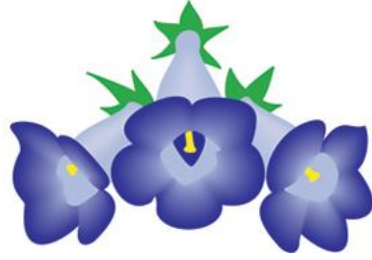


Petal Tones



Volume 46 Number 1

January 2015

National Capital Area Chapter of the Gesneriad Society



NCAC meetings are held at [BEHNKES NURSERIES](#)
11300 Baltimore Ave, Beltsville, MD 20705

Behnkes opens at 8:00am if you would like to browse and shop before the meeting. We gather at 10am to get set up with the meeting beginning at 10:30am. Meet usually the second Saturday of the month. \$10 yearly dues

January 10th: Slide show of the 2014 Mid-Atlantic African Violet Society (MAAVS). More information on page 8.

February 14th: Rhizomatous Plants: collecting, storing and sharing!

Fellow members, bring one of your favorite Columneas to the next meeting for “show and tell”, and let us know a little bit more about it and why you like it.

President's Message

Jim Roberts

Happy New Year to everyone! Thanks to all for supporting my bid to be President once again. I'm probably crazy for doing it, but I really believe in this group and want to make it into one of the best Gesneriad groups around. Not too long ago we sponsored a National Convention. Something happened to the group and I want to see us get back to where we were then.

Corey Wickliffe has agreed to be our Membership Chair. She may contact you if you're on the membership list but haven't been attending meetings. Something is keeping you away and we want to know what it is. Is it our meeting location? Meeting time? Programs? We need to get back on track with what you want to get out of the Chapter. And speaking of Programs – Drew Norris now has the responsibility to plan our monthly programs. He sent a request out to all of you at the members@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org email address. Did you all get it? He only had one response. Are we too technical in our programs? Too basic? We want the meetings to be fun and educational.

Every month we're going to have a Little Show which includes an arrangement. Every month we're going to have a Plant of the Month (your participation is needed!). Every month we're going to have a Show and Tell for plants that may be in bloom but aren't really show specimens. We want every month to offer something to get excited about. The Board will be holding more meetings on its own, either via conference calls or maybe a web-based system, to get a lot of the business handled away from the general meeting time. There will still be an opportunity for the general membership to bring up new ideas and to vote on ideas and programs that the Board has come up with, but we want to minimize all the petty details that have consumed our time at the meeting.

Donna Beverin has done a great job with Petal Tones; but again, we need your help to keep it going. Pictures of your plants are great page fillers and require very little work on your part. A short article about one of the pictures is even better. Please do your part. Petal Tones is our Chapter newsletter but is read by 100's (thousands?) of readers around the world. It's not unusual to get requests to reprint our articles from other Chapters here and even from as far away as Australia. So here's to a great 2015! A new start. A new exciting adventure for all of us.

Green Flower Different and Very Long Lasting

Jim Roberts

I'm not going to claim to be a scientist or to have studied this phenomenon in any great detail. But I find it interesting that plants are being introduced into cultivation with green flowers, or with a green tinge or edge to the flowers.



Saintpaulia 'Yukako' by Rodney Barnett - green stripes in flower

I welcome comments from any readers out there with any additional knowledge or experience. Green flowers on green-leaved plants. How can anyone find this attractive? But it is. The green in flowers is usually a much brighter green than is found in the foliage, or is mixed with pink or white and stands out nicely against the foliage.



Aeschynanthus angustifolius - small green flowers

But still, why would anyone work towards increasing the amount of green in a flower, or want to get any green in the flower at all? Aren't there other colors that look brighter and more festive than green?



Seemannia purpurescens 'Purple Prince' - Green opening to flower

Green does have a very good reason for being sought after in hybrids. The green pigment is chlorophyll. That same green stuff found in the leaves and stems of plants that the plant uses to photosynthesize food from light.



Paliavana prasinata - green flowers for bats

When it's found in a flower the flower has a purpose other than reproduction. The plant doesn't try to shed it quite so quickly; it seems to like getting a bit of extra energy fed down into the flower parts and rest of the plant.



Streptocarpus 'Jaco's Gem' by Drew Norris - very long lasting flowers

Most flowers are there simply to attract the pollinator. Once the flower has been fertilized the plant has no further need for the pretty parts and they shrivel up. Only the ovary remains as the seeds develop. And if there are no seeds the entire flower collapses.



Saintpaulia 'Irish Flirt' by Sue Hoffman - one of the first greens

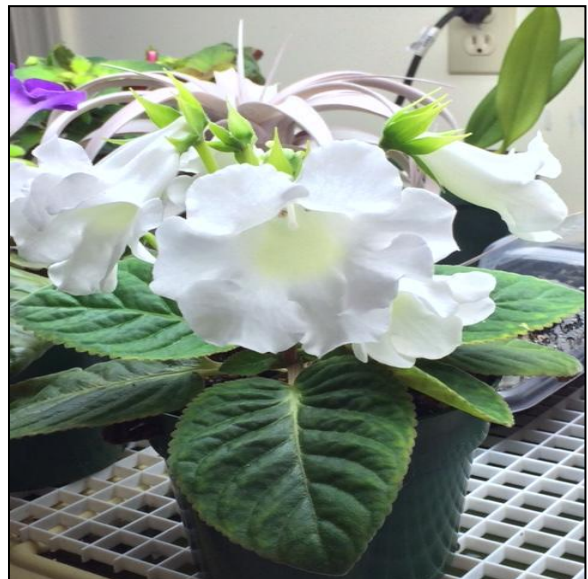
But when the petals are producing food there is no additional stress on the plant to try to maintain the petals. Green flowers can last for weeks instead of days on the plants that carry them. Drew's plant of *Streptocarpus* 'Jaco's Gem,' for example, still has some of the same flowers on it that it had during the Chapter show back in



Saintpaulia 'Petite Blarney' by Sandra Skalski - stunning pink and green combination

early October 2014. That's three months! I challenge you to find any other *Streptocarpus* flower that will last that long. Yes, the older ones are showing their age, but as they age more and more new flowers are added to the display making for a very floriferous plant. Some plants have green flowers in nature. But these colors are relatively new to African Violets and *Streptocarpus*. If you're looking for something new to add to your collection, or for a big display at a show, look for the Green.

Bloomin' Now



Drew Norris's *Sinningia speciosa* 'White Slipper'



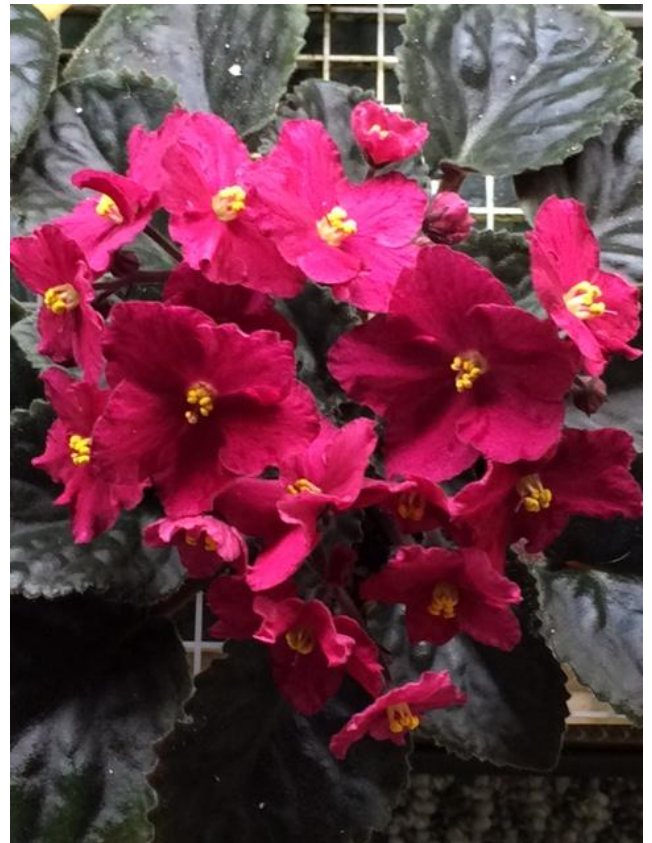
Sinningia speciosa 'White Slipper' Top view:



Drew's *Saintpaulia* 'Cherry Princess'



Drew's *Smithiantha* 'Ann's Secret Code'



Drew's *Saintpaulia* 'Shocking'



Drew's *Sinningia speciosa* 'Bristol's Strawberry Jam'



Drew's *Sinningia* 'Bristol's Galaxy Tour'



Drew's *Sinningia speciosa* 'Bristol's Strawberry Jam'



Drew's *Columnea cruenta*



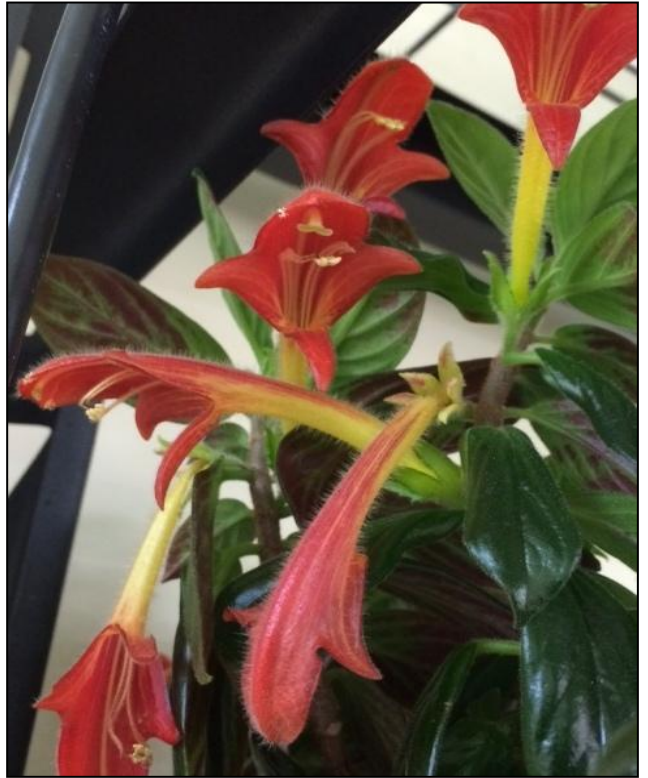
Drew's *Primulina* 'Patina'



Drew's *Sinningia* 'Miriam G'



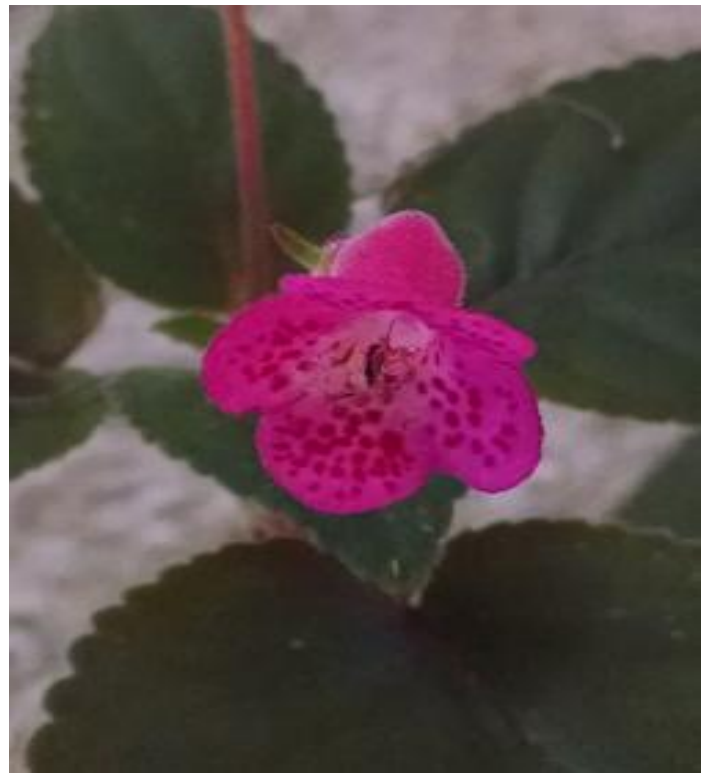
Drew's *Sinningia* 'Diva'



Drew's *Columnnea glickensteinii*



Drew's *Columnea* 'Carnival'



Barb's *Sinningia reitzii*



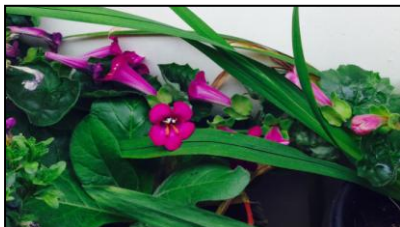
Barb Stewart's *Primulina* 'Little Dragon'



Donna's *Smithiantha* as seen on first page.

