora* 'Tracery'
- Nematanthus* 'Apres', 'Christmas Holly' or 'Black Gold'
- Columnea minor*
- Kohleria* 'Red Rider'
- Gesneria* 'Lemon Drop'

Kyoko Imai:

- Chirita* pollen
- Chirita* Little Dragon
- Codonanthe carnosa* – Looking for *carnosa* with big robust leaves. (I already have the one with smaller leaves that is in circulation as *carnosa*.)



### Hybridizing - the Bare Basics

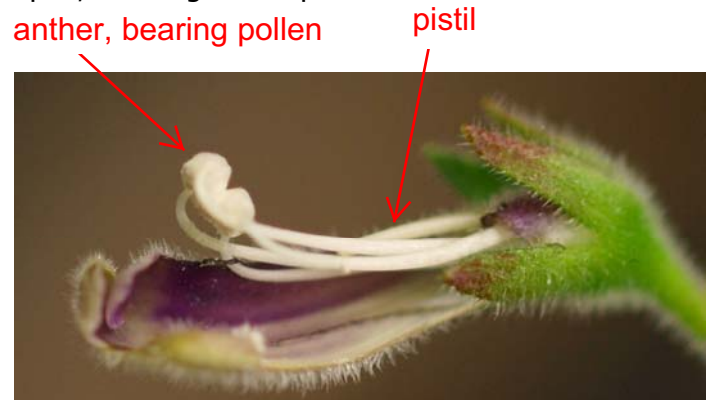
by Kyoko Imai

A good hybridizing program requires patience, vision, knowledge, dedication, and luck (and probably some secret ingredients). But, breaking it down to the bare basics, hybridizing requires only that you pollinate a flower and then grow out the seeds. Pollinating is easy (with some exceptions), and then all you need is to find a good spot to grow seedlings.

Total time from seed-sowing to blooming for some faster-blooming gesneriads is about 4 months. As for caring for the seedlings, I'll let you in on a little secret: I've sometimes sown seed and forgotten about them for months, only to find a Ziploc bag of blooming seedlings. Talk about low maintenance! (No, it's not recommended culture, but sometimes it can't be helped....)

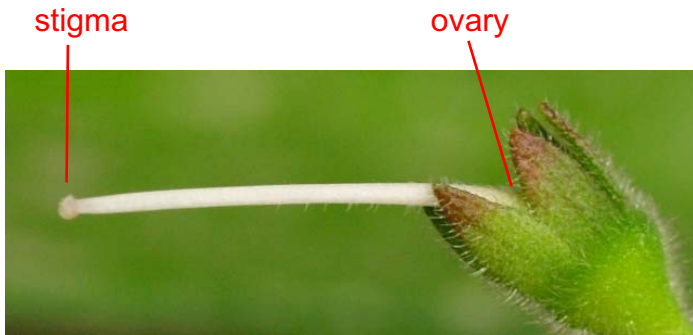
A couple of years ago, I did a little "demonstration" cross of *Streptocarpus*, just to show how it's a fairly manageable process, and to show what kind of plants resulted from the cross. Quite rudimentary but I hope informative for those of you who are new to crossing and growing from seed.

But first, a couple of photos of some flower parts. This is a mini *Sinningia* hybrid that has a tendency to self pollinate. Here's a picture of a bud that I cut open, showing lots of pollen:



The basic idea is to take that pollen and stick it on a stigma. The stigma is the part at the tip of the pistil. In the photo above, the pistil is still short (and pretty much invisible...). As the bud develops, the pistil elongates so that it looks like this:

ovary



I took this is a photo after I pulled the petals and anthers off an open flower. With this particular plant, by the time the flower is open the pistil will be long enough that the stigma touches pollen, resulting in self-pollination. That means that if I want to use the plant as a mother, I have to cut open **buds** and remove the anthers while the pistil is still short (like in the photo on the previous page).

And now for the Streptocarpus cross:

**Mom (white)**

Small narrow-leaved plant. Simple flowers, 1-2 flowers per flower stem, opening sequentially. Flower frequently not fully opening. Generally not a strong grower.

x

**Dad (purple)**

Frilly floriferous purple-flowered plant descended from Park Seed's Royal series. Big wide wavy leaves. Very easy grower (albeit a thirsty one).

I hoped to get a white-flowered Streptocarpus with narrow leaves like the mother, but one that was a stronger grower, with more than one flower open at a time, and flowers that opened more fully.

Because the white Streptocarpus often self-pollinated, I literally ripped the petals and anthers off the flower first, leaving just the pistil on the plant. I then dusted the stigma with pollen from the father.

I should emphasize that I'm not much good at growing Streptocarpus, so this is just an average grower's report - you might get seedlings to bloom even faster.

**November 30**

Harvested seed, and dried in an envelope. *Streptos* (twisted) *carpus* (fruit):



**December 5** – sowed some 15-20 seeds in sterilized potting mix in two pots, placed them in a Ziploc freezer bag, and placed them under fluorescent lights.

**January 1**

squeezed the pots, fed with very dilute fertilizer, and opened the bag a little.



**January 25**

The seedlings were potted on into mini compots (3 or 4 plants per pot), each pot with 2-3 pellets of Nutricote slow release fertilizer (13-13-13) about 3/4 of the way down.



**February 11** – The photos below compare January 25 to February 11 (17 days' growth).



**March 13**

(14 weeks since sowing) – first buds noticed.



**March 31**

(about 4 months from sowing) - first bloom.



The first flower looked almost exactly like the mother plant's, although the plant itself was a much more vigorous grower. There were also three buds on this stem, while the mother plant only had two.

**April 17** - most bloomed by this date. I got both purple and white flowers, with varying degrees of frill. Some had one flower per stem, one had three, and most had two sequentially blooming flowers.

The next photograph shows a frillier white - frills from the father, and color from the mother. The leaves were narrow like the mother, but bigger. Next to it is a purple flower (the camera thinks it was blue but it was actually purple) – the flower shape is closer to the mother, and the color is from the father. The flower size was a bit bigger than the mother.



You can see how the frills come from the father, which looked something like this:



My pick was this white-flowered plant. The flowers were more open and bigger than the mother, and more than one opened at a time. The plant itself grew better as well.



There you have it. Fairly easy and fairly quick.

Now, if you're hybridizing to name and release/share hybrids, the real work comes after this. From your seedlings, select the ones that look promising, and then grow them on. How are the second round of blooms? Growth habit? When you propagate it, are the plant characteristics stable? Is it similar to a cultivar that already exists?

If you are interested in learning more about hybridizing gesneriads, check out the Gesneriad Hybridizer's Association. Their newsletter is fabulous. More information here:  
<http://www.gesneriadsociety.org/publications2.htm>

One final photo: seed pots in a clear, lidded plastic box on my shelf:



National Capital Area Chapter (NCAC), a chapter of the Gesneriad Society, Inc. "The purpose of the chapter shall be to afford a convenient and beneficial association of persons interested in gesneriads; to stimulate a widespread interest in the identification, correct nomenclature, culture, and propagation of gesneriads; and to encourage the origination and introduction of new cultivars." (NCAC bylaws, revised April 1981.)

NCAC usually meets four times a year, September through June, at 10:30 am on the second Saturday of the month. All are welcome. Please refer to the latest issue of *Petal Tones*, or contact our chapter president (Carol Hamelink) or publicity and membership chair (John Boggan) for more information.

**The Gesneriad Society website:** [www.gesneriadsociety.org](http://www.gesneriadsociety.org) **NCAC website:** [www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org](http://www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org)

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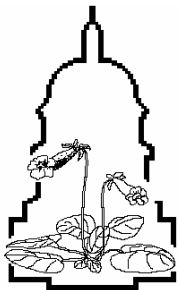
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NCAC/AGGS





# Petal Tones

The newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of  
The Gesneriad Society

Volume 39, number 6

June/July 2008

## President's Message

Greetings everyone!

It's about time for the summer heat to hit here. Perhaps by the time this issue of *Petal Tones* comes out it will already be hot here. This is the time of year when our club takes a hiatus from meetings to allow everyone time for summer activities. The last group activity for a while – other than the convention planning meeting in July – will be the summer picnic to be held in the Sweetgum picnic area of Greenbelt Park (same place as last year). The park has a lot of tables in the shade and is quite pleasant even on a hot summer day. This is a great time to invite along a friend to simply enjoy a beautiful day and share some extra plants or pick up something new. As usual, I have a lot of plants I'd like to find alternate homes for, so come check it out. We'll start sometime around 10:30 AM. Bring something you'd like to cook on the grill and a dish to pass. We'll also have a short business meeting as we have some things to discuss about the 2009 Gesneriad Society convention before the 2008 Denver Convention.

Happy growing,  
Carol

*Kohleria* 'Peridot's Mango Martini'



©2008 Carol Hamelink

## Picnic Details

**Time:** 10:30 on Saturday June 14. (In case of rain, Sunday June 15)

**Food and beverages:** Please bring food to grill, as well as dishes to share, dessert and drinks.

**Raffle/swap plants:** Please bring gesneriads and yard plants etc.

**Place:** Greenbelt Park, Greenbelt, Maryland. Sweetgum picnic area.

### Directions:

From I-95, take Exit 23 Route 201 Kenilworth Avenue South (toward Bladensburg) to Route 193 East Greenbelt Road. (Greenbelt Road is an overpass over Route 201.) The park is a quarter mile on the right hand side of Greenbelt Road across from Fridays restaurant and Marriott Courtyard.

From 295 north (Baltimore-Washington Parkway), veer right onto Route 193 Greenbelt Road West. The Greenway shopping center is on the left. The park is on the left hand side at the 3rd traffic light across from Friday's restaurant, Capitol Cadillac, and Marriott Courtyard.

The Sweetgum Picnic Area is near the entrance of the park. Enter the park, turn right at the stop sign. The Sweetgum Picnic Area is the first left.

### Upcoming Events:

June 14, 2008: picnic, 10:30 am Greenbelt Park

July 19, 2008 (tentative): post-Denver and pre-DC Convention meeting *chez* Jim Roberts. More details by email in July.