Desperately Seeking:

Barb Stewart..... *Primulina brassicoides* "marble leaf"



The mini waterfall rock was first purchased for a chameleon's habitat and now it adds humidity to my plant shelf! Next to the *Smithiantha* is *Basil* growing very well for winter and a *Thunbergia* seedling that survived the end of summer! It is amazing what we can grow during the winter under lights. In my basement a rose cutting is blooming along with a *Lophospermum* (also called Creeping Gloxinia but not a gesneriad) that is blooming under lights in a cool basement!





Barb's "Frosty the Gesneriad Man", design from the little show in December. Judges awarded it a blue ribbon. Plant material includes a Streptocarpus blossom, Primulina Rachael, and Aeschynanthus Thai Pink. Judges liked the background "ice" simulated by bubble wrap.



Barb's "Frosty" design redone for an African Violet exhibit. Judges awarded it a blue ribbon. Violet blossoms are Comfort Zone and Mac's Carnival Clown. Foliage includes Hellebores, Feverfew, and an unnamed shrub.

Next Meeting! January 12th

The January meeting will be a slide show of the MAAVS Show held in Delaware this past November 2014. The Little Show arrangement class will be called "Celebrate" - an 8" x 8" x 8" arrangement showing lots of the color and movement you would see at a New Year's Eve Celebration.

The Plant of the Month will be Columnea. This genus has been divided up and recombined a number of times. It would be great to see a variety of plants from the genus to show the diversity of growth habits from members of the Columnea, Dalbergaria (now Columnea), Pentadenia (now Columnea) and Trichantha (now Columnea) genera.

Bring a plant with at least one open flower so that we can see not only the foliar differences but the flower shape differences between the different groups within Columnea.

NCAC website:

www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

NCAC Blog:

<http://dcgesneriads.blogspot.com/>

Website & Blog: Kyoko Imai

web@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

President: Jim Roberts

Marriottsville, MD 21104

410-227-2324

jim.roberts@wildblue.net

Vice-President: Andrew Norris

Marriottsville, MD 21104

extensionofgreen@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Barry Woolf

1301 Malus Court

Fallston, MD 21047

410-879-1654

Woolfphoto1@comcast.net

Secretary: Barbara Stewart

bstew771@verizon.net

Membership:

Corey Wickliffe

CEwickliffe@gmail.com

Directors: Andrew Norris, Barb Stewart, Donna Beverin

Committees:

Hospitality: vacant

Membership: vacant

Programs: Andrew Norris

Newsletter Editor: Donna Beverin

editor@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

Petaltones@gmail.com or

Donnabeverin@gmail.com

Website and Blog: Kyoko Imai

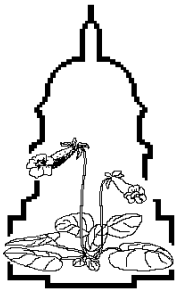
web@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

<http://dcgesneriads.blogspot.com/>

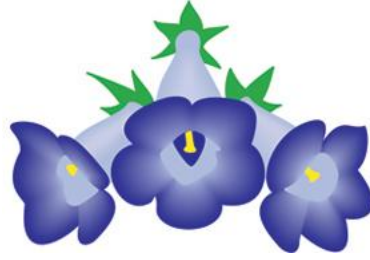
dcgesneriads -at- gmail.com

The Gesneriad Society website:

www.gesneriadsociety.org



Petal Tones



Volume 46 Number 2

February 2015



Episcia cupreata viridifolia



President's Message:

Well, the groundhog predicted 6 more weeks of winter, and we've lived through one of them relatively unscathed. Yes, it's cold outside. But snow has been really minimal for us this year. I'm so glad I'm not facing the New England winters any more. It's so nice to have a warm, green, growing space inside the house. No matter what Mother Nature throws at us, I can retreat to a room where the air is 75° and the humidity is 70%. Fans blow the warm air around and there are flowers popping out everywhere. I hate winter! No need to say anything else about it.

My guess is that the Achimenes weren't listening when the groundhog made his prediction. Many are coming out of dormancy now. It's way too early to put them outdoors, but there just isn't room for them inside either.

NCAC meetings are held at BEHNKES NURSERIES
11300 Baltimore Ave, Beltsville, MD 20705

Behnkes opens at 8:00am if you would like to browse and shop before the meeting. We gather at 10am to get set up with the meeting beginning at 10:30am. Meet usually the second Saturday of the month. \$10 yearly dues

February 14th: Jim Roberts and Drew Norris

Rhizomatous Plants: Discussion includes the plant structures, known as rhizomes, specifically covering several of the most popular genera; including function, propagating, care, dormancy, optimum growing and blooming. Please bring your questions, dormant rhizomes or actively growing plants!

Arrangement: "Love" – Since Saturday is Valentine's Day, an arrangement showing your interpretation of Love. Since love has no limit, there are no size limits on this month's arrangement. Make it as big (36" x 36" x 36") or small (2" x 2" x 2") as you want; or anything in between. Extra points if you can incorporate a rhizome into the arrangement.

Plant of the Month: Anything Rhizomatous

Be sure to bring entries for the Little Show and Show and Tell too.

They're just going to have to wait, or get sent to a friend's or neighbor's house where space isn't quite so tight. Or maybe they'll come to the meeting on Saturday and go home with one of you. That's the real beauty of rhizomatous plants. They are so darn easy to share. You don't have to root a cutting or hope for good germination of seed. You just dig up a rhizome, plant it, and have a flowering plant a couple months later.

Drew will be talking about rhizomatous plants this month and I hope all of you will bring examples of your favorite rhizomatous plant for us to see and share.

I'm looking forward to a big crowd on Saturday. Bring some snack sized baggies; you WILL be going home with some goodies.
Jim Roberts

Bloomin' Now

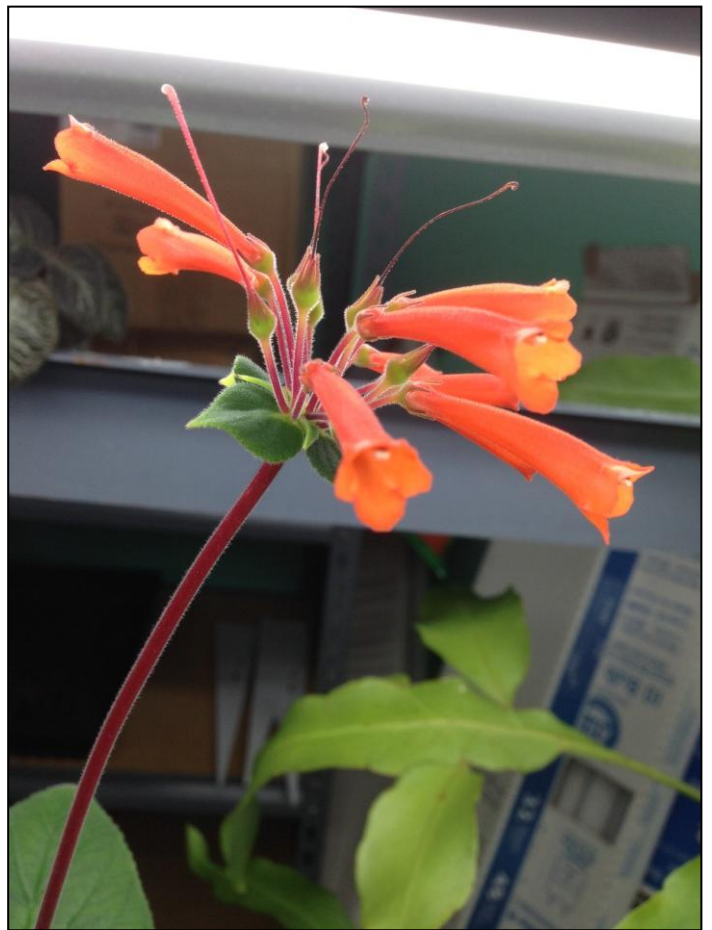


Johanna's '*Seemania* 'Chic'

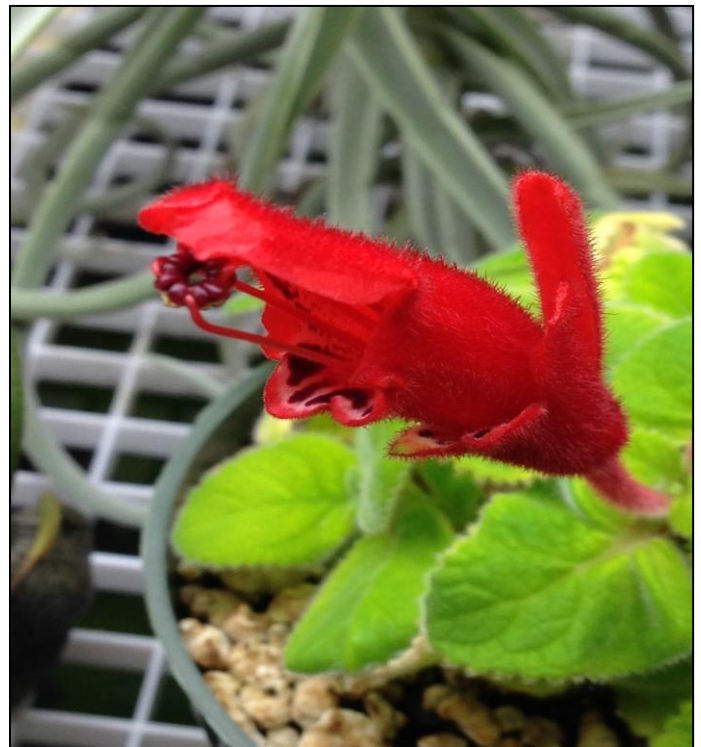
Next some 'Bloomin' Now from Jim and Drew



Drew's *Neomortonia rosea*



Sinningia insularis: always sending up new crowns and flowers!