## **How To Grow Achimenes: The Untold Story!**

*by Serge Saliba*

*(Achimenes grower and hybridizer)*

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/gesneriads/>



©2007 Serge Saliba

This photograph is – need I even say it – a stunningly spectacular scrumptious display. I asked Serge to tell us how he does it, and he provided a very informative article in record turnaround. I'm very pleased to be able to bring this to you. Serge is writing from Romania in South-Eastern Central Europe – that's where the Danube flows into the Black Sea. – *Ed.*



Growing Achimenes is not the simple fact of putting down a rhizome under 2 inches of soil and then watering and fertilizing – it's much more than that!

Getting a huge stunning mass of colors and a very compact well-ramified plant with lots of blooms requires a whole procedure which could be slightly different depending on the varieties' habit (erect, semi-erect and hanging varieties).

This procedure begins from the moment the rhizome germinates and the first four leaves appear, and ends when flower buds start to form.

A rhizome which is planted on February 20th or March 1st will germinate during the first week of April. The two first leaves appear above the soil surface on a white thin stem that continues to grow and form another pair of leaves by the end of April.



©2008 Serge Saliba

What we have to do now is to pinch the tip and eliminate the 2 or 3 youngest leaves on it. This procedure occurs when the stem is already 0.5 - 1 inch long. **IT'S VERY IMPORTANT TO PINCH AT THIS STAGE OF GROWTH!**



©2008 Serge Saliba



©2008 Serge Saliba

Some growers recommend to pinch at 4 inches long, but from my experience, pinching at that stage cannot give the same results as the first one. In fact, the much earlier you pinch, the more ramifications you get! An Achimenes pinched at one inch long can produce 40-50% more branches and blooms than the one pinched much later when the plant is already preparing itself for blooming!

The most frequently asked question is: How many times should we pinch? The answer cannot be an exact number since number of pinchings varies depending on the varieties' habit; this makes the growing procedure different from one variety to another.

From my own experience, I can tell that the Tetras need to be pinched one single time and some could be grown without pinching at all. For example: Lach's Charm, Quick Step, Elegance etc. These can be pinched just once. Some Tetras such as Yellow Queen and others don't like to be pinched and should be kept untouched!

Regarding the erect (non-Tetras & tall), semi-erect and hanging specimens, they have to be pinched at least 5 times to get stunning cascades. Pinching has to be stopped when the first bloom buds start to form. Some examples are: Judith, Dot, Glory, Apricot Glow, Peach Glow, Ambroise Verschaffelt, Purple King, India etc... I pinch these varieties 5 to 7 times.

Some growers pretend that pinching can delay blooming, but I'm telling you, this is not true at all; sometimes a small delay of a week or 10 days can occur with some hybrids, but this is not significant. So, my dear Achimenes growers, don't let the pity control your minds – take your scissors and pinch! I know it could be hard to see your young tiny fragile

plants "without a head", but think that there will be 2 or maybe 3 or even 4 that replace every head you cut, only a few days after!

First pinching of Serge's Fantasy



©2008 Serge Saliba

'Serge's Fantasy' pinched twice. For this hybrid, 2-3 rhizomes are planted in a 5" pot.



©2008 Serge Saliba

'Tetra Verschaffelt' pinched twice



©2008 Serge Saliba

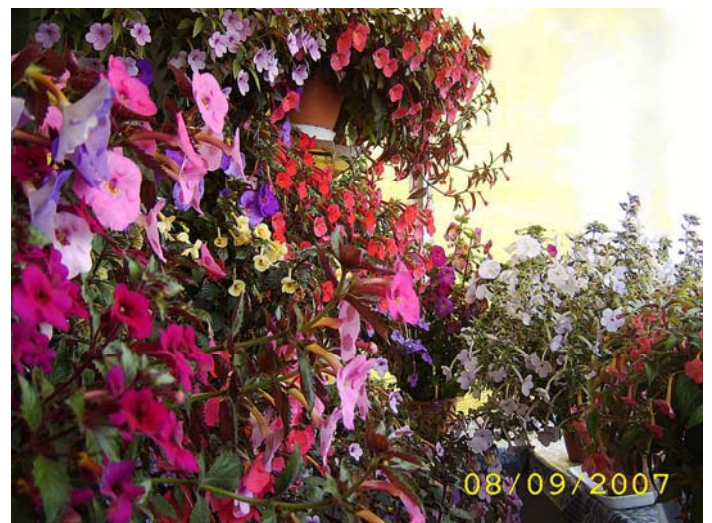
Another point that I find extremely important in growing Achimenes is the growing location!

To get the perfect results, Achimenes must be grown in two different locations before and after blooming.

Before blooming (vegetative period), I put the pots from the moment of germination (March) in a sunny spot, where the sun hits directly the tiny plants. They continue to be exposed to the direct spring sun until the middle of June when they start to form buds – then I move them into a semi shady spot. Why do I do that? Because when the buds open, the petals cannot tolerate direct summer heat and light – they will be certainly burned.

By this method, the plants will be very ramified, the stems will be robust and thicker, and the distance between two levels of leaves will be shorter – that means more branches, more blooms and more aesthetic appearance!

In both locations, air circulation is needed; without direct contact with outside air you cannot achieve perfectly your target, even with a good amount of light and temperature. Remember, Achimenes like to live in an open space, covered and protected from above but with lateral sides opened. They adore contact with the outside world. So if you grow them in a small greenhouse, be sure to leave all the windows open.



©2007 Serge Saliba

I usually use 6.5" pots and plant 5 rhizomes in each. I prefer to plant few rhizomes – like that the plant will continue to bloom for a long period of time, much longer than a crowded pot!

Regarding temperature, Achimenes are known to be a "hot water plant" – they can endure extreme heat if you ensure them the needed water. But at 100F and above, don't be surprised if you see a drastic change in colors and shape; some varieties may be unrecognizable! You can see the peach color of Peach Glow turning into yellow, the dark blue of 'India' and 'Iona' turning into white etc... Some hybrids will have a faded color but all with smaller blooms!

Actually, temperature has a significant effect on color and corolla size. The ideal range will be between 76F-80F: at this range the blooms will be bigger, colors more vivid, and details on petals such as the "black eyes", dots... will be more clearly visible!



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The Second Quarter 2008 issue of *Gesneriads* is dedicated to *Achimenes*. See The Gesneriad Society's website for more information.

\*\*\* Wish Lists \*\*\*

Aarti Shah:  
*Seemania sylvatica*  
*Seemania medea*  
*Petrocosmea forrestii*  
*Petrocosmea minor*  
*Codonatanthus 'Aurora'*

## Hardy Gesneriads

by Jim Roberts

Now that the weather has finally turned and we're spending more time outdoors than in, it's time to consider what to do with the gesneriads. Many do well outdoors in a shady location, and some actually thrive in the extra light. Even a shady location outdoors is bright compared to most window light. But beyond putting plants out in their pots for the summer, you should consider adding gesneriads to the actual garden plots.

There are several groups of gesneriads that can be grown outdoors. Maryland, Virginia and DC are in an ideal position climate-wise to grow a large variety of gesneriads. Not only are there a number of alpine gesneriads that we can grow, but there are some others that are tropical that survive our winters and come back year after year.

Let's start our discussion with the European alpine. These plants are winter hardy in our area, without a doubt, but will have a hard time coping with our summers unless you provide them a shady location that stays a little cooler than the rest of the yard. Those of us in the country will have an easier time with these plants, as the temperatures we experience are a little more moderate than those in the inner cities. Plants to try are Ramonda, Haberlea and Jankaea. There are three species of Ramonda – *R. myconi*, *R. serbica* and *R. nathaliae* – that are available through the seed funds of The Gesneriad Society (at times) and the rock garden societies, as well as from other seed sources (Chiltern's Seeds lists them on occasion). The species are available in different color forms such as white, purple and pink. *Haberlea rhodopensis* and *H. fernandi-cobergii* grow a little more open than Ramonda, but all of these plants look similar to Saintpaulia with low rosettes of foliage and violet shaped flowers. Jankaea has been on my wish list for at least 25 years. It is available from at least one grower on the web, but I don't want to spend \$50 on a plant that I'll probably kill its first year in the yard. Jankaea is covered with fine silver hairs (like *Sinningia leucotricha*) and grows very slowly. It has been crossed with Haberlea to make for a slightly more robust plant, but still very hard to find.

Potted *Conandron ramondioides* in Tokyo, Japan



© 2007 Koizumi [http://flickr.com/photos/casablanca\\_moon/](http://flickr.com/photos/casablanca_moon/)



The Asia alpines come from China and Japan. I've over-wintered both *Conandron* and *Optithandra* in Baltimore, so they should do well anywhere in the area. Both of these plants go semi-dormant for the winter. *Conandron* makes a tight little leaf bundle that unfurls in the spring when the weather warms. Flowers on *C. ramondioides* come in purple, white and pink forms, and have pointed petals giving them a star shape. *Opithandra primuloides* also comes in a variety of flower colors. Most of the outer leaves die back over the winter, leaving just a central bundle of tiny leaves. Both of these plants need to have a protective covering of leaves or straw to protect them from extreme cold. In nature they are snow-covered, but we don't get enough snow to keep them at 32°F.

*Lysionotus* and *Hemiboea* are also marginally hardy in this area. Some of the *Briggsia* may be too, but I haven't tried any yet. Both produce thick underground rhizomes which send up new growth in the spring. *Hemiboea subcapitata* has proven itself many years in a row, although it still hasn't emerged this year for some reason. A protective cover over the ground when they go dormant will help keep the ground frozen. Freeze thaw cycles are not good for the dormant rhizomes. The last time I lost *Hemiboea* was when the squirrels discovered how tasty the rhizomes were and dug up every single one. They can get to be quite large; I remember seeing one of the squirrels with a long white "something" that looked like a white German sausage. Turned out it was one of the *Hemiboea* rhizomes.

Then there are plants which are not supposed to be hardy, that come from tropical areas, but which seem unfazed by our winters. *Titanotrichum oldhamii* is sometimes sold as Summer Foxglove. The spikes of mustard yellow flowers with the brick red interior are a real sight when they show up in late August. Again, these plants are rhizomatous and re-emerge late in the spring each year. I believe they originated from Hong Kong, not a very "alpine" place.

*Titanotrichum oldhamii* in John Boggan's garden.