Sinningia cardinalis 'Red Feather'



Nautilocalyx 'Burle Marx'



Drew's *Sinningia* 'Amizade'



Nautilocalyx forgetii



Gesneria rupicola



Pachycaulis nummularia



Achimenes 'Red Diamond'



Achimenes 'Red Diamond' close up

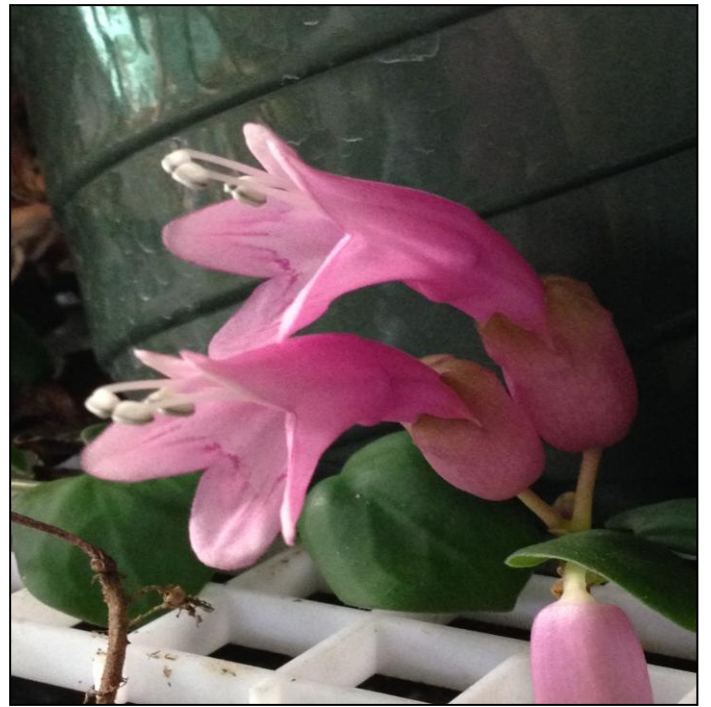


Episcia 'Jim's Yellow Spider'





Nematanthus 'Heart Throb'



Aeschynanthus 'Thai Pink'



Drew's *Streptocarpus* 'Batik'

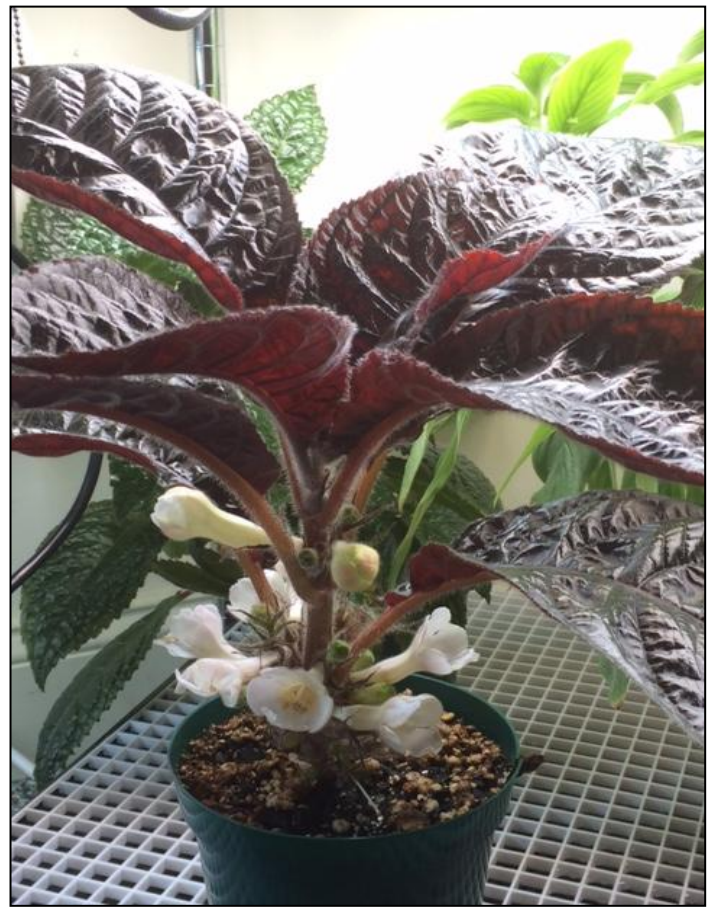


Drew's *Sinningia* 'Orange Rain Drops'





Drew's *Sinningia* 'Solstice'



Drew's *Nautilocalyx aeneus* 'Bronze'



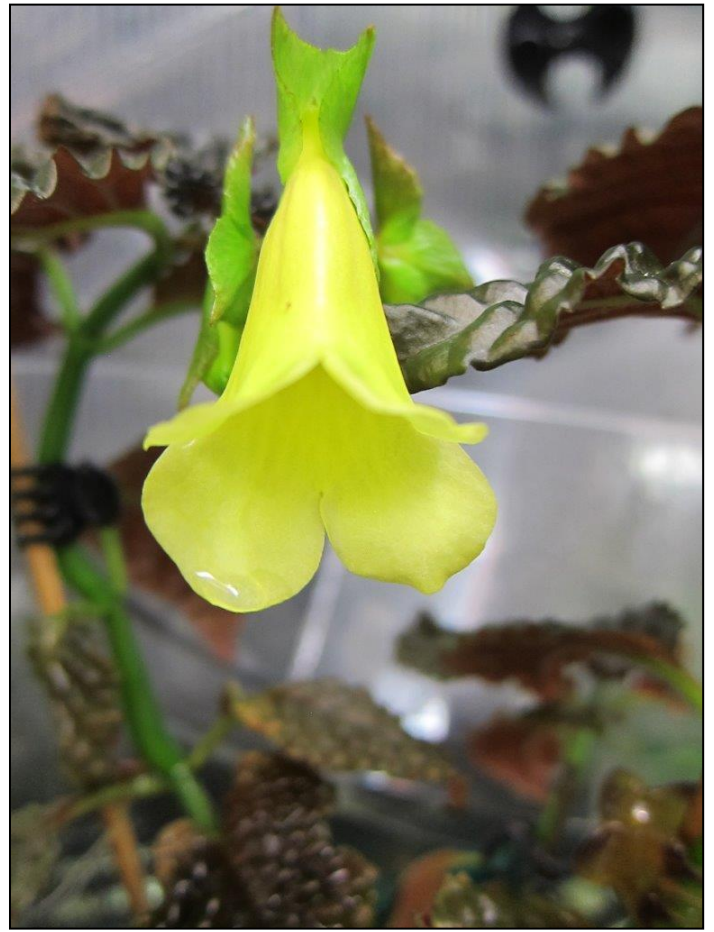
Drew's *Nautilocalyx aeneus* 'Bronze'



Barb's *Sinningia* 'Deep Purple Dreaming'



Johanna's *Columnea* 'Birds in Flight'



Johanna's *Gasteranthus atratus*



Johanna's *Columnea scandens* var. *fendleri*



Johanna's *Primulina tamiana* (center)



Notes on the Colorful Clan of *Columnnea*

(from Jim Roberts, Drew Norris, and some additional research)
Barbara Stewart

Goldfish and flying goldfish hanging from the rainforest trees; sounds like something from an animated movie, but no, these are *Columnnea*, a popular and easy to grow gesneriad from Central and South America. *Columnnea* was the featured plant for the NCAC meeting in January 2015. Jim Roberts and Drew Norris brought in numerous cuttings from their extensive collection of gesneriads, and shared some basic information about this varied group of epiphytes.



Columnnea 'Carnival'

Columnneas were introduced in Europe in the mid 1700's, and were named by Carl Linnaeus (known as the father of modern taxonomy) in 1753. The name was given in honor of Fabio Colonna, author of the first botanical book with copper plate illustrations (published in 1592).



Barb's unnamed *Columnnea*, possibly *scandens fendleri*



Columnnea 'Louise Harris', a *Columnnea/Tricantha* cross

Columnnea in cultivation were considered difficult to grow outside of greenhouses until 1953 when Robert E. Lee and Harold E. Moore, Jr. (botanists from Cornell University) hybridized a number of varieties that were easier to grow than the species. *Columnneas* continue to be popular houseplants today, often called by their common name of goldfish or flying goldfish plants.

The clan of *Columnnea* now includes plants that were formerly classified in the separate genera of *Tricantha*, *Dalbergiera*, *Pentadenia*, and *Bucinellina*; however, in the late 1990's these genera were combined with *Columnnea* into the largest group of New World gesneriads, about 300 species. Although they can be crossed to create new hybrids, the offspring are sterile. In nature, *Columnneas* are epiphytes, growing in trees or rotting logs and moss in tropical areas. Many have red coloring on the leaves, which attract pollinators such as hummingbirds.



Barb's unnamed *Columnnea*, possibly *polyantha*, a woody, upright growing variety

The leaves also serve as protection for the blossoms which form underneath where they are more visible to pollinators. Like other gesneriads, Columneas have pairs of leaves opposite each other, but one leaf is larger than the other. Although they are seasonal bloomers, many hybrids today are capable of blooming year-round.

Because Columneas have a wide range of habitat, there is a large variety of species with different cultural needs. Some are trailing and hanging, while others are woody and more upright growing. There is a large variation in size, and blossoms come in shades of red, orange, and yellow. Many like humidity at 50-80%, a light soil mix, warm temperatures and even moisture. Some varieties need cooler night temperatures to form buds or a few weeks with slightly drier soil. They are easily rooted from cuttings. Some branch naturally, but pinching will also encourage branching.

They are susceptible to the usual pests that plague other gesneriads: mealy bugs, cyclamen mites, thrips, aphids, and whiteflies. Leaves can drop from drafts or air that is too dry (such as transitioning from outdoors to inside in the fall). They can be grown in natural light or on light stands. As with other epiphytes which are shallow rooted, they may bloom better when slightly pot bound.

Many varieties of Columnea can be enjoyed for their decorative foliage with red coloring on the underside of the leaves; however, it is always exciting when a trailing plant produces brightly colored “flying fish” down the long cascading stems!

MOLASSES, YOU'RE JOKING by Paul Lee

Reprinted with permission Toronto Gesneriad Society Newsletter

I have been inspired to write this short article on molasses after listening to Mel Grice give a presentation at our chapter. The subject of molasses came up when Mel said he was using it in his soil mix, thinking he was alone and out there. Previously at the convention, when he did this presentation, I spoke to him to say I have been using it for several years. So he was no longer alone! I will try to explain the reasons for my use of molasses being applied to plants and soil. Why molasses? Molasses is derived from the process of making sugar from sugar cane or in some cases sugar beet. Sugar is the source of energy needed to make plants grow. To make this sugar, the plants use sunlight, minerals, vitamins, bacteria and many other materials. Molasses can supply some of these requirements, such as sugar, calcium, phosphorus, iron, magnesium, manganese, sulphur, selenium, copper, zinc, and others. When using a soil mix such as Pro Mix with mycorrhiza, the addition of molasses feeds the mycorrhiza with sugars, and in turn will help the hyphae (threads of a fungus; collectively the vegetative part of a fungus, as per Everyman's Encyclopedia of Gardening) to colonize the soil faster. Normally the plant produces sugars through its root system which feed the bacteria, and they in return supply the plant with phosphorus and other minerals that are not available to the plants. This symbiotic relationship is beneficial to both parties. The application of molasses to the soil helps to boost



the bacterial activity in the soil, and makes more nutrients available to make the plants grow faster and healthier. The application of molasses to the foliage of plants can be useful when plants are not doing well. Because of a lack of light or a poor root system, these plants show symptoms of yellowing leaves. This can mean they are unable to produce enough sugars, but by applying molasses to the foliage you can stem the decline until the plant starts to recover. This might have an application when cuttings take a long time to root. The sources of molasses are numerous, but be careful what you get. The two main types are fancy and the blackstrap. The blackstrap is best with the sulphur still in it and should be derived from cane, as some of the beet molasses is now G.M.O. (genetically modified organisms) You can also get dried molasses. The liquid molasses I dilute 10ml in 1 liter of water for foliar spraying and for direct ground application anywhere up to 30ml per liter. I hope this has been of interest to you and maybe suggest ideas on how to use this versatile and safe product in ways you have never thought of!



Ask Mr. Gesneriad

Mr. Gesneriad: About rhizomes! Which end is up? I repotted a Gloxinia Dragonsong that had gone dormant.



Gloxinia Dragonsong Kohleria Heartland's Blackberry Butterfly

After I dumped the soil out of the pot, I found this large rhizome, but hadn't observed which way it was positioned in the pot. It appears to have some roots on one end, so I am guessing that end should go in first. What is the best way to repot this rhizome?
Barb Stewart

Mr. G's answer:

With some rhizomes you can tell which way is up simply by the way they taper. Since the scales on rhizomes are really just compressed leaves you can sometimes tell which way is up by looking at the angle the scales attached to the stem. The best thing to do with large rhizomes is to break them into pieces. Each piece will sprout and you'll end up with a much fuller pot. Think of it this way: if someone gave you a cutting that was three feet long with 200 leaf pairs, how would you plant it? You'd break it into shorter pieces. Well that long rhizome may have 200 scales and each scale can be thought of as a hormone-filled leaf. The pieces will all sprout. In fact, the individual scales themselves will sprout if it is laid on the surface of the soil and not allowed to dry out.

How to Create a Last Minute Design

By Barb Stewart

The newsletter arrives shortly before the meeting with a design suggestion for the mini-show. Then, you are too busy to read it until the day before the meeting. You scan your plant shelves for any blooming gesneriads, and then start putting together the framework of an arrangement. Then you get up early the next morning and finish it (or maybe overhaul it) before taking off for the meeting. How do you pull this off? Here are a few suggestions:

1. Become a Pack Rat. Having a ready supply of just about anything comes in handy. (If you aren't into clutter, then wait for my next article on "The Art of the Scrounge".) As you become a more experienced designer, you start noticing the artistic aspects of all kinds of strange things. I am always looking for interesting containers or line material for a future design. Yard sales and thrift shops abound, and are great places to find unique objects that stretch your imagination but don't leave you broke. In fact, some of the most artistic items are often the oddities that no one else buys (including broken things or pieces of something), and are therefore very bargain priced. Although the sellers are baffled by why you would buy such an item and your friends and family are suspecting that you are now in the early stages of Hoarders Disease, you are now set to have something on hand to start a last minute design that will work with any theme you are given.

2. Give in to your Gesneriad Addiction. The more, the merrier. You are pretty much guaranteed to have several blooming plants to choose from for your design, and have an ample supply of blossoms to work with as well. Now you have a better chance of getting the blossom color that fits the theme or blends well with the rest of the arrangement. Furthermore, you won't feel guilty about chopping up a plant for design, because it needed trimming anyway and your friends want cuttings. (If it blooms, it gets groomed!)

3. Keep it simple. This is pretty much a necessity, since you don't have time to work up anything complicated or simplify an overdone design. (Simple usually gets you closer to a blue ribbon, too.) I start with some scrap cardboard to make a niche the required size. Then I rummage through my "collection" of nic-nacs to find the right size and style of container to reflect the theme. Add a simple line to create the shape of your arrangement. Have a design toolbox handy with things like floral picks, tubes or straws to hold blossoms, floral tape, wire, scissors, and my favorite, modeling clay to hold anything that won't stay exactly where I want it. Add a few pieces of greenery and your blossoms. Then check your box of scrap fabric that you have collected from remnant bins for a drape that will set off your design and make it stand out. Did I mention theme? You can reflect the theme throughout your design using the color, texture, shape and form of your materials, as well as your container, base, and background. Then you probably won't need any other accessories. The judges should get your interpretation.



"Celebrate" This design was created by Barb Stewart for the mini-show at the January meeting. Foliage consisted of stolens from *Episcia* 'Faded Jade', and blossoms from *Primulina* 'Nimbus' and a *Streptocarpella* (unnamed). Judges liked the theme interpretation, use of color, and overall design form.

4. Have fun and learn. Even if you don't end up with a blue ribbon design, remember it is a learning experience. You will find the more you practice, the better you get. You will learn not only what materials work and don't work, but also what plant materials work best. This is a good time to experiment before entering designs in a show. You will also improve your artistic skills and develop your own taste and style. Having someone else judge and critique your design will help you see things through the eyes of others and learn what the judges look for. Finally, don't forget that your design is also a learning experience for others. Hopefully you will provide inspiration for them to create their own designs for the next mini-show.

NCAC website: www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org
NCAC Blog: <http://dcesneriads.blogspot.com/>
Website & Blog: Kyoko Imai
web@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

President: Jim Roberts
Marriottsville, MD 21104
410-227-2324
jim.roberts@wildblue.net

Vice-President: Andrew Norris
Marriottsville, MD 21104
extensionofgreen@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Barry Woolf
1301 Malus Court
Fallston, MD 21047
410-879-1654
Woolfphoto1@comcast.net

Secretary: Barbara Stewart
bstew771@verizon.net

Membership:
Corey Wickliffe
CEwickliffe@gmail.com

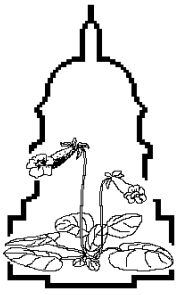
Directors: Andrew Norris, Barb Stewart, Donna Beverin

Committees:
Hospitality: vacant
Membership: vacant
Programs: Andrew Norris

Newsletter Editor: Donna Beverin
editor@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org
Petaltones@gmail.com or
Donnabeverin@gmail.com

Website and Blog: Kyoko Imai
web@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org
<http://dcesneriads.blogspot.com/>
dcesneriads -at- gmail.com

The Gesneriad Society website: www.gesneriadsociety.org



Petal Tones



Volume 46 Number 3

March 2015



Streptocarpus 'Emily' grown by Kitty Hedgepeth

President's Message:

Is anyone ready for spring yet? Is there anyone who isn't? As I write this the snow is still falling; enough to day to send me home from work early and to keep Drew home from school altogether. But the calendar says that spring is just 15 days away. The spring Equinox. 12 hours of warm, snow-melting sun. And that time of year that our indoor plants start sending out new growth too. The rhizomatous plants such as *Achimenes* and *Eucodonia* refuse to stay asleep any longer. *Columnnea* and *Aeschynanthus* growing in natural light are sending out lots of new growth and flower buds.

This is the perfect time of year for starting new plants. Traditionally we have our Propagation Workshop in March, and this year will be another year of March Propagation Madness. Everyone is asked to bring in

NCAC meetings are held at *BEHNKES NURSERIES*
11300 Baltimore Ave, Beltsville, MD 20705

Behnkes opens at 8:00am if you would like to browse and shop before the meeting. We gather at 10am to get set up with the meeting beginning at 10:30am. Meet usually the second Saturday of the month. \$10 yearly dues

March 14, 2015: March Propagation Madness! by Jim Roberts

Plant of the Month is *Sinningia*. Bring in examples to share!

Arrangement of the Month: St. Patrick's Day: 50 Shades of Green with dimensions 8" x 8" x 8"

Be sure to bring entries for the Little Show and Show and Tell too.

April 11th: *Gasteranthus* and *Gesneria* by Jim Roberts

plants that need pruning. *Episcia* are prime candidates. I know mine have dozens of extra stolons to give away. But *Kohleria* and other bushy rhizomatous plants, *Drymonia* which have outspread their allotted space on the shelf, and even *Petrocosmea* and *Primulina* which have thrown off some suckers are all excellent candidates for sharing. Drew and I will bring soil mix and Solo Cups, and also some pots of overgrown seedlings that need some splitting up. Of course there will be some other plants that we want to share. I hope others will find plants in their collections that need work too.

We'll also have some seed to share and plant, and some rhizomes to scale. All methods of plant propagation will be explored and everyone will go home with a box full of starter plants. (bring a box). Bring your own soil mix if you have a preference. **And bring a friend.** What better way to get someone new interested in *Gesneriads* than to send them home with plants. Jim

Other news from Jim Roberts:

Program for March:

As mentioned in the President's message, we're going to have a hands on workshop. Gesneriads are among the easiest plants to propagate and share. We'll cover all sorts of methods to start new plants from old, sending everyone who attends the meeting home with cuttings, seedlings, rhizomes, and other pieces of plant material. All for free! Know someone who might be interested in joining the group? Someone who grows African Violets or lots of other house plants? Bring him/ her with you. Tricks (my car won't start – can you bring me?) are encouraged.

Plant of the Month

This month let's bring in samples of *Sinningia*. There is a wide variety of sizes and growth habits. There are *Sinningia* that fit into a two inch glass globe and others where the tuber alone can be over 2 feet across. Some of these tubers are even planted at the top of the pot and displayed as a decorative caudex. Bring a selection of sizes from your collection – in or out of flower.

Arrangement for March

Three days after our meeting is St. Patrick's Day. An arrangement called 50 Shades of Green. There are many different colors and textures of Green in this diverse family. An 8" x 8" x 8" celebrating St. Patrick in shades of Green. If you use flowers (not required) they should have some green in them too.

Future Programs:

April: *Gasteranthus* and *Gesneria*. These two terrarium genera are a lot easier to grow than most realize. The flowers are really spectacular and easy to achieve. And the very low light requirements of *Gasteranthus* make them perfect office plants. Some growers even grow them long distances away from the plant stands that they grow all of their other plants on. And *Gesneria* are probably the closest growing *Gesneriads* to D.C. They're found on the Caribbean islands down through Cuba. You can get to them with just a short flight or find them on your shore leave whenever you take a cruise down that way.

May: The Baltimore African Violet and Gesneriad Club holds its show every year on Mother's Day weekend. Instead of getting together at Behnke's we're going to have an informal meeting at the Shops at Kenilworth on Saturday, May 9, 2015. Jim and Drew will be there with their exhibits, as will a dozen other exhibitors. It's always a great show with a great sales table.

June: Picnic, July: Species African Violets, August no meeting

Grubs, Rats, or Rhizomes?

(Notes from program given by Drew Norris, Feb. 2015)

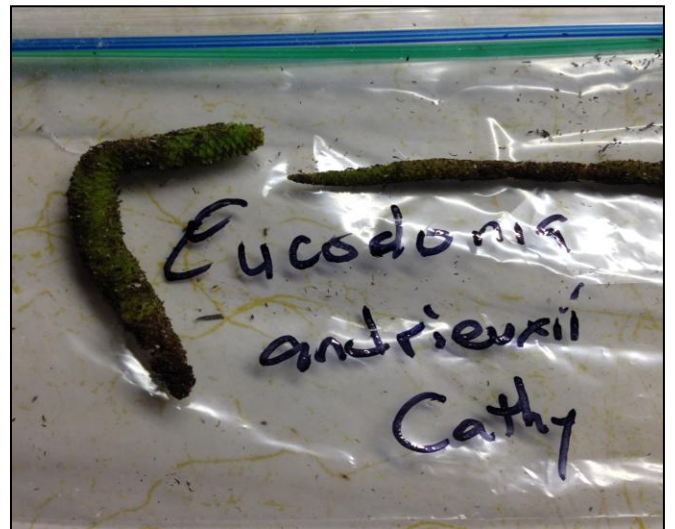
By Barbara Stewart

No sign of life above the surface of the soil!! Dried, shriveled up leaves and stems flopping over the side of the pot!! Well, better luck next time!! Dump the soil and toss the pot in the bucket to be washed and sterilized. But what is that in the soil? Calling cards from the rats? Hibernating grubs? Not this time of year. Must be rhizomes!

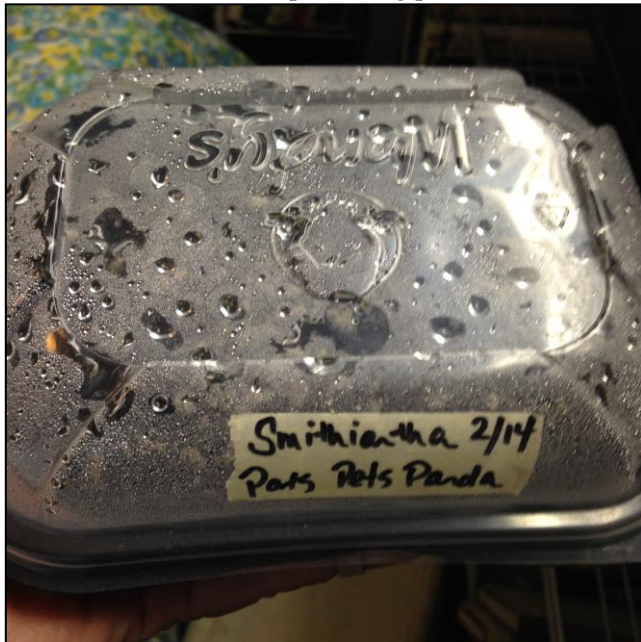


Close up of a rhizome

There are two basic types of rhizomes found in the family of gesneriads (no, not dead or alive). Some are smooth rhizomes, as in *Lysionotus*. Most are scaly with distinct segments, each of which can be broken off to produce a new plant. An easy way to separate the scales is to twist the rhizome and they will just fall off.



How can you tell if a rhizome is still alive? Just break it open. If it shows some white inside, then there is still life in it. Sow the scales on top of the soil. It is best to leave them uncovered or just cover very lightly with soil. Put them in a covered container and wait for sprouts. There are several ways a plant produces rhizomes. After it blooms, the dead bloom stalk should be cut off and water gradually withheld. This causes the plant to start producing rhizomes in the soil. (How not to get rhizomes: let the plant dry out before it is ready.) Rhizomatous gesneriads can be propagated by leaf cuttings. Sometimes the leaf will die without producing plantlets.