© John Boggan

Other Asian gesneriads have surprised us too with their ability to survive our winters. John Boggan reports that *Raphiocarpus petelotii* from Vietnam survives in his garden in DC. It doesn't flower, but it survives the winter. I wonder when someone will start to test some of the higher altitude *Petrocosmea* and *Chirita* in the garden. They're already being grown outdoors in England and the Pacific Northwest. It's only a matter of time (especially with global warming giving us a hand) that we'll be using them as fillers in the garden like Hens and Chicks or Pansies.

*Raphiocarpus petelotii* in John Boggan's garden.



© John Boggan

The final group that I'm going to mention comes from South America. *Sinningia* have a very wide range throughout Brazil. Some have proven themselves to be quite hardy, even as far north as New England. *Sinningia tubiflora* produces tall spikes of white scented flowers. The tubers actually multiply underground like potatoes and the clump gets bigger each year. This hardiness trait gets carried over into hybrids with *S. tubiflora*, such as *S. 'Apricot Bouquet'* and a number of other hybrids that you can find on the web (try Lazy S's Nursery in Virginia). *Sinningia sellovii* with its dangling pink flowers also winters over in this area.

Some basic rules for all of the above. They all require excellent drainage. Wet feet in the winter will kill them faster than any cold snap. In the summer months the true alpine plants from Europe, China and Japan need protection from the heat. Not so the *Sinningia*. They REQUIRE full sun. They'll produce nice compact growth and lots of flower spikes. *Hemiboea*, *Titanotrichum* and others from

Asia want some protection from the sun or they'll burn, but they don't mind the heat at all.

So, in summary, while you're out puttering in your garden this spring, slip a tuber or rhizome or plant into the ground. When friends ask you what it is you can tell them all about this wonderful family of plants called gesneriads and then bring them inside to show them the rest of the story.

*Sinningia tubiflora* shoots



©2008 Kyoko Imai

*Sinningia tubiflora* tubers



© 2006 Kyoko Imai

### So You Crossed it...

by Kyoko Imai

Time for a few updates. Remember the fun *Sinningia* pods Carol Hamelink created recently and offered to the group? Well, apparently she didn't keep any seeds herself so there's no update yet ... and it's up to those of you who got seed through Jim Roberts to grow them out!

Brian Connor wrote one day to say:

As I was rushing around watering plants, trying to leave for work on time... I noticed my *Aeschynanthus* seed pod had split (cross between *Aeschy. lobbianus* variegated x *Aeschy. Thai Pink*).... I touched the seed pod and a whole bunch of seeds flew out, floating away on little fine hairs onto the *Codonanthe* below (OhOh!!).... It was amazingly cool and a little disconcerting at the same time.....

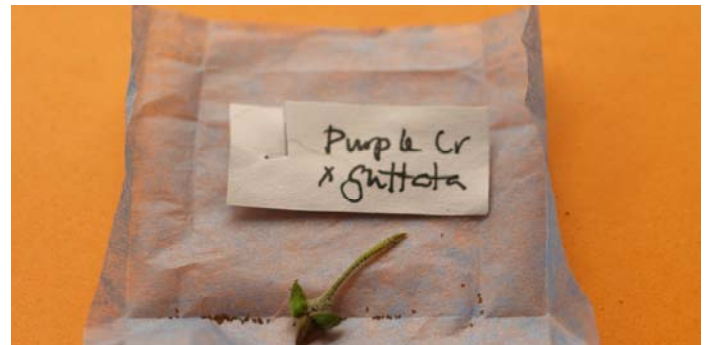
I can just imagine – it's an awesome sight. A very effective way to disperse seed.

*Aeschynanthus longicaulis* seeds (bigger than life view)



© 2007 Kyoko Imai

As for me, well I lost most of the contents of two mini *Sinningia* pods as I got to them too late. I did manage to harvest one intact, and snapped a photo. I then folded up the paper, put it in a glassine envelope, and went to load the photo. Ten minutes later I decided to sow the seed but OH NO!! I couldn't find the pod *anywhere!* Looks like I've lost the whole thing now so I'll never know if I successfully crossed it - the mother plant sets pods on its own all the time.



© 2008 Kyoko Imai

I've taken preventative steps on this *Chirita* by encasing the pod in tissue paper....



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## Highlights from the May Meeting

by Kyoko Imai

The Raffle Table



At our last meeting, Jim Roberts provided a demonstration on how to pollinate gesneriads using Sinningias and Streptocarpus as volunteer moms. Here he is snipping open a flower.



The idea is to prevent the flower from pollinating itself, and instead place pollen from another plant onto the stigma.

The parts of a *Sinningia speciosa* flower



Pollination



Streptocarpus offerings (Texas Hot Chili and Bristol's Party Boy)



Seed pods should always be labeled and here's yet another way to do it. Jim warned that this method may be risky if you water from above – a little water on the label and it may be lost. I'd say that it's the same if you use price tags or paper and thread. Jim's method works perfectly if you bottom water and I've now adopted it. So far so good.



Jim also showed us how he sows seed. Take a pot, fill with seed mix, cover with milled sphagnum, sow the seed, spritz it with water, and then put the pot in a bag to hold in humidity (and prevent the seeds from flying around).

Seed Pot with Layer of Milled Sphagnum



Jim also brought in a pot of *Gesneria citrina* seedlings a few months from sowing to show us what a seed pot turns into (just like a cooking show!) and generously shared the seedlings.

Spritz Bottle



Thanks go to Naomi Pitts for bringing in a lovely *Sinningia speciosa* 'Lavender Queen' which she also generously shared, Denise Whitman for mama Streptocarpus and flowers, Brian Connor for Streptocarpus flowers, Ruth Ann McGrail for the mini Sinningias and a pot full of *Nautilocalyx lynchii* which she – need I say generously – shared with anyone who wanted a piece, and Tom Miranda for bringing in an *Episcia* and *Columnnea* (and yes, he also shared generously!). (I hope I haven't missed anyone.)

Naomi's *Sinningia speciosa* 'Lavender Queen'



©2008 Kyoko Imai



### What's Growing....

Tom Miranda's *Columnnea*, which he brought in to our last meeting:



©2008 Kyoko Imai

*Pentadenia orientandina* grown by Carol Hamelink:



©2008 Carol Hamelink

*Petal Tones* is on a summer schedule and the next issue will be in August. Photographs and musings from your summer travels, summer growing, summer sowing, and summer wishing will be most welcome. And thanks to those of you who made wishes come true last month!

*Columnnea minutiflora* Grown by Carol Hamelink:



©2008 Carol Hamelink

Pinched tips (I pinched my Achimenes too)



©2008 Kyoko Imai

Seed pots on my shelf (update from May photo)



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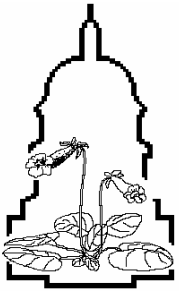
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NCAC/AGGS





# Petal Tones

The newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of  
The Gesneriad Society

Volume 39, number 7

August 2008

## Message from the Convention Co-Chair

We've only just finished the 2008 Gesneriad Society Convention in Denver and we're hard at work on the 2009 Convention here in the National Capital Area. As you can see, we have a logo for the 2009 Convention, combining our chapter logo with the 2009 Convention theme: Gems of the National Capital Area. As we welcome Gesneriad Society members from across the country and around the world, we want to introduce them to the gems, hidden and otherwise, that await visitors in and around our nation's Capital.

We'll be hosting the convention at the Hilton Silver Spring, just blocks from the Silver Spring Metro Center in Maryland, just north of Washington, D.C. The hotel is located at 8727 Colesville Road in the newly revitalized Silver Spring Downtown area. If you haven't been to Silver Spring in a while, check out what's available there at [www.silverspringdowntown.com](http://www.silverspringdowntown.com). The hotel is convenient to the Silver Spring Metro stop on the Red Line. We'll be looking for suggestions for places that Convention attendees may want to see, particularly those that can be reached by subway. Bring ideas to our September meeting.



**GEMS**  
of the  
National Capital Area

... cont. on next page

## Next Meeting

At our next meeting, we will also have a program on **growing Streptocarpus** by Brian Connor. Streptocarpus is also the **Plant of the Month**, so if you have a favorite Streptocarpus (or two or more), please bring it with you for a show and tell.



*Streptocarpus* 'Bristol's Party Boy' and 'Texas Hot Chili'

## ***In this Issue.....***

Message from the Convention Co-Chair  
Gesneriads at the USBG (photos)

Wish Lists

Growing Gesneriads in Leca (clay pellets)

## **Upcoming Events:**

Next Meetings at 10:30 am, at the National Arboretum, Washington, D.C:

Sept. 13, 2008: *Growing Streptocarpus*,  
discussion on 2009 Convention arrangements

Oct 11, 2008: *Dog Show* (details tba); slides from  
2008 Denver Convention

...Convention continued from page 1

Our chapter will be responsible for the Host Chapter reception on Wednesday, July 1, organizing the trips on Thursday, July 2, and the final event on Saturday, July 4. Mike Cagley, Special Events Chair, has been working on the Thursday and Saturday events. We should have details by our September meeting.

Ron Myhr of Toronto, our Speakers Chair, has put together a great line-up of speakers:

- Silvana Marten-Rodriguez has recently completed her dissertation on pollination in Caribbean gesneriads, and will be taking up a post-doc appointment at the Smithsonian this year. She will be showing what Larry Skog describes as "some amazing videos of hummingbirds and bats visiting plants."
- Mauro Peixoto, who supplies our Chapter with seeds from Brazil, will be talking about *Sinningia*, with a focus on recent collections and on some taxonomic developments.
- Tim Tuttle and Peter Shalit will be doing genus presentations on, respectively, *Petrocosmea* and *Chirita*. These talks will address the species and taxonomy of the genera, as well as culture and recent progress in hybridization.

The exact order of their presentations hasn't been worked out yet, but they will be on Friday afternoon and Saturday morning.

Jim Roberts is chairing the Flower Show and Carol Hammelink is chairing the Plant Sale. Both were able to shadow their opposite numbers at the Denver Convention.

We'll be discussing the final arrangements for the 2009 Convention at our September 13 meeting and describing what we learned from this year's Convention in Denver.

See you then,

*Nell*

## Gesneriads at the U.S. Botanic Garden

<http://www.usbg.gov/>

Now that we are looking forward to the 2009 Convention and our out-of-town readership is increasing, we will be running a few short pieces on points of interest in the area.