Container with scaled pieces of rhizomes that Drew planted at the meeting on February 14th

However, check the soil before tossing it, as the leaf may have produced rhizomes in the soil. Some plants produce rhizomes above the soil which appear as small bumps along a string. Each of these bumps is a rhizome which can be grown into a new plant. Plants tend to produce more of these aerial rhizomes when pot-bound because they are looking for more space to spread, but too many of them can make the plant look messy.

These can be reduced by potting the plant in a larger container so it can have more room to spread by underground rhizomes.

Different gesneriads have different life cycles. Some, such as *Achimenes*, have “obligate dormancy”, which means they go dormant naturally, following seasonal patterns. They will go dormant in the fall and will start to grow again when they are ready in the late winter or spring. Although they cannot be forced out of dormancy, warmth and moisture may speed up the sprouting process. Other gesneriads, such as *Kohlerias*, sprout new growth as older growth is dying back, so there is seldom a dormant period

or at least a very brief one.



The baby plants growing: each from a rhizome scale 3/10

Rhizomatous *gesneriads* vary in cultural requirements. *Achimenes*, *Smithiantha*, and *Eucondonias* enjoy 4-6 tubes on a light stand. *Kohlerias* also need good lighting to help keep them more compact. A plant that is getting too tall can be controlled by potting the rhizomes deeper in the pot. Rhizomatous plants are a bit more tolerant of over-watering than other gesneriads, and prefer wet conditions to dry. Due to genetic similarities, it is easy to create inter-generic hybrids with rhizomatous gesneriads. One example is *xSmithicodonia* which is a cross between *Smithiantha* and *Eucondonia*. Rhizomatous gesneriads are fun and easy to grow. I find them very forgiving of my sloppy growing habits and they reward me with beautiful blossoms in many colors. And if I do happen to find a pot with nothing but soil in it, I have friends with plenty of surplus rhizomes to share!

April 11 – April 12, 2015

The Richmond African Violet Society presents its annual show and sale themed “**Violets in Wonderland**” in the Robins Room at Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens.

Show hours: Saturday, April 11, 2015: 1:00 pm - 5:00pm
Sunday, April 12th : 9:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Hours for the plant sale:

Friday, April 10th from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm
Saturday April 11th from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
Sunday April 12th from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

http://www.lewisginter.org/events/event_detail.php?event_id=552

Bloomin' Now



Kitty's *Saintpaulia* 'Mac's Firey Fascination'



Kitty's *Streptocarpus* 'Wow'



Kitty's *Sinningia* 'Party Dress'



Kitty's *Streptocarpus* 'Kahinta'





Kitty's *Streptocarpus* 'Roulette Cherry'



Kitty's *Streptocarpus* 'Harlequin Blue'

NCAC website: www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org
NCAC Blog: <http://dcgesneriads.blogspot.com/>
Website & Blog: Kyoko Imai
web@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

President: Jim Roberts
Marriottsville, MD 21104
410-227-2324
jim.roberts@wildblue.net

Vice-President: Andrew Norris
Marriottsville, MD 21104
extensionofgreen@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Barry Woolf
1301 Malus Court
Fallston, MD 21047
410-879-1654
Woolfphoto1@comcast.net

Secretary: Barbara Stewart
bstew771@verizon.net

Membership:
Corey Wickliffe
CEwickliffe@gmail.com

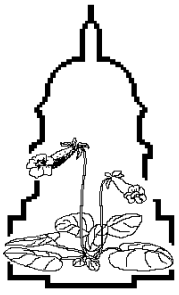
Directors: Andrew Norris, Barb Stewart, Donna Beverin

Committees:
Hospitality: vacant
Membership: vacant
Programs: Andrew Norris

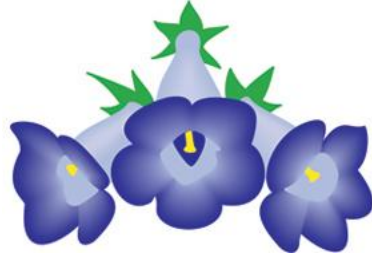
Newsletter Editor: Donna Beverin
editor@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org
Petaltones@gmail.com or
Donnabeverin@gmail.com

Website and Blog: Kyoko Imai
web@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org
<http://dcgesneriads.blogspot.com/>
dcgesneriads -at- gmail.com

The Gesneriad Society website: www.gesneriadsociety.org



Petal Tones



Volume 46 Number 4

April 2015



Gasteranthus atratus

President's Message:

Happy April everyone! It's that wonderful time of year when plants, both inside and outside, start to put out new growth and flowers making our lives overly busy and beautiful at the same time. Does anyone know why our plants, in the basement under lights, start to put out new growth at this time of year? Is it the gravitational pull of the sun that signals our plants that the days are longer outdoors? Do more gamma rays (or other rays from the sun) penetrate our homes and tell the plants inside that it's time to wake up? I don't know what it is, but the plants sure do seem to know that it is spring.

Our April meeting has been moved off a week because this is also the time of year when shows seem to pop up all over the place. On April 11th Drew and I will be up in Long Island judging their annual Gesneriad Show.

NCAC meetings are held at **BEHNKES NURSERIES**
11300 Baltimore Ave, Beltsville, MD 20705

Behnkes opens at 8:00am if you would like to browse and shop before the meeting. We gather at 10am to get set up with the meeting beginning at 10:30am. Meet usually the second Saturday of the month. \$10 yearly dues

April 19th: *Gasteranthus* and *Gesneria* by Jim Roberts
Print and play the word game on last page of this issue of Petal Tones and receive 5 free raffle tickets!

May 10th: The Baltimore African Violet & Gesneriad Club will hold their 59th Annual Mother's Day Show and Sale at the Shops at Kenilworth, 800 Kenilworth Drive, Towson, MD. NCAC will hold our meeting at the show. Lots of cool plants and supplies for sale! Plenty of gifts for Mom!

Freylingheusen Arboretum in NJ was having its annual show and sale at the same time. And our own Barb Stewart and Kitty Hedgepeth were busy with the Richmond African Violet Club's annual show. I wonder if having a Sunday meeting on April 19th will help or hurt our member attendance. National Capital has ALWAYS met on Saturday mornings. I don't think we have ever explored Sunday meetings.

Take a look around your plant room. See what's looking especially good at this time of year, after a winter of dry home air. Because if it's looking good now, chances are it will be looking good next March when we hit the show schedule again with our own show. Next month our "meeting" will be at the Baltimore African Violet and Gesneriad Club's Show and Sale. Drew and I will be at that one too and can't see the point in rescheduling the meeting again. June is typically our picnic meeting.

We usually meet at Greenbelt Park, right off the Capital Beltway in Greenbelt, MD. We'll confirm this at the April 19th meeting.

This month's program will be on *Gasteranthus* and *Gesneria*. Other than beginning with the letter G and liking higher than normal humidity, these two genera don't have a whole lot in common. One is super easy to propagate from leaves or stem cuttings. The other is almost hopeless unless you can get seed. *Gasteranthus* (other than *G. atratus*) is rarely seen in shows or home collections. *Gesneria* is fairly common, and can flower almost non-stop under the right conditions. Everyone will go home with a *Gasteranthus* cutting, to be grown on as a challenge plant for next spring's show. I'm not sure if I have any good *Gesneria* seed right now, but if I do, everyone will go home with seed to be grown on as a challenge plant too.

Our show is only 11 months away. To do it right we need to start planning now. We need real plant sales. We need membership participation in showing. We need to get the public interested in our little group. Every club out there holds shows once a year to build their treasury and their membership roster. NCAC holds its shows every 18 months, which means we skip an entire year this year. But to have guest speakers and to be able to have extraordinarily interesting meetings we need a treasury. Dues, raffles and plant sales aren't going to do that for us. Let's start planning our show at this meeting. To do it right it really does take that long.

Put down the garden rakes. Delay the car wash until the afternoon. Get your vegetable garden planted on Saturday. Come to the Sunday meeting! Regards, Jim Roberts

Gesneriads, Gesneriads Everywhere: Propagation

Workshop Notes from program given by Jim Roberts
By Barbara Stewart

One of the most popular programs of the year is the annual NCAC propagation workshop. Gesneriads can be reproduced in many different ways. Jim demonstrated the various ways of propagation with several different gesneriads. Suckers: *Primulina dryas nimbus* is a fibrous rooted gesneriad with a beautiful rosette form; however, it can produce suckers like *Saintpaulias* which can be removed and potted in the same way. Remove the sucker with a sharp tool and place it in a small pot with regular potting mix.

Water the soil and place the pot in a plastic bag or covered container until it is rooted. Clear trash bags work well for

a tent with stakes to support it. Of course, do not forget a label to identify the variety and include the date it was planted.



Leaves: Most gesneriads can be propagated by leaves. They root easily by placing the stem in long fibered sphagnum moss in a clear plastic cup. Milkshake cups with

domed lids that have a hole in the top work well and support the leaf. Cover the lid with plastic wrap to maintain humidity. When the leaf starts to produce plantlets, the plastic can be removed so the plantlets can be gradually acclimated to the environment while still maintaining some humidity. Other parts of the leaf can also be rooted. *Primulina* and *Streptocarpus* work well when the leaves are cut into pieces and put in the soil. Plantlets form at each vein that touches the soil. Leaves can have the tip trimmed off and the cut end placed in the soil. The center section of the leaf can be cut into pieces, removing the center vein and placing sideways into the soil. The bottom of the leaf can be planted with the stem in the soil. *Petrocosmea* leaves are a little more challenging because they bruise easily when handling. *Petrocosmea* can be rooted by placing the whole leaf (underside down) on top of damp sphagnum moss in a covered container. Plantlets will form where the veins touch the moss. Most gesneriads can be rooted this way. Sphagnum moss should be damp but not soggy, as air space is necessary for successful rooting.

Stolens: Plants with stolens, such as *Episcia* 'Show Time' are easily propagated with the many stolens they produce. Stolens are "runners" that these groundcovers produce to spread over the ground. As with suckers, each stolen is the start of a new plant which will quickly establish itself in soil. *Episcias* produce roots at the nodes. Some will have callous bumps which will also form roots. Stolens or stem cuttings can be rooted in sphagnum moss or regular potting soil. They will need extra humidity until rooted, so a covered container or bag will keep them protected until established.

Rhizomes: Rhizomatous plants, such as *Kohleria*, can be propagated by the many rhizomes they produce when they go dormant. Rhizomes can be planted whole or broken into pieces and planted about one fourth of the way down in the pot. The can also be broken down into individual scales which will each produce a new plant and can be

spread on the surface of the soil. Rhizomes should plump and a healthy color, such as green, pink, white or brown, but ones that have dried up will not grow. Rhizomatous plants can also be propagated by stem and leaf cuttings. Flowers and buds can be left on a stem cutting while it is rooting.

Tubers: Tuberous plants such as *Sinningia speciosa*, can be propagated with stem and leaf cuttings. Unfortunately, leaves often produce roots but will have “blind” tubers which do not have an “eye” to produce growth.



Cutting the leaves into pieces and rooting at the veins, as with *Primulina* and *Streptocarpus* leaves, is more likely to produce viable tubers. Some tuberous plants produce multiple tubers which can be pulled off the main tuber and planted separately.

Seeds: Seeds can be sown in a covered container with damp soil. Because moss and fungus develop easily, microwaving the soil mix for 15 minutes will sterilize and kill spores. Seeds need light to germinate, so they should not be covered with soil. Once seedlings sprout, they will grow faster if repotted often. With so many ways to propagate gesneriads, it is easy to see how some of us end up with large collections of plants. The propagation workshop is a great opportunity to share the extras we have and at the same time acquire a few new varieties to add to our collection!

It's ALIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIVE!! Why I throw trash at my plants

Part 1

By Corey Wickliffe

Call me crunchy, but I'm now knee deep in the composting revolution. That chore my parents forced me to be involved in because I wanted to grow tomatoes in the yard is now one of my favorite things, and what is old is new again! Compost piles, worm bins, and Bokashi buckets – I'm there, but maybe not for the reason you

think. Yes, I want that black gold at the end of the composting rainbow, and am willing to exchange gardening services to my friends to get access to their compost systems (living in an apartment with my significant other will only let me go so far after all). But it's not black gold to me for the same reasons its black gold to others. It's not the nutritional content I'm after, it's the *microbes*.

Eeeeeew. Yup, I went there. Compost is a living thing, and by sterilizing it we may be destroying one of the best parts of it.

I got interested in the general idea first because I'm lazy. That sounds odd, but I would rather put a lot of time and effort into setting things up correctly so that when they run, I don't have to do much. With plants that means once they are potted I pretty much just want to have to water them, and repot them when they need a bigger pot. If I am constantly having to fight off this or that on top of repotting, when would I have time to hybridize? I wouldn't, which is why I haven't done much hybridizing. So, after hearing about a *Begonia* grower who added compost to her pots so she didn't have to fertilize (and was winning ribbons doing it), I figured it was a great version of lazy fertilizing. It is, but it's also *so much more*.

Turns out, I was getting healthier plants too. The science behind it is twofold –

#1: the nutrition itself of the live compost/microbe relationship that made for a healthier plant that was more resistant to disease (so less cases of powdery mildew for example)

#2: the microbes in the compost itself will out compete other – possibly less nice – microbes.

I've not been having issues with the white webby fungus covering my pots anymore, and even the plants from the vendor that always do this to me don't have it happen after repotting, and if it happens before I repot it doesn't spread to other pots. Sorry, that space is taken *thank you very much*.

Now I should point out that while I'm singing the praises of compost, I didn't significantly change much else about how I grow. The lights are still the same, I still wick water, and my soilless mix and perlite ratio is the same, it's just that my “soilless mix” is now a “living potting soil” instead. My fertilizing schedule has changed because I don't need to do it as much, and I use an organic style fertilizer instead of a standard chemical one (but I made that switch a long time ago – I just didn't see the full benefits until now). My repotting schedule is now on the

size of the plant, because I don't get the salt build up that is the normal reason to repot. I do occasionally harass the roots a bit because many of the plants respond with fresh growth like if you repotted, but they don't *need* it now.

Somewhere along the way I also realized that this was a great way to dispose of all the plant material that accumulates after a grooming session. My plant waste (along with kitchen scraps) is now becoming the next generation of soil mix for me to use. I'm actually testing a cycle that lets me reuse my potting soil and plant waste!

This was just the beginning of my journey and my reasoning for continuing to throw trash at my plants. It wasn't a smooth road the whole way though, so if you're interested in trying this method check in next month when I cover some tips and tricks for making the switch!

Bloomin' Now



Kitty's *Primulina* 'Aiko'



Kitty's *Saintpaulia* 'Geysers of Color'



Kitty's *Streptocarpus* 'Somerset Indigo Ice'

THE BALTIMORE AFRICAN VIOLET & GESNERIAD CLUB'S 20TH ANNUAL SHOW & SALE

Friday, May 8th 9 am to 7 pm (Show will open at 1pm)
Saturday, May 9th Show & Sale 9 am to 5 pm
The Shops at Kenilworth, 800 Kenilworth Drive, Towson, MD 21204
Free Admission-Handicap Accessible
We will be holding a plant clinic on Saturday from 1 to 3pm.
For more information contact Shirley at bshuffman2@aol.com
Website: <https://www.facebook.com/BaltimoreAfricanVioletClub>

Desperately Seeking

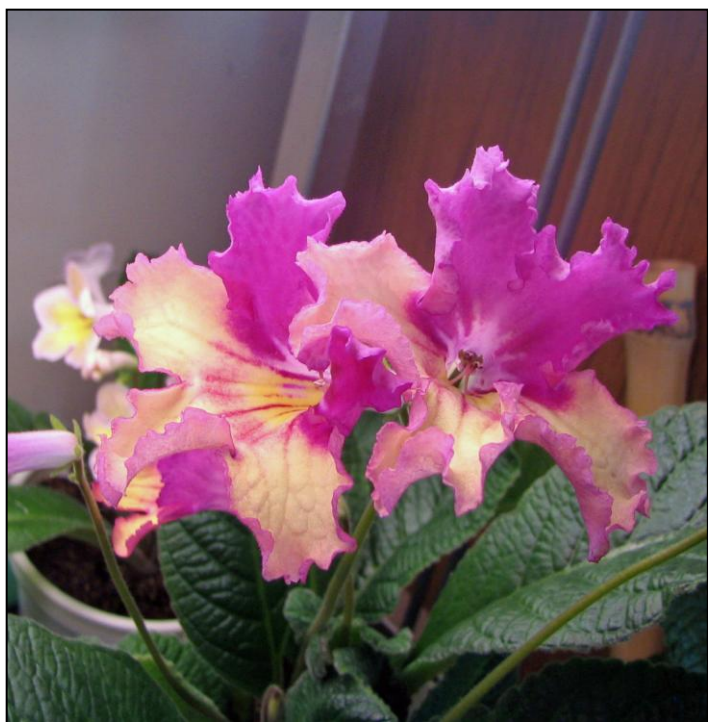
Corey Whitcliff *Sinningia* 'Little Venus'
Corey Whitcliff..... *Sinningia* 'Carefree's Regina'
Corey Whitcliff..... *Sinningia* 'Super Red'



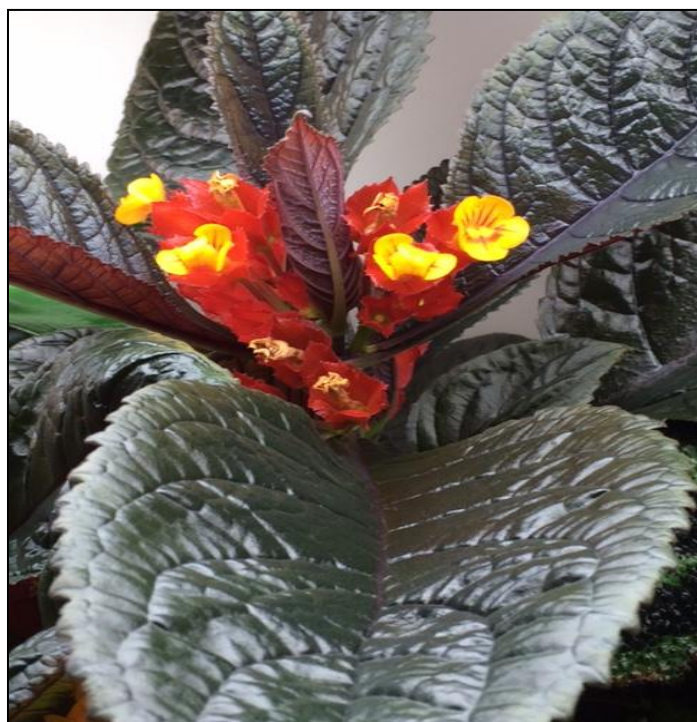
Drew's *Sinningia speciosa* 'Kleopatra'



Drew's *Nautilocalyx forgetii*



Kitty's *Streptocarpus* 'Tequila Sunrise'



Drew's *Chrysothemis pulchella* (dark seedling from Tuck Lock)



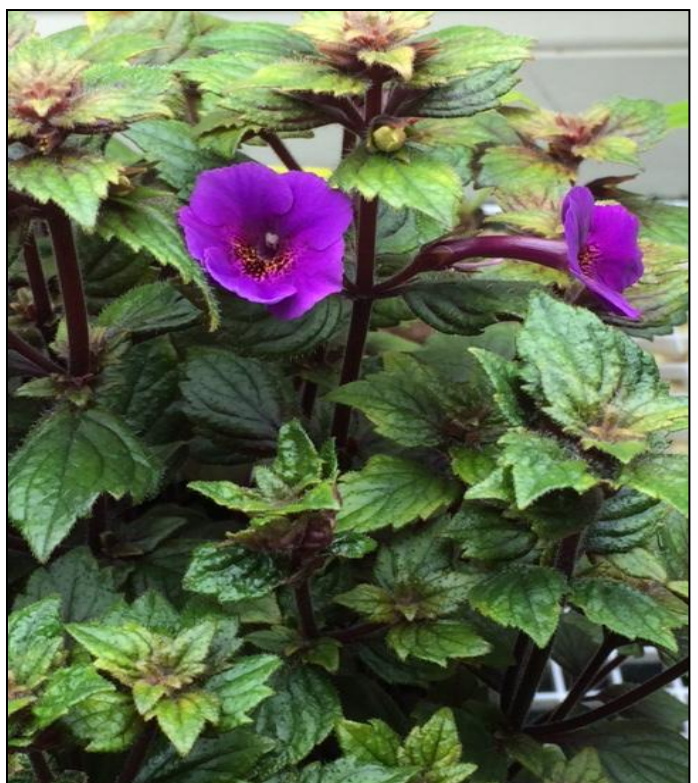
Drew's *Sinningia* 'Isla's Gorgeous'



Drew's *Achimenes* 'Madame Bovary'



Drew's *Achimenes* 'Caligula'



Drew's *Achimenes* 'Caprice'

March's Show & Tell and Designs



St. Patrick's Day design by Barb Stewart



Jim Robert's *Sinningia* 'Gabriel's Horn'



Johanna Zinn's *Nautilocalyx pictus* 'Jade'



Jim Robert's *Sinningia* 'Amazada'



Jim Robert's *Sinningia cardinalis*



Corey Whitcliff's *Sinningia* 'Jung's Mango Sunday'



Johanna Zinn's *Columnnea schimpfii*

More Bloomin' Now !!!!



Johanna Zinn's *Columnnea minor*



Johanna Zinn's *Columnnea* 'Broget Stavenger' close-up



Johanna Zinn's *Columnea* 'Broget Stavenger'



Johanna Zinn's *Henckelia* 'Moonwalker'



Johanna Zinn's *Primulina tamiana*

Gasteranthus

Jim Roberts (reprinted)

Gesneria and *Gasteranthus* are two of my favorite genera. Sure, they require special growing conditions - 100+% humidity for the *Gasteranthus* - but if grown enclosed their care is really minimal.

I currently have 7 or 8 species of *Gasteranthus* growing, and really should start propping them for sale. It's important to get them growing by multiple people in various locations since many are extinct or approaching extinction in the wild.

Two years ago Drew and I judged the Long Island Chapter show and sale in April. One of the plants in the sales table was simple labeled *Gasteranthus sp.*, the grower had lost the name tag and couldn't remember what it was it where it came from.

It took 2 years, but the plant finally flowered for me. Lovely orange pouches with orange calyxes. I hadn't seen anything like it before, and it didn't look like any of the *Gasteranthus* in John Clark's photo library. I was stumped. So I put a photo up on the Gesneriphiles site and got a really nice surprise. Jonathan Ertelt recognized the plant as *Gasteranthus imbricans*, a species he had collected years ago in Costa Rica. I sent him some cuttings (with flowers) and he's "almost" positive I have what he thought had been lost to cultivation. He's growing it on to get fresher flowers for a positive ID.

There are now three of us growing this exciting and beautiful species. It's larger than the familiar *Gasteranthus atratus*, but still worth growing. I hope it turns out to be as easy to propagate as the other *Gasteranthus* species.

NCAC website: www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

NCAC Blog: <http://dcgesneriads.blogspot.com/>

Website & Blog: Kyoko Imai

web@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

President: Jim Roberts
Marriottsville, MD 21104
410-227-2324
jim.roberts@wildblue.net

Treasurer: Barry Woolf
1301 Malus Court
Fallston, MD 21047
410-879-1654
Woolfphoto1@comcast.net

Membership:
Corey Wickliffe
CEwickliffe@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor: Donna Beverin
editor@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org
Petaltones@gmail.com or
Donnabeverin@gmail.com

web@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org
Website and Blog: Kyoko Imai
<http://dcgesneriads.blogspot.com/>
dgesneriads-at-gmail.com

Vice-President: Andrew Norris
Marriottsville, MD 21104
extensionofgreen@yahoo.com

Secretary: Barbara Stewart
bstew771@verizon.net

Committees:
Hospitality: vacant
Programs: Andrew Norris

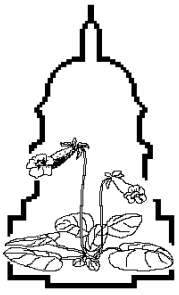
The Gesneriad Society website
www.gesneriadsociety.org

Directors:
Andrew Norris
Barb Stewart
Donna Beverin

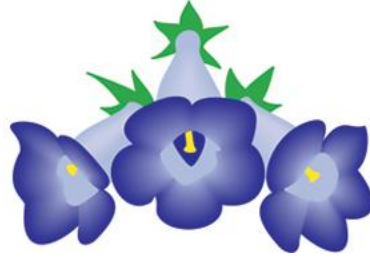
Gesneriad Genera

Bring completed copy to the April Meeting for 5 free raffle tickets!