The U.S. Botanic Garden is located in the middle of DC, right by the Capitol. The Conservatory reopened after a four-year renovation in December of 2001 – here it is on a dreary January day in 2006:



Across Independence Avenue is Bartholdi Park, created in 1932. The National Garden – shown under construction in the photograph above – opened in October of 2006. The photograph below was taken soon after the Garden opened, looking SW through part of the National Garden towards the National Museum of the American Indian. The building to the left is the Dept. of Health and Human Services. By 2009, the plantings should be fairly well established.



And what gesneriads might you see at the USBG? There are regularly a few on display, such as....

Sinningia hybrids planted among the roots of *Anthurium eggersii*.



More miniature *Sinningias* on a ledge:



*Aeschynanthus speciosus*.



And upstairs along the walkway:



(no, no gesneriads in this photo)

are some of the epiphytes like *Nematanthus Tropicana*:



*Lysionotus pauciflorus*.



and another *Aeschynanthus*:



The upstairs walkway is a delight for any epiphyte enthusiast, where the collection includes various species and hybrids of hoya, dischidia, begonia, bromeliads and orchids. It's also an opportunity to see the flowers of the African Tulip Tree (*Spathodea campanulata*) up close:



\*\*\* Wish Lists \*\*\*

**Mark Zukaitis:**  
*Gloxinia 'Dragonsong'*  
*Sinningia braziliensis*  
*Kohleria warszewiczii*

## Growing in Leca Stones

by Jim Roberts



Many of you have probably heard of Leca Stones, and many have probably also heard that I'm in the process of converting my collection over to this method of growing. Those who attended the meeting at my house on August 2 saw some of the plants that have been converted over. But most of you probably don't understand what the method is or why it works.

What are the number one and two reasons for losing plants in your collection? In my case it was 1) the plant wick dried out and I didn't notice until the plant was so dried out that I couldn't get it to recover and 2) the soilless mix had broken down to the point that the roots weren't getting any air and the plant drowned in its own mud.

Leca helps eliminate both issues.

Let's think about how and where most Gesneriads grow. You've heard the term epiphyte before. And you've read descriptions on where plants were collected. How many trees have soilless mix pasted to the bark? How many rock cliffs have pockets of soil to anchor the roots? How do plants grow with their roots submerged in water next to a waterfall?

Leca stones are hard, fired clay pellets ranging in size from about 1/4" to a 1/2" in diameter. They're not perfectly round, but have bumps and things which make them look more like natural stone. They are very porous and can hold large amounts of water. When placed in a tray with 1/2" to 3/4" of water, the water wicks up through the stones so that even the stones at the top of the pot will contain moisture.

But this is the special part: The air spaces between the stones are very high in humidity.

You've all seen air roots. These are the roots that grow out of the stems and fill up the air space in a closed terrarium. Not pretty, but they can suck quite a bit of moisture out of the air. I really think that this is exactly what's going on when you grow plants in Leca Stones. The air spaces between the stones are high in humidity and the roots fill up these spaces and grow. The roots also get a lot of air, so that even though the plants are sitting in trays or dishes of water, they don't drown.

The roots tend to find a level in the pot that works best for the type of plant you are growing. I've had cactus and Gesneria growing the same tray of water. The roots on the Gesneria come through the bottom of the pot into the tray of water, and the cactus roots stay very close to the surface of the pot. But both have thrived.

There are a few tricks to growing in stones. The first is getting your plants into the stones. You can't just take a plant out of its pot, throw it into a new pot and surround the root-ball with stones. The roots in the soilless mix will rot. You have to wash off as much of the old soil as possible. There won't be much of a root system left, and that's really okay since the plant will be putting out a completely new type of root system anyway.



Put a layer or two of stones in the bottom of the pot and then (and this is where having three or four hands would be a definite advantage) hold the plant at the level in the pot that you want it and pour stones around the root ball. Most of the roots will be

concentrated in a narrow area, but that's okay. These roots will all go away and be replaced by the air/water roots.

After you've filled the pot you may notice that the plant is not centered in the pot, or is too high in the pot. Hold your fingers over the top of the pot and gently shake the pot while repositioning the plant with your other two hands (??). Seriously, it takes a bit of coordination but you can move the plant around by shaking the stones and moving at the same time.

Cuttings, too, can be started directly in stones. Start with a layer or two of stones in the bottom of the pot and position the cuttings in the pot, holding them between your fingers to keep them spread around in the pot. Fill with stones. You can't simply push cuttings into a pot filled with stones. The stones don't move that easily. Once you have the cuttings in the pot you can use the shake and reposition method described above. I generally keep the water level a little higher in trays with cuttings for the first few weeks.

Care of plants in Leca couldn't be easier. If you're already growing on wicks, just grow in the same open trays of water. The pot sits directly in the tray, so you can get rid of the plastic egg-crating or margarine tubs or whatever else you used to suspend the plants above the water reservoir.

Feed lightly. Gesneriads are not heavy feeders, and too much food will result in fertilizer build-up on the tops of the stones at the surface of the pot. This is easily remedied by replacing the stones at the top of the pot with fresh ones just before a show. Since there is nothing to stick to the leaves on a plant, you don't have to worry about brushing soil or perlite off the leaves of show plants that have been freshly repotted.

When the plant gets top-heavy or the plant just looks too big for its pot, lift the entire root ball (stones and all will form a solid mass) and place it in a new pot. Fill with new stones. The stones don't degrade. Ever. So you don't have to worry about repotting every three to six months. If a plant dies, wash the stones off and they're ready for a new plant.

There are a couple of other questions that I've had over the years about this growing method. For example, what about tuberous plants that don't want to be wet all the time? No problem. As long as the tuber is not too deep in the pot it will send its roots down into the water and send out great top growth. However, as the tuber expands it can not compress the soil around it like it does in a soilless mix. Many a green plastic pot has taken on a deformed round shape with lots of bumps projecting through the side. Cut the pot away if you have to and put the tuber in a bigger pot.

Will rhizomes form in Leca Stones? Absolutely! When the top growth shows signs of wanting to go dormant, start keeping the water level a little lower. You can even let the trays or dishes dry between waterings. The rhizomes will form between the stones. No need to dig them out either. Just put the pot and stones aside and when you're ready to bring it out of dormancy, put it in a dish of water, or just place it back into a community tray with the other plants. Remember, the stones last forever.

What happens if the trays go dry? Will the plants all die? This is the big reason I like stones better than soilless mix and wicks. If the trays go dry just add more water. The wicking action of the stones will start immediately. No need to re-wet wicks to start the capillary action. And the stones themselves hold a lot of water, so even though the tray has gone dry, the plants themselves will be fine for a week or more without the water feed at the bottom.

Are plants grown in stones accepted by judges in shows? YES! Although it has been a long time, I won Best In Show at the National Convention in Baltimore in 1991 with a plant grown in Leca Stones. When I first started showing plants I got some strange comments like "nice top dressing." But judges have no problems with the stones as long as they're clean. (Remember the tip that you can replace the top layer of stones without having any effect on the plant?)

Finally, where can I get them? They are available at some orchid supply houses, and I used to get them at Valley View Farms, North of Baltimore. But for me the easiest way is to order them over the internet. Crop King in Ohio sells 50 liter bags for \$20 (plus \$30 for shipping). Since the stones don't compress,



a bag can take care of quite a few plants. Here's a link: [http://www.cropking.com/pages/Growing\\_Media/LEC1004.shtml](http://www.cropking.com/pages/Growing_Media/LEC1004.shtml)

### Step by Step Guide to Leca

1.



Gesneria 'Yellow Bird'

2.



G. 'Yellow Bird' root ball

3.



Washing off the roots

4.



The Naked Roots

5.



Stones in bottom of pot

6.



Centering the plant in the pot

7.



Adding stones to pot until full

8.



Finished repotting

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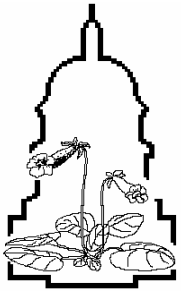
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Volume 39, number 8

September 2008

## Message from President

*Greetings Gesneriad fans!*

I hope you've had a great summer. It's been a busy summer with several of us attending the Gesneriad Society Convention in Denver in July and then a convention planning meeting at Jim Robert's house in August. Although it is hard to let go of summer, a bright spot in this time of year is the reconvening of our club meetings. I hope to see you all September 13 for helpful tips from Brian Connor on growing beautiful *Streptocarpus*. People like Brian who grow them well make these plants look easy. But if you're like me and find them hit or miss, you'll want to catch this meeting to learn some of his secrets.

Then, for those of you who didn't get to Denver this summer, you're in luck with a slide presentation from the Convention at the October meeting. We're also having a dog show in October to help you figure out how to get that non-performing gesneriad on your shelf into show shape for the '09 Convention. See you soon.

Happy growing,

*Carol*



## Next Meeting: *Streptocarpus*

*Streptocarpus* is the theme for September's meeting! We are lucky to have Brian Connor to help us improve our growing skills. Don't forget to bring yours for a show and tell. We'll also have a raffle table, of course!



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*Streptocarpus* Collection, shown at the NCAC 2008 Show.

## ***In this Issue.....***

History and Culture of the *Streptocarpus*, Part I  
Local Interest: Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens  
A Visit to Lyndon Lyons  
Close-Up of Two *Sinningia* Seeds

## **Upcoming Events:**

Next Meetings at 10:30 am, at the National Arboretum, Washington, D.C:

Sept. 13, 2008: *Growing Streptocarpus*, discussion on 2009 Convention arrangements

Oct 11, 2008: *Dog Show* (details tba); slides from 2008 Denver Convention

## History and Culture of the *Streptocarpus* Part I

by Brian Connor

Commonly known as the Cape Primrose, *Streptocarpus* is actually a diverse genus of gesneriads, remarkable for its exquisite flowers and botanical oddity. Genetically, *Streptocarpus* is divided into two sub-genera, that are closely related to *Saintpaulia* (African Violets). Subgenus *Streptocarpella* (probably a separate genus - the "*Streptocarpus* with stems") is less well known but has a wider geographical range in Africa and Asia. This article will deal only with the subgenus *Streptocarpus*: stemless rosette type plants native to South Africa.

In nature, *Streptocarpus* is found along shaded river banks and hillside cliffs. The plants grow from gaps in the earth and crevices filled with moss, soil and pebbles. Even when there is a source of constant moisture, the roots are kept cool and well aerated. This is a crucial point to consider for indoor culture.