S	D	A	M	B	B	S	K	G	A	P	V	C	A	E	S	U	I	A	A	Q	R	B	D	N	ACHIMENES
O	A	M	M	A	E	G	A	L	E	R	W	C	O	T	D	J	F	I	W	I	E	E	S	U	AESCHYNANTHUS
Q	N	A	H	E	P	S	S	I	A	S	H	Z	R	R	Z	A	G	A	L	M	Y	L	A	I	AGALMYLA
N	V	L	I	R	T	O	L	D	N	I	N	E	U	S	Y	N	T	V	W	A	J	L	U	W	ALLOPLECTUS
R	Q	L	G	R	B	S	N	E	M	T	P	E	A	Y	I	T	V	W	A	P	E	O	A	Q	ALSOBIA
J	W	O	O	I	E	O	A	E	R	T	P	G	R	N	O	O	O	E	X	A	A	N	E	X	AMALLOPHYLLON
A	O	P	A	U	M	L	N	I	O	I	F	A	N	I	I	R	L	P	R	I	Y	I	C	W	ANNA
T	W	H	V	A	P	E	H	C	D	E	A	I	U	R	A	R	T	P	L	R	C	A	R	T	BELLONIA
N	R	Y	R	Q	S	Z	A	O	W	P	S	L	C	L	E	G	I	A	N	E	C	P	A	J	BESLERIA
E	O	L	Y	S	K	R	M	M	K	M	F	X	R	B	I	Q	X	R	S	L	C	T	E	A	BOEA
I	E	L	W	T	P	A	C	A	J	A	H	O	A	Q	U	A	O	A	J	H	N	T	P	R	COLUMNEA
M	R	O	W	U	X	V	N	N	A	I	R	H	D	A	T	E	P	B	F	O	A	X	U	A	CORYTOPLECTUS
R	H	N	S	X	Y	I	U	N	G	R	N	A	E	L	N	G	A	O	H	K	K	O	W	S	DIASTEMA
A	C	N	O	Q	L	E	L	T	A	R	O	H	P	C	P	I	S	E	A	U	W	A	L	Z	DRYMONIA
S	G	E	N	X	A	W	P	U	N	X	D	N	O	N	U	U	L	A	A	B	I	S	S	F	EUCODONIA
Y	Q	M	S	G	C	T	H	E	N	K	E	L	I	A	T	N	J	U	U	H	B	F	S	P	GESNERIA
D	K	A	D	S	O	Z	R	A	Y	T	U	E	L	C	G	N	C	Z	M	V	P	L	V	Y	HABERLEA
W	S	T	Y	S	L	H	M	X	K	M	V	H	E	O	S	K	E	D	D	I	Q	I	C	Q	HENKELIA
H	U	A	G	X	I	P	Q	V	N	U	B	L	A	H	S	R	I	I	C	M	R	H	N	M	KOHLERIA
S	M	N	C	B	T	L	I	E	S	X	P	E	T	R	O	C	O	S	M	E	A	P	E	Q	NAUTICALALYX
L	U	T	C	G	U	X	A	A	A	O	W	V	A	E	A	N	I	H	P	Z	G	D	P	I	NEMATANTHUS
J	M	H	U	G	A	M	U	Y	L	B	O	E	A	U	W	V	A	I	N	O	M	Y	R	D	NIPHAEA
T	Y	U	H	H	N	E	H	L	J	W	I	P	N	P	A	D	K	P	Z	M	W	Y	E	P	PARABOEA
A	E	S	C	H	Y	N	A	N	T	H	U	S	A	I	N	O	M	Y	R	D	A	R	A	P	PARADRYMONIA
P	R	J	A	N	K	X	M	F	T	Y	A	I	N	O	D	O	C	U	E	L	N	K	N	K	PARAKOHLERIA



Petal Tones



Volume 46 Number 5

2015 May/June



Mike Salapka's beautiful *Streptocarpus* 'Cape Cool Mix'

President's Message:

Happy Summer everyone! That time of year when we all slow down our lives and try to enjoy the weather, our gardens, trips to the beach, barbeques and vacations away from home. And then our plants decide to do just the opposite and grow like crazy and ask us to be re-potted and to get more fertilizer and work every which way to make our lives more complicated. June is going to be a busy month for us. On June 6th Behnkes is having their annual Garden Party. This is an event where all the various garden clubs in the area get together and try to garner new members while sharing information about what they offer to others interested in the same type of

NCAC meetings are held at [BEHNKES NURSERIES](#)
11300 Baltimore Ave, Beltsville, MD 20705

Behnkes opens at 8:00am if you would like to browse and shop before the meeting. We gather at 10am to get set up, with the meeting beginning at 10:30am. Meet usually the second Saturday of the month. \$10 yearly dues

June 6th: Behnkes Garden Party, Set up 8:30am. See page 15.

June 13th: Annual picnic at Greenbelt Park 10:30 with lunch at noon. See page 14.

Future meetings and programs: TBA

plants. Behnkes will allow us to sell from the table, and the Board has decided to let those who sell keep 100% of the profits. This is a great time to “get rid” those extra miniature *Sinningia*, or *Episcia* stolons that are reaching for a pot on the light stand shelf underneath the one that their mother is growing on, or extra seedlings from that last batch of *Streptocarpus* that you planted. A picture of the mature plant, of course, will help. Freebies – plants that we just want to give away – are also very welcome. I hope we have a good showing. I'll be bringing membership applications and a few back issues of *Petal Tones* to display, as well as some back issues of “*Gesneriads*,” the *Gesneriad Society's* magazine. We need to make an impression on the public and other gardeners. None of us grows just one type of plant. If we can convince others that what we grow will grow well alongside what they grow we could gain a new member. Bring your enthusiasm and join us at the table. Then on June 13 we're going to have our annual picnic at Greenbelt Park. Bring a side dish or a dessert and your own meat (or meatless dish) for the grill. Also bring plants to trade. Rather than hold a raffle I think it would be fun to

just assign everyone who attends a number (1-25). Then the number holders would go to the table one at a time to pick something up. The more that there is on the plant table, the more often we would pick. I'll bring the charcoal and drinks for everyone. We will also hold a brief business meeting to discuss the agenda items posted elsewhere in Petal Tones. Good growing and a happy summer to everyone. Regards, Jim

Business Meeting Agenda for Annual Picnic:

Programs for the remainder of 2015: What is planned and what we still need to fill in the calendar.

Spring Show: Date/ Location/ Chair Volunteers? It is never too early to start planning!

Membership: Where have all the members gone? What do we need to do to get them back?

Brazil Seed Fund: We are joining at a much reduced level this year. Who is interested in seed – planting the seed, growing on seedlings – do we need to have a program on this topic?

Guest Speaker – Any ideas on who we would like to have come in?

Other Agenda Items: If you have something that you would like to discuss at the meeting, please send an email to members@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org so that we all know about it before the meeting and we can add it to the agenda.

Bloomin' Now



Kitty's *Saintpaulia* 'Tiny Wood Trail'



Kitty's *Sinningia Speciosa* 'Multibells Cherry x Empress 'Red'

It's ALIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIVE!! Part 2

Making the Switch

By Corey Wickliffe

Last month I shared the inspiration for what got me traveling down the road to compost, and I hope I got you interested in the idea of living soil. I'm most certainly not a nutrition guru, and there is plenty to read on the subject anyway, but looking at the other side of the living soil process I hope has given some clarity to how well rounded the idea can be. Now if only it was as simple as buying a new bag of dirt!

Well, it can be. It can also be a horribly complicated process that involves sorting your trash, caring for your compost, all on top of your current care for plants. Or it can be a significant investment in cash trying to work through a dizzying amount of "organic" products. This is an *idea*, and how you execute it in your collection is up to you and your circumstances. I hope in this article to give you some guidance on how to investigate what is best for *your* circumstances. I focus on indoor growing in this series, but similar methods could be applied to container plants and outdoor plantings.

The key understanding to making this transition is to think about two different methods – inorganic (sterilized soilless mix and chemical fertilizers) and organic (living soil mix and organics based fertilizers). I don't mean "certified organic" for use on organic crops, I mean they are derived from organic things (bone meal, kelp, etc.) rather than chemicals made in a lab. While organics based fertilizers are required to have PNK numbers on them, they are often low because the nutrients are not in a chemically available state (yet – that's what the microbes are for). They are not easy to compare with chemical fertilizers on the labels because they are more than just a list of compounds. An easy way to think about it is that chemical fertilizers are immediately available to the plants, while the organics are slow release over time. That's why it's easy to burn with one but not the other, and why one needs to be replenished regularly but not the other.

These two methods are complete systems by themselves, and it's mixing them together to get a hybrid version that can cause issues. It's not as easy as adding a beneficial microbe dust or use an organics based fertilizer. Beneficial microbe mixes in the soil need organics to survive, and organics won't break down and be utilized by the plant without the beneficial microbes. You can start with a sterilized soilless mix, but you need to add beneficial microbes AND organic fertilizers (their food) to get the full benefits. You can still keep going with regular chemical fertilizers, just remember to give the microbes some food on a regular basis too (and realize you may not even need the regular fertilizers anymore).

Helpful tip: The easiest way to add organic to your methods is adding a bit of live compost to your mix.

I recommend living compost last month because it is a mix of beneficial microbes and the organics they need in one package. If you compost in your yard, have a worm bin, or do bokashi composting then you've already got a community going, so why not use it? While each method has different communities (as does each beneficial microbe additive) and organics they munch on, the key is to at least have some. If you're already composting for other reasons then this is a super easy way to boost your plants – just add a scoop to the mix when you repot.

Helpful tip: If you've got compost in the mix go very light on the fertilizing – organic or otherwise! You may find that only your heaviest feeding plants need fertilization, or they only need it after a certain number of months.

There are also many additives and soil mixes on the market now that may be of interest, particularly if you don't have access to compost other than purchase it or you want to try other methods. These are largely based around hydroponic systems and can give amazing results - they were developed mainly for agriculturally significant plants that are pretty fertilizer needy, and can be tailored to many plant needs. They are also meant to be complete systems, since hydroponics means they are not connected to the environment for food and water. Give that soilless mixes have little nutrients in them to begin with, these can complement each other nicely. These similar benefits of compost but in bottle form.

Helpful tip: Pick a brand and stick with that one brand. If you go mixing additives and different organic fertilizers you can end up overdoing some things and not doing others.

For those wondering what my transition was, I was originally using Pro Mix with mycorrhiza/perlite, and MSU fertilizer. I then transitioned to adding an organic fertilizer (Golden Harvest Natural Fertilizer – no need to use 5 different components!) with great results! This was my "hybrid" stage, and like many organics based fertilizers, my significant other noticed the "pond" smell when I watered with it. While not the worst smell, or even that strong strong, I'm in a tiny apartment and particularly fond of him, so I decided to try the next step - I've been testing a compost soil mix instead (Fox Farm Ocean Forest Potting Soil) and I've actually stopped fertilizing for now. I'd use regular compost if I had some! But wait, didn't I say last month I was using Bokashi? I did, didn't I...

But I know what you're thinking reading this whole thing... out of a bottle is probably better because live compost and non-sterile soil mixes harbor pests! I've got you covered next month, and the mystery of Bokashi and my mad scientist ways will be revealed...

Bloomin' Now

Drew's unnamed Gesneriads



Drew can you share this one with a cutting for the editor!!?
Exquisite!