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The seedpods of *Streptocarpus* are characteristically twisted (*Streptocarpus* translates from Latin as "twisted seedpod"). Seedlings sprout as dicots, but then something bizarre happens. One of the cotyledons (seed leaves) dies and the other becomes the true leaf.

For a few species such as *Streptocarpus dunnii* and *S. wendlandii*, this is the only leaf that is ever produced and it may grow 1 to 3 feet in length. These species are monocarpic and usually die after flowering.



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Unifoliate seedlings of *S. (polyanthus x prolixus)*.

Most species of *Streptocarpus* are perennials and produce multiple leaves after the single cotyledon in a stemless rosette. Let me emphasize that most species and nearly all hybrids will not die after flowering.

*Streptocarpus rexii* (white, light blue to light purple flowers) was the first recognized species and the first to be cultivated around 1820. More species followed, including the red flowered *S. dunnii* in 1884. In the late 1880s, *S. rexii* was crossed with *S. dunnii*, *S. polyanthus* (white to blue-mauve flower with white to yellow throat) and *S. cyaneus* (white to blue flower with distinct lines in the throat). Their offspring gave rise to the *S. rexii* hybrids, with white, blue, purple, pink or red flowers, often with a contrasting color or markings in the throat.



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Wiesmoor hybrid *Streptocarpus*. Courtesy of <http://gesneriads.ca/>.

In the early 1950s, Fleischman introduced the Wiesmoor hybrids. The Wiesmoor hybrids were large plants with lovely flowers, 3 to 5 inches in diameter, often with ruffled edges. They were beautiful plants, but not easy to grow as houseplants and were often confused with (and mislabeled as) the *S. rexii* hybrids.

Around this same time a little known hybrid in Great Britain was produced (with *S. johannis* as a parent) called 'Constant Nymph.' As it turned out, this hybrid was less showy than the Wiesmoors but was remarkably floriferous and flowered intermittently throughout the year. It wasn't until years later that horticulturists fully realized that 'Constant Nymph' was an important breakthrough in *Streptocarpus* hybridization.



© Ronald Myhr

*S. johannis* wall planting at Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, Scotland. Courtesy of <http://gesneriads.ca/>.



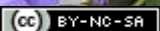
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*S. 'Constant Nymph'*, grown by Ronald Myhr. Leaf span approximately 30". Courtesy of <http://gesneriads.ca/>.

Several other, very similar 'Nymphs' followed, all blue to purple flowered. Then the John Innes Institute began to extensively cross the Nymph series and *S. johannis* with other species and hybrids to create better, more floriferous plants in more vibrant colors. Plants such as 'Tina,' 'Fiona,' and 'Falling Stars' emerged in the 1970s and 80s and were marketed by Dibleys (<http://www.dibleys.com>).



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*S. 'Falling Stars'*.

The Dibleys became an important European hybridizer, introducing plants such as the lovely but ubiquitous 'Kim' and the Crystal series (using *S. kentaniensis* as a parent).



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*S. 'Kim'*, shown at the 2006 NCAC Show.



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Hirsute leaves and buds of *S. kentaniensis*.



© Ronald Myhr

*S. 'Crystal Ice'*, grown by Ronald Myhr. Courtesy of <http://gesneriads.ca/>.

Plants such as 'Crystal Ice' grew very narrow strap-like leaves in a more symmetrical rosette (the *S. kentaniensis* influence) and they are extremely floriferous under low light conditions. In Great Britain, Germany and Japan, *Streptocarpus* continue to be actively hybridized.



*S.* 'Lavender Rosette', grown by Al Romero, GSNY. This is a hybrid by Dale Martens, registered in 1998. *S.* 'Pegasus' x *S. kentaniensis*.

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Meanwhile, back in America, Jonathan Ford pioneered *Streptocarpus* hybridization and introduced such plants as 'Something Special' and the double 'Chorus Line.' Lyndon Lyon (<http://www.lyndonlyon.com>) and Rob's Violet Barn (the Bristol series, <http://www.violetbarn.com>) produced fantasy flowers such as 'Space Dust,' 'Bristol's Party Boy' and 'Bristol's Party Girl.'



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*S.* 'Bristol's Party Boy'.

Dale Martens ('Texas Hot Chili'), Lee Stradley (hybrids with *S. lilliputana*), Dennis Miller ('Neil's Strawberry') and others have produced an amazing array of innovative hybrids. However, the most prolific hybridizer in recent years has been David Thompson. He has burst onto the scene with 20-30 striking, free flowering hybrids such as 'Purple Peppered,' 'Summer Parfait,' 'Spin Art,' 'Remembering John' and too many others to list.



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*S.* 'Spin Art'.

Two important trends in *Streptocarpus* hybridizing are variegated leaves and fragrant flowers. Plants such as 'Iced Pink Flamingo' and 'Iced Amethyst Showoff' have wonderful white and green variegated leaves. Offspring from crosses with *S. candidus* and *S. vandeleurii* may have scented flowers.

#### NEXT

*Streptocarpus Culture*, or come to the September meeting of the National Capital Area Chapter of the Gesneriad Society to hear all about this fascinating genus.

Please check out these wonderful websites: The Gesneriad Reference Web <http://www.gesneriads.ca/> and <http://www.streptocarpus-info.com>.

### **Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens**

<http://www.nps.gov/keaq/>  
*by Kyoko Imai*

The water gardens at Kenilworth are our local feature this month (even though there are no gesneriads there).

Part of the National Park Service, the park is located in northeast D.C., and is accessible by canoe (not kidding - they say so on the website) from the Anacostia River.\* A quick look at a map will show that the Kenilworth is across the river from the National Arboretum.

Summer is the season for lotus flowers:



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Formerly Shaw Gardens – a business owned by Walter Shaw – the gardens were purchased and added to Anacostia Park in 1938.

Although the park does have a landscaped water garden, the main feature is a gigantic field of lotus:



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Actually, there are numerous ponds, including some with lilies. There are also tropical lilies that spend most of the year in a greenhouse.



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Beyond the lotus field is an extensive boardwalk (see the satellite view of Google Maps) from which the tidal wetlands can be seen. The park is also a birding destination.

Information on the Anacostia Watershed is available at <http://www.anacostiaws.org>, the website of the Anacostia Watershed Society.

\* More conventionally, access is by car or Metrorail/bus.

**A (Spur of the Moment) Buying Spree  
at Lyndon Lyon**  
*by Brian Connor*

The Baltimore African Violet Club planned a visit to Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses in upstate NY and then cancelled the trip. I had already taken a few days off from work... but needed the time off to accomplish some chores around the house. However, on Thursday night images of gesneriads filled my head. Could I take a day trip to Dolgeville, NY and return to Baltimore in time to be sipping a gin and tonic at my favorite night club?

I could, in fact, and I did.

Mapquest listed 33 steps from Baltimore to Dolgeville (no way!). Instead, I took I-83 from downtown Baltimore to Harrisburg, PA, and picked up I-81 to Syracuse, NY. From there I traveled east on Route 90 to exit 29A (Dolgeville). It took 6 hours and 40 minutes on the way up, but about 8 hours on the way back due to road repairs (closed traffic lanes, etc.) around Scranton, PA. I really needed that gin and tonic when I finally arrived home!

At the greenhouse I found beautiful, well cared for plants! You can see for yourself - although my photography does not do justice to the gesneriads. [The full story is that Brian picked up a disposable camera just to share photographs with us! -Ed.]

A small section of the enormous greenhouse which houses tens of thousands of plants:



A Chenille plant has taken over this corner from the violets:



Highlights for me were the hundreds and hundreds of African Violets, Streptocarpus (including recent David Thompson hybrids like 'Spin Art' and 'Remembering John'), *Achimenes* 'Ambroise Verschaffelt,' *Sinningia* 'Amizade,' *Coltrichantha* (now *Columnea*) 'Midget' and *Columnea teuscheri* (*Trichantha minor*).

Columneas - I can't grow them like this at my house!



*Achimenes* 'Ambroise Verschaffelt':





A mix of Chirita species and hybrids:



I spent less than \$200, so I consider that I was well behaved. Maybe the next time I can talk one of you into going on a road trip in search of exotic violets and gesneriads.

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### Close-Up of Two Sinningia Seeds by Kyoko Imai

I recently harvested seed from two Sinningias I have outside, *Sinningia* ('Tampa Bay Beauty' x self) and *Sinningia tubiflora*. TBBxS will continue to bloom through the fall and form it's last seedpods into the winter, but *S. tubiflora* looks like it is done for the year.



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© 2007 Kyoko Imai

This is a cross-section of a seedpod of *S. tubiflora*:



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Below is a comparison of the seed found in each: TBBxS first, and *tubiflora* below. It's most likely that these are selfings, but as I can't be sure I've sown some seed from each of the pods.



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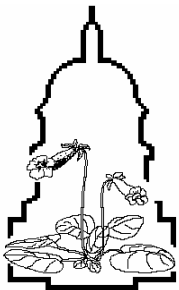
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NCAC/AGGS





# Petal Tones

The newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of  
The Gesneriad Society

Volume 39, number 9

October 2008

## President's Message

*Greetings everyone!*

I hope to see you all at our upcoming gesneriad meeting. This month's Dog Show should be a lot of fun. I'm sure all of us have had the experience of trying to grow a plant that just didn't perform. Well, this is your chance to bring that poor performer with you and get some advice for how to perk it up. If everyone brings 2 or 3 plants for the show, we should have lots of entertainment. Plants must be pest and disease free, but are not required to be beautiful. In fact, the farther they are from perfect, the higher they'll score. With all of the traveling I've been doing lately, I have a lot of potential entries. Now comes the hard part of deciding which ones have that special dogginess and should be brought to the show. For details on the Dog Show, see the schedule included in this issue of *Petal Tones*.

Happy growing,  
*Carol Hamelink*

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## Announcement

The **Baltimore African Violet Club** presents their Fall Plant Sale at the Harford Mall, Bel Air Road, Bel Air, MD, Saturday, Oct. 11, 10am-9:30pm through Sunday, Oct. 12, 10am-5:00pm.

For sale will be hundreds of beautiful African violets, other Gesneriads, and exotic house plants, leaves, cuttings, growing supplies including soil mix, plant rings, self-watering pots and more. Experienced growers will answer any questions you may have. contact: Karen Foster, phone: 410-457-4434 or fancypos194@aol.com.

## Next Meeting....

### Dog Show

Please see the show schedule (prepared by Jim Roberts) on the next page. Please bring plants and submissions! As usual, we'll also have a raffle table as well. The 2008 Convention slideshow which was originally scheduled for October has been moved to the Holiday Party in December.



September Raffle Table

## In this issue....

Dog Show Schedule and Rules

History and Culture of the Streptocarpus, Part II  
Survey Results

Thank you note from Dale Martens (and  
Streptocarpus culture tips!)

A Visit to Brennan's Orchids

## Upcoming Events:

Oct 11, 2008: Dog Show. 10:30 am, at the  
National Arboretum, Washington, D.C.

Dec 13, 2008: Holiday Party; slides from  
2008 Denver Convention. 10:30 am, at the  
National Arboretum, Washington, D.C.

## October 2008 Dog Show Schedule and Rules

Plants entered in the Dog Show must be free of disease and pests. We will be judging plants based on lack of care, unconventional growing techniques (growing in the dark or with the pot on its side) and the desperate need for grooming. There is no limit to the number of plants that can be entered in any class. The winner in each Section will be awarded a special prize, with a Worst-In-Show award to the plant least deserving to win anything.

Leaf spotting, wilt, damaged leaf edges, dead leaves all count positive in point scoring.

Fresh flowers, high bud count, clean leaves and pots all count negative in point scoring.

In other words: **DO NOT GROOM** anything.

Judging will be performed by a team of novices and will be followed up by tips on getting the plants in condition for a real show.

### **Division I – Plants in Bloom** (hopefully not too much)

#### Section I: Tuberous Gesneriads

- Class 1 Trailing Sinningia speciosa (points awarded for stem length)
- Class 2 Upright Sinningia species (fresh flowers count against you)
- Class 3 Miniature Sinningia
- Class 4 Sinningia with an exposed tuber (asymmetry gives extra points)
- Class 5 Other tuberous Gesneriads

#### Section II – Rhizomatous Gesneriads

- Class 6 Achimenes, Eucodonia (aerial rhizomes add something special to these plants)
- Class 7 Kohleria (must be growing and alive, but that's about all)
- Class 8 Miniature rhizomatous
- Class 9 Other rhizomatous Gesneriads

#### Section III – Fibrous-Rooted Gesneriads

- Class 10 Trailing fibrous-rooted (especially non-trailing types)
- Class 11 Upright growing fibrous-rooted (obtrusive staking a big point-getter)
- Class 12 Out of Africa (Saintpaulia/Streptocarpus)
- Class 13 Chirita, Petrocosmea and other Asian fibrous-rooted

### **Division II – Plants Not in Bloom (including those that should be)**

#### Section IV – Plants grown for foliage

- Class 14 Episcia with brown leaf variegation
- Class 15 Other gesneriads with leaves

### **Division III – Artistic and the Arts**

#### Section V – Artistic Design

- Class 16 "Who Let the Dogs Out?" Dog toy or other accessory required. An arrangement of cut plant material in a 12" x 12" x 12" niche.
- Class 17 "How Much is that Puppy in the Window?" An arrangement of "growing" material in a glass container.

#### Section VI – Plants growing in Containers

- Class 18 Natural Planting – plants growing in a natural material
- Class 19 Dish Garden
- Class 20 Terrarium

#### Section VII – Photography

- Class 21 Color print
- Class 22 Monochrome print

*The National Capital Chapter of the Gesneriad Society sincerely apologizes to all our canine friends. The use of the name Dog is not in any way meant to malign our dear friends, but is only being used to distinguish these plants from those which would normally appear in a show.*

## History and Culture of Streptocarpus Part II: Culture by Brian Connor

For the most part, Streptocarpus culture is not terribly difficult. Most cultural problems begin with watering (especially wick watering) Streptocarpus and finding an appropriate soil mix.



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From Brian's presentation at the September meeting: *Streptocarpus* 'Iced Pink Flamingo,' 'Good Hope,' 'Spin Art,' 'Persian Carpet.'

- **LIGHT:** Streptocarpus, like African violets, enjoy bright light but not many hours of direct sun. Of course, natural light can vary from window to window, depending on many factors. Usually, east and west-facing windows are the best because they tend to provide early morning/late afternoon sunlight. Plants may need to be placed several feet away from a southern exposure. Either 2-4 tube fluorescent fixtures give excellent results.
- **HUMIDITY:** Moderate (30%), humidity doesn't need to be high for flowering
- **TEMPERATURE:** Daytime temp of 65°-80° F and 55°-75° F nighttime temp is best. Temperatures above 85-90° F will cause some varieties to wilt.
- **WATERING:** Here is a way Streptocarpus differ from AVs. Streptocarpus like to dry out more than AVs (surface dry, ¼ inch - dry) if you are watering by hand. If wick watering, use a MUCH lighter mix than for your AVs. I hate to admit it,

but on rare occasions Streptocarpus have survived extreme wilting when plants have been "forgotten" or their wick has dried up or become dysfunctional.



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Limp *Streptocarpus* (rexii x gardenii). Note how the leaves are so limp, they are hugging the pot. (Also note that this is your editor's growing habits, not Brian's.)



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The same *Streptocarpus* 36 hours after watering.

- **FEEDING:** When wicking, I regularly use **half strength** (per label) 20/20/20 CONSTANTLY. I have used Miracle Gro Tomato (the pink powder) routinely. I have also used Schultz and Peters, AV fertilizers (half strength). And I add 2 tablespoons Hydrogen Peroxide per gallon of fertilizer to keep algae out of my wicking reservoirs.

- Once a month switch to a 12-36-14.
- Lately I have been using some hydroponics type fertilizers that seem to work well.
- If not wicking, feed at half strength at every watering or every 2 weeks at regular strength.
- Please refer to the recommendation from Dale Martens regarding feeding UREA-free high-N fertilizers in this issue.

- **POTTING:** Repot every 6 months to 1 year. Do not over-pot; under-potting is preferable.
- **SOIL MIX:** If not wicking, a well draining AV mix with plenty of perlite will suffice (even the Cornell 1:1:1 mix). When wicking add extra coarse perlite, charcoal and diatomite. My wicking mix evolves and changes but it is 80-85% drainage material and very little "soil" (but that means regular fertilizing is necessary!).



- Diatomite is a type of horticultural gravel composed of silica and is well known to orchid growers. Paradoxically, it provides drainage and aeration but absorbs water also. Diatomite comes in fine, small, medium and large grade. The fine grade looks like kitty litter and compacts too much (I think) for extensive use in my Strept Wicking mix. I am currently mixing the small with the medium grade diatomite. Also I insist on using *coarse* perlite in the wicking mix. This soil mix is an experiment in progress – so if you can improve it, please do so!

#### **Brian's Streptocarpus Wicking Mix (currently)**

2 ½ quarts Coarse Perlite  
2 ½ quarts Diatomite (50% small, 50% medium)  
1 quart horticultural charcoal  
1 quart Coco coir or PROMIX (or sphagnum peat which I don't like as much)  
3 tablespoons bat guano or dehydrated cow manure

2 tablespoons dolomite lime  
1 teaspoon bone meal  
½ teaspoon triple phosphate or green sand  
Marathon if you like

MIX WELL and before use. Water well after initial repotting in this mix.



*Streptocarpus* 'Peachy Pink' baby, in Brian's mix.

- **PROPAGATION:** Seed, Division, Leaf Cuttings
  - Can propagate by seed which is very fine (1.8 million per ounce, according to Professor Moore)
  - Can also propagate by dividing multiple crowns
  - Leaf cuttings are the most rewarding method of propagation because you can get many offspring this way!
    - Cut leaf wedges or horizontal sections with the central rib removed. You can dust the cut side with rooting hormone powder if you choose
    - Bury the cut side of the leaf no more than ¼" in a well draining propagation mix
    - Like AVs, this process can take 2-4 months for babies to appear. Be patient!
    - Where each vein intersects the soil mix, a baby plant can potentially grow
  - Pot them up when they are large enough for you to handle



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Streptocarpus leaf cuttings.

- **GROW FOR SHOW:** Remove old flower stems as close to the leaves as possible. Trim (and shape) brown edges from leaves with pinking shears. This mimics the natural scalloped edges of *Streptocarpus* leaves, if done artfully. Disbud 9-10 weeks before show and fertilize with 12-36-14 or another flower booster. About 4-5 weeks before show, stop disbudding and use 12-36-14 again.

Streptocarpus are wonderful plants. There is more than one way to successfully grow a Strept! Try one!

Brian

### Readership Survey

Thanks to everyone who responded to the readership survey last month. I received 30 responses, of which the member/non-member split was about 50/50.

I'm glad to see that no one had a problem with the file size being about 2MB, and almost everyone is happy with receiving it as an email attachment.

As for reading and printing, the breakdown came out as follows:

	Members	Non-Members	Combined
I print it out in color (if possible)	5	3	8
I usually read it on the computer screen, and sometimes print it.	7	5	12
I only read it on the computer screen	2	8	10

I'm now considering some slight format changes in view of these results.

Kyoko

*From Dale Martens....*



*Dear Members of the National Capital Chapter,*

Thank you so very much for the award of "Best Old World Gesneriad in Flower" which I received for my hybrid, *Streptocarpus* 'Dale's Lost in Space.' It is a cross between *S. Nerys* and *S. Space Dust* and has a fantasy flower. Many asked how I got all those flowers on such healthy looking, dark foliage. Well, I quit using "high bloom" fertilizer and use a couple of non-urea orchid fertilizers - 20-14-13 BetterGro and 20-10-20 GrowMore. I think if the plant has healthy leaves, then it will maximize flower out-put.

I so look forward to next year's convention in your area!

Good Growing!  
Dale Martens

### A Visit to Brennan's Orchids

<http://www.brennansorchids.com/>  
by *Kyoko Imai*

I was inspired by Brian Connor – by his presentation on *Streptocarpus* and his visit to Lyndon Lyons – to visit one of our local gesneriad sources, Brennan's Orchids. This was an impromptu trip – an easy two-hour drive west from the Potomac side of Washington, DC. I-66 west, then some 27 miles south on I-81 followed by a short drive on local roads.