Johanna Zinn's Bloomin' Now



Johanna's *Columnea schimpfii*



Close-up of Johanna's *Columnea schimpfii*



Johanna's *Episcia pink leaved*



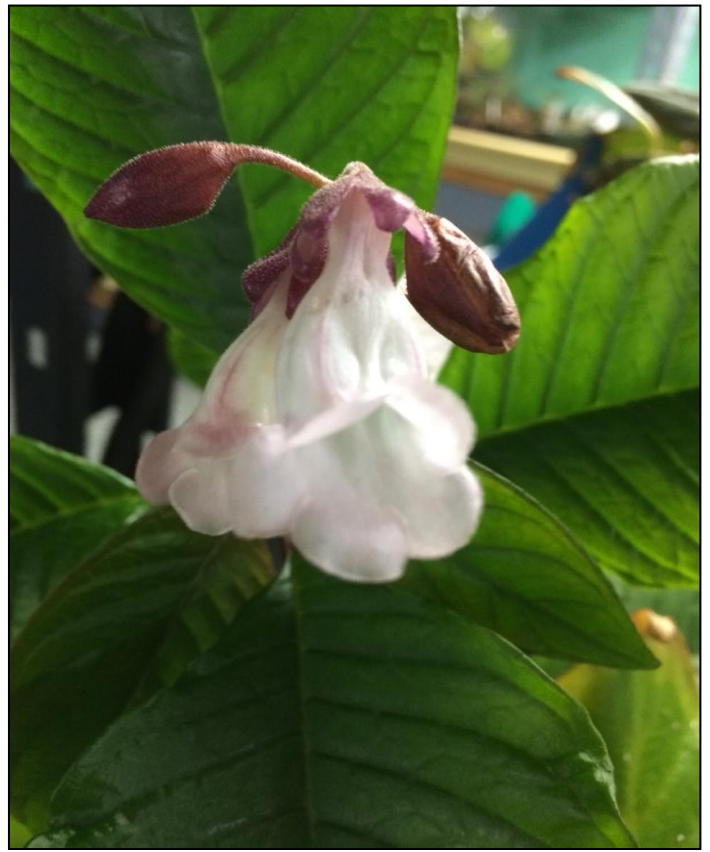
Johanna's *Columnea 'mycophylla'*



Johanna's *Primulina tobaccum*



Jim's Bloomin' Now: *Chrysothemis friedrichsthaliana*



Jim's Bloomin' Now: *Anna submontana*, a 2 foot tall rhizomatous plant from China



Jim's Bloomin' Now: *Sinningia aggregata* yellow



Jim's Bloomin' Now and First Place Special Awards in the BAVC show: *Sinningia globulosa*

Baltimore African Violet Club Show Highlights



Here's Drew holding his Best in Show at the Baltimore African Violet Club show & he won Sweepstakes with 59 blue ribbons. (Photo and posted by Jim Roberts)



Second Best in Show at the Baltimore African Violet Club show. Grown by Drew Norris.



Best in Show at the Baltimore African Violet Club show. Grown by Drew Norris.



Best Chimera at the Baltimore African Violet Club show. Grown by Drew Norris.



Best Semi-Mini in Show at the Baltimore African Violet Club show. Grown by Marie Burns



Best Trailer in Show at the Baltimore African Violet Club show. Grown by Shirley Huffman



Jim's First Place in the Baltimore African Violet Club show: *Sinningia (bullata x leopoldii) x self*



Saintpaulia 'Band of Brothers' (Look how big the flowers are on Drew's entry in the show!)



Educational Exhibit at the Baltimore African Violet Club show by Drew Norris with some anonymous help!



Streptocarpus 'Gwen', grown by Marie Burns in natural light.



'From Russia with Love' design by Marie Burns



Primulina longgangensis grown by Shirley Huffman



Episcia 'Show Time' grown by Shirley Huffman



Achimenes 'Caprice' grown by Drew Norris under lights



Gesneria 'Ako Cardinal Flight' grown by Drew Norris



Saintpaulia 5g clone pendula var' kizarae grown by Shirley Huffman



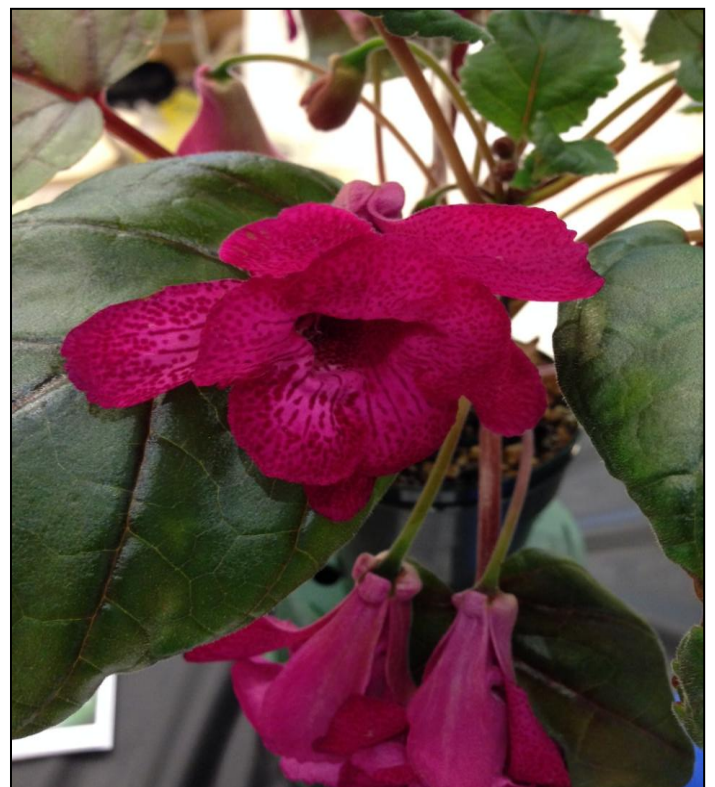
Kohleria 'Rolo', Best Gesneriad grown by Shirley Huffman



Saintpaulia 'Tommie Lou', Best Variegated grown by Shirley Huffman



Saintpaulia 'Jolly Fun' grown by Marie Burns



Sinningia 'Isla's Gorgeous' grown by Drew Norris



Sweetgum Picnic Area
 6565 Greenbelt Road Greenbelt, Maryland 20770.
 Open All Year Phone 301-344-3948
 8:00 a.m. to Dusk

Sweetgum Picnic Area is located near the entrance of the park. Sweetgum Picnic Area is a first-come first serve picnic area. There are two sets of playground equipment, a baseball field with backstop, and a large field. There is a limit of 4 tables and 24 people per group so that everyone may enjoy this area. There are picnic tables and a restroom in this area. There are reserved picnic areas (Holly and Laurel) available for large groups by calling 301-344-3948. **Upon entering the park, proceed to the stop sign. Make a right hand turn and the Sweetgum Picnic Area is the first left.**

GPS Information. (Latitude, Longitude):
 38.98389, -76.89333
 38°59'2"N, 76°53'36"W

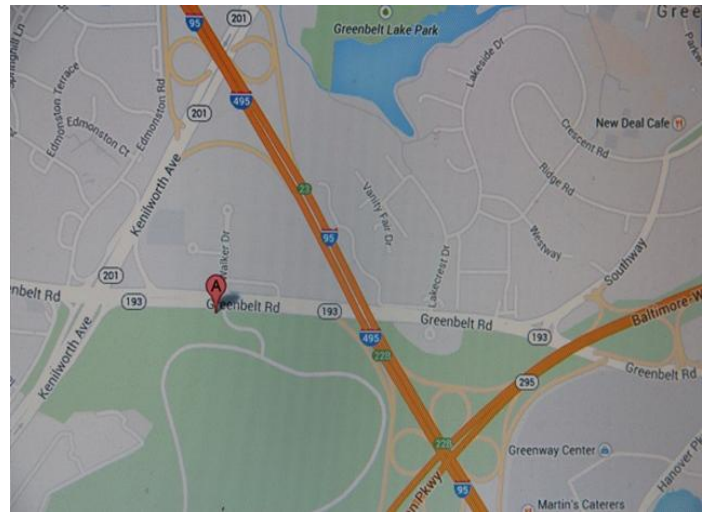
Off I-95 South

Take Exit 23 Route 201 Kenilworth Avenue **South**(toward Bladensburg). (this will be a left). Drive on Kenilworth Avenue (Route 201). Once crossing over I-95, you will see sign for Route 193 Greenbelt Road. Veer right to Take Route 193 East. Take a left on Greenbelt Road . (Greenbelt Road is Route 193 and is an overpass over Route 201)

The park entrance is a quarter mile on the right hand side of Greenbelt Road across from FRIDAYS restaurant and Marriott Courtyard.

From I-95 North (points north)

Take Exit 23 Route 201 Kenilworth Avenue **South** (toward Bladensburg). Upon exiting I-95, take a right on Route 201 (Southbound). Veer right and you will see Route 193, Greenbelt Road. Take a left on Greenbelt Road. (Greenbelt Road is an overpass over Route 201 that is also known as Route 193.) The park is a quarter mile on the right hand side of Greenbelt Road across from Friday's Restaurant and Marriott Courtyard.



Directions to the Park & Entrance and Exit are located at the A marker on the map. Google Maps

From Washington, D.C.,

Take (Route 295) Baltimore-Washington Parkway. Take Greenbelt Road west (It's the exit right after I-95) Veer right onto Route 193 Greenbelt Road West. The Greenway shopping center on the left. Proceed on Route 193 Greenbelt Road west. The park is on the left hand side at the 2nd traffic light across from Friday's Restaurant, Capitol Cadillac, and Marriott Courtyard.

From Baltimore, Maryland

Take (Route 295) Baltimore-Washington Parkway South. Take Greenbelt Road Route 193 West (It's the exit right before I-95) Upon exiting the parkway, take a left at the stop light (there's a Citgo gas station at the intersection). Veer right on Route 193 Greenbelt Road west. The park is on the left hand side at the 2nd traffic light across from Friday's Restaurant, Capitol Cadillac, and Marriott Courtyard.



- If lost, please call one of the following:
 Park Headquarters 301-344-3948 Monday through Friday 8-4.
- Ranger Station 301-344-3944 Seven days a week 8 - 3:45 p.m.
- U.S. Park Police Station at entrance of park open twenty fours a day 301-344-4250

BEHNKE NURSERIES'

5TH ANNUAL
garden party

TO BENEFIT FRIENDS
OF BROOKSIDE GARDENS

SATURDAY, JUNE 6, 2015
9AM TO 3PM

Featuring:

local garden clubs & plant societies • a plant swap
free wine tasting by Old Line Fine Wine, Spirits & Bistro
a huge raffle • free talks by Carol Allen, horticulturist
food for sale from The PG County Police Department
Explorers Post 600

And Don't Miss:

"Grow Your Best Tasting Tomatoes Ever"
a free talk by Mike McGrath,
host of the syndicated Public Radio show "You Bet Your Garden"
sponsored by Espoma organic fertilizers

11300 Baltimore Ave., Beltsville, MD



(301) 937-1100 • www.behnkes.com

NCAC website: www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

NCAC Blog: <http://dcesneriads.blogspot.com/>

Website & Blog: vacant
web@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

President: Jim Roberts
Marriottsville, MD 21104
410-227-2324
jim.roberts@wildblue.net

Vice-President: Andrew Norris
Marriottsville, MD 21104
extensionofgreen@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Barry Woolf
1301 Malus Court
Fallston, MD 21047
410-879-1654
Woolfphoto1@comcast.net

Secretary: Barbara Stewart
bstew771@verizon.net

Committees:

Hospitality: vacant

Programs: Andrew Norris

Membership: vacant

Newsletter Editor: Donna Beverin
editor@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org
Petaltones@gmail.com or
Donnabeverin@gmail.com

web@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org
Website and Blog: vacant

<http://dcesneriads.blogspot.com/>
dcesneriads -at- gmail

Directors:
Andrew Norris
Barb Stewart
Donna Beverin

The Gesneriad Society website
www.gesneriadsociety.org