As I didn't do my homework first, I didn't realize that there was a local event on the same day – that meant that many of the sales plants had been trucked away.

That's not to say there was any lack of gesneriads. Here is a view of their growing house:



They also have African Violets:



You may have heard of their *Streptocarpus* hybrids with names beginning with "Shenandoah." Promising new crosses go through an additional step of quality control – they are tested in the kitchen window to make sure they will grow well as houseplants.

*Streptocarpus* 'Shenandoah Shiloh'



*Streptocarpus* 'Shenandoah Something Special'



*Streptocarpus* 'Shenandoah Sugarplum'





What was most amazing to me was the health and size of the Chiritas. These are also in the growing room:



Molly Brennan explained to me that these are all watered by hand, and in the heat of the summer they may require watering every 1-2 days. By hand-watering, any problems are noticed early and dealt with.

Closer views of the Streptocarpus in the growing house follow – I should note that these include their stock plants and plants ready to be divided. They are certainly blooming very well!

A final note: Brennan's Orchids will be having their annual end-of-season sale on November 7-9, 2008, from 10 am – 5 pm.

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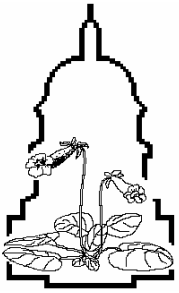
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NCAC/AGGS



# Petal Tones

The newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of  
The Gesneriad Society

Volume 39, number 10

November 2008

## President's Message

Greetings everyone!

I hope all is well. Hard to believe it's already frost season here. Our banana plant out in the garden is showing some blackened leaves already, suggesting we have already had a mild frost in Laurel. That means it's time to bring in the last of the gesneriads from the porch and dig the *Achimenes* rhizomes for next year. I've got a hanging pot of *Aeschynanthus splendidus* that is just beginning to bloom. What a surprise, I thought it liked warm weather and needed to almost be in a greenhouse to get heavy blooming. But it's obviously fairly cold tolerant as well.

When you bring plants in for the winter, be sure to isolate them from the rest of your plants as they will almost certainly be bringing in some insects you'd rather not let loose in your collection. The woman two doors down from me at work always gets a fresh crop of aphids when she brings in her Hibiscus. Even if they appear to be without critters when you bring them in, as soon as they warm up the insect life multiplies and soon becomes apparent.

As for *Achimenes*, this year I had enough rhizomes to put in a whole planter box of 'Coral Sunset'. I should have enough rhizomes to do hanging baskets of this mixed with 'Purple King' next year (as well as sharing them at the holiday party next month). After I dig them, I store them dry, but covered. Don't forget to check on them early, because they always start earlier than I expect and can get leggy if left growing in their storage cups. See you all next month.

*Happy growing,  
Carol*



©2008 Jim Christ.

*Aeschynanthus splendidus.*



## Convention 2009 T-Shirts

Members wanting t-shirts for the 2009 Convention can place orders now. Details included in the email distributing this newsletter – or contact Nell Hennessy:

[nell.hennessy@fiduciarycounselors.com](mailto:nell.hennessy@fiduciarycounselors.com)

The deadline for this early order is November 20, 2008.

## *In this issue....*

Local Interest: National Bonsai and Penjing Museum  
Report from the October Meeting: Dog Show  
*Sinningia bulbosa*: Just How Important is Good Culture?

*Aeschynanthus longicaulis* – Looking Closely

## Upcoming Events:

Next Meeting: Saturday Dec. 13, 2008, at the National Arboretum, Washington, D.C. Holiday Party; slides from 2008 Denver Convention. Doors open: 10:30 am. New members welcome. (Yes, there will be a raffle.)

2009: expect monthly meetings through July.

Part of our local interest series:

**National Bonsai and Penjing Museum**

<http://www.usna.usda.gov/>

by *Kyoko Imai*

The National Bonsai and Penjing Museum is located at the National Arboretum, right next to the Administration Building where the National Capital Chapter of The Gesneriad Society holds its meetings.

The collection was conceived in 1972, and the first plants arrived in the form of 53 specimens donated by the Nippon Bonsai Association of Japan. A collection of Chinese penjing was donated in 1986, and the collection currently contains some 150 plants including American bonsai specimens.

The age of some of the specimens is astounding. For example, this *Pinus parviflora* 'Miyajima' (Japanese White Pine) has been in training since 1625.



Much younger is this *Pinus densiflora* (Japanese red pine), in training "only" since 1795:



Here are a few more examples. *Juniperus chinensis* var. *sargentii*, in training since 1905:



*Juniperus californica*, in training since 1964:



Another *Juniperus californica*, in training since 1968:



The National Bonsai and Penjing Museum has a number of pavilions housing the collection, including one for non-hardy plants. The grounds by the pavilions are also landscaped, featuring Asian plants as well as plantings sharing the aesthetic of the bonsai and penjing collection.

This is the entrance to the Chinese pavilion:



*Cycad revoluta* inside the Chinese pavilion:



## Report from the October Meeting: The Dog Show by Kyoko Imai

If you missed the October meeting, you missed some high entertainment! We had numerous entries in the Dog Show - a table full of defoliated, lanky, crunchy plants, seemingly on their very last legs. What a sight to behold! Seriously beautiful stuff.



Ribbons, courtesy of Jim R.!

After the Show (complete with scoring), Jim Roberts discussed the plants, explaining how to re-start, re-grow, and re-groom the entries. If I recall, there was not one plant beyond hope. Here's a sampling.

First up, a little pot of *Diastema luteola* (ined. Wiehler) looking extremely forlorn. In fact, so insignificant that I forgot to take a photo of the whole plant - there wasn't much to it except for tufts of green fuzz... With a little more time, these should be propagation material, and with luck there will be rhizomes in the pot.



Speaking of rhizomes, this *Kohleria* 'Laura' was suffering from some serious inconsistent watering. Ratty leaves, defoliation, stunted *and* lanky growth - what a mess. (Yes, it's my plant.) Again, rhizomes in the pot and in the air point to new growth in times ahead.



Moving on to tubers, most *Sinningias* are tuberous, so lanky growth can be cut off and the tuber - once it re-sprouts - only needs better culture. The tip cutting can be rooted to form another plant. If a *Sinningia* with no tuber has lanky growth, try rooting the tip cutting, and see if the old stem will branch.

This *Sinningia sellovii* has a new sprout forming - a perfect time to cut the lanky growth.



*Streptocarpus saxorum* and the other *Streptocarpellas* can be rejuvenated by pruning. The old stems will branch and the cuttings can be rooted. More light and more consistent watering should do wonders.



Columnneas and *Nematanthus* and other epiphytes can defoliate too. Do not despair! Many of these will re-sprout from the nodes along the stems.



All-in-all, an excellent session.

**\* \* \* Wish Lists \* \* \***

Carol Hamelink:  
*Kohleria* 'Silver Feather'  
*Chirita* 'Betty'

Carol Gates:  
*Streptocarpus pole-evansii*  
*Streptocarpus liliputana*  
*Streptocarpus galpinii*

***Sinningia bulbosa*:**  
**Just How Important is Good Culture?**

At the October meeting, we were treated to a fantastic display of good vs. neglectful culture. These two pots of *Sinningia bulbosa* appear to have come from the same seed packet. Both about two years old, the sheer difference in size is – to say the least – illustrative.



Not obvious enough? Here's another comparison shot:



Did I mention these plants are about the same age?

The applause goes to Naomi Pitts. Seed was sown on November 8, 2006, so the plants are almost exactly two years old. Naomi grew her plants under lights, but put them outside in light shade during the summer. These are the first blooms.



Finally, a closer look at the tubers:



This is a good reminder to those of us who sow seed and then forget about them. (And I am definitely guilty of this habit.) Culture makes a big difference. A bit more care would go a long, long way - better light, better watering, a bit of fertilizing..... The results are dramatic.

###

***Aeschynanthus longicaulis*:**

Looking Closely  
by Kyoko Imai

*Aeschynanthus longicaulis* blooms like clockwork every year. In a few weeks, I will have bean-like seed pods hanging from this plant. Commonly grown for its foliage, most people don't care for the greenish yellow flowers (if they notice them at all). Me? I love the purple pollen, the hairy calyxes, the shiny flower buds.... Here are some close-up shots.

Anther:



Stigma:



Along the style:



Calyxes:



And a flower:





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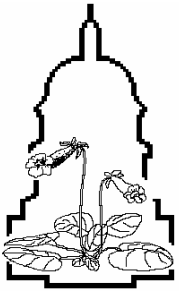
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NCAC/AGGS



# Petal Tones

The newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of  
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Volume 39, number 11

December 2008

## President's Message

Greetings everyone!

I look forward to seeing everyone on Saturday. This will be our annual Holiday Party. For this meeting we traditionally have just a social event with no program (but this year we will have photos from the Denver Convention!), a large raffle table, a brown bag gift exchange and a pot luck luncheon.

Since we have had very little participation in the gift exchange for the past couple of years, I'd like to do something a little differently. I propose that we have a brown bag gift swap, and that we all bring one. If you can, put a nice gesneriad in the bag - it doesn't have to be big, but maybe something a little special, like something well grown or something a little unusual. With luck, these will be plants we'll see at the Convention next summer. If you don't have a gesneriad, put something else fun in the bag - maybe a different plant, or something plant-related.

To make things more fun we can do the exchange by the Thieving Gesneriphiles Swap Rules. [Sound familiar? See page 2. -Ed.] So look through your shelves and bring in something exciting! Don't forget to put it in a brown paper bag, so no one knows what it is until it is opened. Remember also to bring a dish to share for the luncheon and I'll see you all December 13.

*Happy growing,  
Carol*



The Best from the MAAVS Convention, from the left: *Saintpaulia diplotricha* (Best Species), 'Rob's Lucky Penny' (Best Miniature), 'Lucien Croteau' (Third Best in Show), 'Ness' Satin Rose' (Best in Show), 'Pink Dream' (Second Best in Show), and *Episcia* 'Karlyn' (Best Other Gesneriad).



and more from the MAAVS Convention.

## ***In this issue...***

Thieving Gesneriphiles Brown Bag Rules  
Mid-Atlantic African Violet Society 2008 Convention  
Fun with Hybridization (*Aeschynanthus*)  
Wishlists

## **Upcoming Events:**

Next Meeting: Saturday Dec 13, 2008, at the National Arboretum, Washington, D.C. Holiday Party; slides from 2008 Denver Convention. Doors open: 10:30 am. New members welcome. (Yes, there will be a raffle. And a brown bag gift exchange. And food. And a photos from the Denver Convention.)

2009: expect monthly meetings through July.

### Thieving Gesneriphiles Swap

Brown Bag Gift Exchange

(modified from the Yankee Swap official rules)

- ❖ Everyone gets a randomly drawn number when they bring an unlabeled brown paper bag wrapped plant, or plant related item. Don't mark the bag with your name or with what's inside.
- ❖ Nobody leaves until it's over.
- ❖ The person who picks first, also gets to pick last.
- ❖ The person with the lowest number goes first. He or she chooses a paper bag, opens it, and takes it back to their seat.
- ❖ Each person in order then gets the choice of either picking an item already opened by someone else (Thief!), or choosing a new bag to open. The person whose item is stolen then gets to either steal from someone else or open a new bag. You cannot steal back an item stolen from you in the same turn.
- ❖ Choosing or swapping continues until all bags have been chosen.
- ❖ Finally, the person who picked first gets to choose from everything opened, or keep whatever they already have.

---

### What's Growing...



*Gloxinia erinoides*, blooming on my shelf. –Kyoko.

### Violets Along the Shenandoah Mid-Atlantic African Violet Society (MAAVS)

2008 Convention

<http://maavs.org/>

by Brian Connor (text) and Kyoko Imai (photos)

On November 13-15, 2008, MAAVS held its Convention in Fredericksburg, VA. There were gorgeous plants on the show tables, sales tables were packed full of goodies, and lots of gesneriad and plant-lovers for some stellar conversation. Here's a quick photo tour.



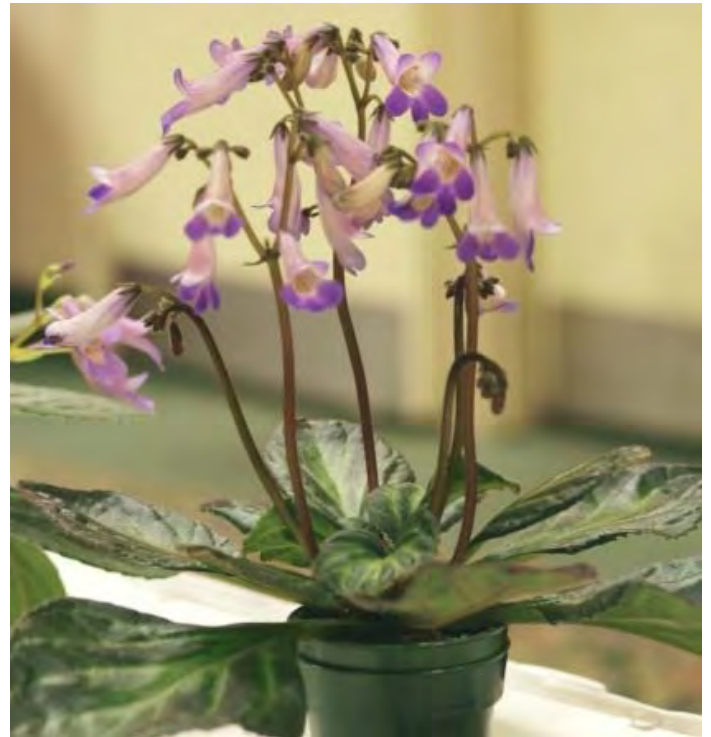
First, one of the sales tables.



*Saintpaulia* 'Ness' Satin Rose': It is unusual for a semiminiature *Saintpaulia* to win best in show, but that is exactly what happened at 2008 MAAVS. This is a terrific double, hybridized by Don Ness, grown to perfection here.



*Nematanthus* 'Lemon-Lime': William (Bill) Saylor created many of the *Nematanthus* hybrids currently in cultivation. 'Lemon-Lime' was one of his later and most unique hybrids (1989). This hanging basket has an abundance of lemon-yellow flowers that are conspicuous over the green glossy foliage.



*Chirita* 'Vertigo': 'Vertigo' is a floriferous Peter Shalit hybrid. *C. sclerophylla* is one of the parents, contributing to the lighter green veining in the leaves. The lavender flowers are held high over the foliage. Shown by Karen Foster of the Baltimore African Violet Club [who insists she only grows *Saintpaulia*. I think she is tricking me!].



*Smithiantha zebrina*: The three lovely spires of flowers photographed here illustrate how *Smithiantha* came by the common name "Temple Bells." This photo also accurately captures the attractive velvety mottled leaves of this plant.



*Petrocosmea flaccida*: Native to China, this gesneriad could be mistaken for a *Saintpaulia* species with its flat, tight little rosette. The flowers are reminiscent of wild violets.



*Saintpaulia orbicularis* var. *purpurea*: Indigenous to East Africa, this species can be grown single crowned or as a trailer. The delicate flowers remind the gesneriad enthusiast that Saintpaulia species are well worth growing. It is a shame that the species are disappearing from their natural habitat in Africa.



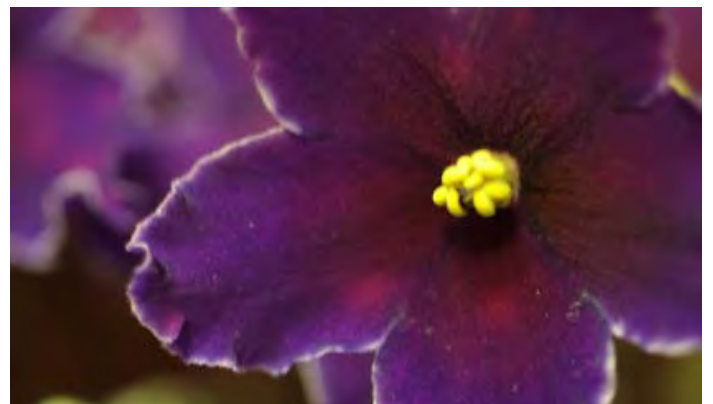
*Saintpaulia* 'Yukako': A fantastic chimera with blue flowers pin-striped pale green to white. Chimeras do not propagate true from leaf cuttings. When 'Yukako' was first introduced, a plant sold on eBay for more than \$300.00. Now a small plant can be purchased for \$20.00-\$25.00.



*Saintpaulia* 'Plumberry Glow': A variegated semiminature with a purple thumbprint type of flower.



*Saintpaulia* 'Tineki': A small standard chimera that is known to be very floriferous and lovely.



*Saintpaulia* 'Cosmic Blast': A very large single purple star with a red center (standard). A new introduction

from Lyndon Lyon that is not commercially available yet.



This photograph shows Cosmic Blast next to some miniatures.



*Saintpaulia* 'Zima Ulybaetsia': One of the striking new Russian hybrids. Green edged Saintpaulia flowers are desirable for hybridizers, not just for the novelty, but because they last longer on the plant.



*Saintpaulia* 'Black Pearl' sport: The flower of this hybrid has mutated to white in spots where the original (Russian) hybrid by Elena Korshunova was dark purple. So, a very dark blossom with lighter purple has been transformed into a white flower infused with light purple.



*Chirita* 'Little Dragon': A compact Chirita hybridized by John Boggan. As shown here, the plant may produce stolons when mature, as does one of its parents, *C. gemella*.

**\* \* \* Wish Lists \* \* \***

John Boggan:

*Seemannia* (formerly *Gloxinia*) *gymnostoma*

Brian Connor:

*Streptocarpus* 'Roulette Cherry'

*Streptocarpus* 'Roulette Azur'

*Smithiantha* 'Sassy Redhead'

*Smithiantha zebrina*

*Smithiantha* 'Big Dots Rule'

*Eucodonia* 'Adele'

*Eucodonia* 'Frances'

Carol Gates:

*Streptocarpus pole-evansii*

*Streptocarpus micranthus*

*Streptocarpus liliputana*

*Streptocarpus* 'Silky Touch'

*Chirita dielsii*

Carol Hamelink:

*Kohleria* 'Silver Feather'

*Chirita* 'Betty'

## Fun with Hybridization

(not that I really know what I am doing or anything...)

by Brian Connor

My first hybrid was a cross between *Aeschynanthus lobbianus* 'variegated' and *Aeschynanthus chinanthus* (formerly 'Thai Pink'). I confess... a whole lot of thought did not go into this hybrid initially. They both happened to be in bloom last March and were sitting next to one another in an east window. So the next step seemed logical, taking pollen from *A. chinanthus* and rubbing it on the stigma of *A. lobbianus*. Afterwards, I could always tell myself that the variegation of the *lobbianus*, the hot pink corolla and light colored calyx of the *chinanthus* were desirable traits.

Much to my surprise, the stigma and calyx of the pollinated flower did not wither away and die and the next thing I knew, a 4-5 inch long seedpod had developed. It is a good thing that the May program of NCAC was devoted to hybridization and seed cultivation.

At any rate, by June I was frantically harvesting the seedpod, which had split open before I was ready for it. Did you know *Aeschynanthus* seeds each have a tiny little hair for dispersal? I didn't, until a puff of seeds floated out of the seedpod onto my plants below. Fortunately, there were plenty of seeds remaining.



Within days I sowed a pinch of fine seed in a 3 inch pot of my gesneriad 'wicking mix" overlaid with milled sphagnum moss. I stuck the pot in a plastic baggy under a 2 tube fluorescent light fixture and then I waited.

Within 5 weeks about 40-50 seeds had sprouted and in another 6 weeks they seemed in danger of crowding one another. So, I repotted them in my regular soil mix, which they seemed to dislike and are growing rather slowly since that time. I have kept about 4-5 seedlings (and given a bunch away).



Seedlings on the October raffle table.

They all look unremarkably the same at this point, simply like tiny *Aeschynanthus* plants. There is no variegation that I see. I will have to wait for flowers, but I don't have high expectations.

And yet my curiosity is piqued....I may have to self the hybrids to obtain anything interesting like a variegated plant. So this is not over yet, not by a long shot.



One of the raffle table pots, about two months later.

My next project is a cross between *Smithiantha* and *Gloxinia (Koellikeria) erinoides*. I don't know if this is even possible, but I want a plant half-way between in size, with attractive foliage and a terminal raceme of flowers that does not need a terrarium. Wish me luck!

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