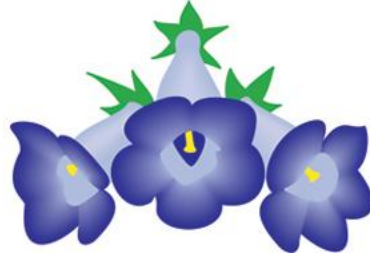
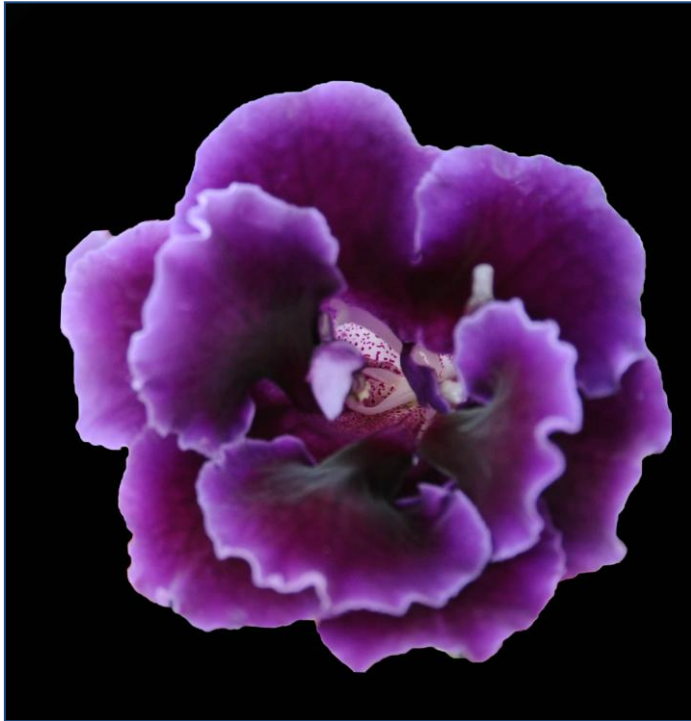


Petal Tones



Volume 46 Number 6

July 2015



Sinningia grown by Barry Wolfe

President's Message

As I write this on July 3rd, I have to wonder what's going on with our Chapter. Where have all the really devoted members gone? Our paid membership is dropping and attendance at meetings has really dropped. I know it is summer and we all have plans with vacations, family gatherings and kids and grandkids demanding our time. And I certainly understand not being able to make all the meetings. But we voted to have meetings all summer long. Maybe we need to re-evaluate that vote. We voted to participate in Behnke's Garden Party event. We had a nice table there and a number of interested people stopped by and may show up at our meeting on the

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

July 11, 2015: Barb Stewart presents [African Violets are Gesneriads, Too!](#) This is a great program detailing the *Saintpaulia* species. These plants were found in Africa before all the hybridizing and mutations created today's wonderful assortment of African Violet plants. If you are growing any of the *Saintpaulia* species please bring them in for the group to see! Please bring only one hybrid.

Arrangement Title: Out of Africa, an arrangement bringing to mind the Dark Continent, using African Violet flowers, 12x12x12

Please remember to bring things for the raffle table!!

August 8, 2015: TBA

11th. But where was our membership? I was there with some plants and printed information, but I was alone. I had to cancel my attendance at the June picnic – our A/C was out and I was not about to put off getting that repaired in the middle of a heat wave. Things happen. But I was surprised to learn that if I had attended it would have been just one other member and me at the picnic. We have some excellent growers in our Chapter. Members participate in our meetings and really seem interested in the raffle table and cuttings of plants brought in for the Little Show. What can we do to get more members to attend meetings? Is it our location? Is it the time of our meetings? Should we consider

changing from Saturday mornings? This is one of the agenda items I'm adding to the July meeting. The other agenda items are left over from the cancelled 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.
- Brazil Seed Fund: We are joining again 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 and teach us something new?
- 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.

Sorry for sounding so negative in this message. I really enjoy our meetings, and seeing all of you is one of my highlights every month. I hope that those of you who come to the meetings feel the same way. And I hope all of you come out to support Barbara Stewart's talk on *Saintpaulia* species (wild African Violets). Jim

Barb's Bloomin' Now



Sinningia 'Kaleidoscope'



Sinningia 'Orange Zinger'



Nautilocalyx adenosiphon

Please bring dues of \$10 for 2015 membership to next meeting on July 11th if you forgot to pay for this year!!



Episcia 'Jim's Canadian Sunset'



Sinningia 'Arkansas Empress'



Chrysothemus 'Black Flamingo'



Saintpaulia Ionantha



A little nocturnal visitor on Barb's bay window!

It's ALIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIVE!! Part 3

Live and Let Live, Unless They Need to Die

By Corey Wickliffe

We live in a germaphobic world my friends, and it has spread to our plants. We do battle with things we can't see with the naked eye – and a few that we can – and have determined all of them are bad. If it's not sterile, then it's no good. I say, NO MORE!

We've gotten into the standardization that the only good soil is sterile (and amusingly also soil-free). How else can we keep the damp off from taking our seedlings? So how else can we keep the 'mealies' or thrips or fungus gnats from spreading?

Living soil is a vector for disease and pests.

Pests are what kept me from jumping full tilt into composting no matter how much waste my plant hobby made. The amount of soil mix and plant material after grooming made me cringe. It's this thought process that really made me rethink what I was doing with those two materials - which, due to pest risk, had to be removed from the area and tossed ASAP to stop possible transmission. I'm spending good money on that soil mix, and tossing the plant material is a waste! I could compost that! Well, if I didn't have an apartment and if the composting process actually killed everything I was worried about...

My circumstances mean that I grow indoors on a light stand, with no access to outdoor composting options (unless I beg from a friend), and the occasional foliar mealy bug terrorization that leads me to be scared of using anything from outside to begin with, or of reusing my soil. That's pretty much why people sterilize their soil anyways, right?

So to start being less wasteful I'm working on sterilizing my used soil in the oven to kill all the bad guys, and I'll be able to reuse it. I've got a microbe brew to restart the soil good guys. I can mix it with the new good stuff. Ah, but for a good bit of compost and a way to not waste all that plant material I'm tossing!

Then a few months ago I was introduced to Bokashi bucket composting – and Bokashi will kill the pests on the plant material. Bokashi doesn't just kill them, it pickles them along with everything else to create a raw compost. The process is different from traditional compost piles (aerobic) and worm bins (worms eat it), because it's an anaerobic (no oxygen) environment. Once it's been sufficiently pickled, you can dump it in your garden and it will break down quickly into the black gold every gardener loves. So after reading up on a few others working with it indoors in situations like mine, I've now got a bin of sterilized used soil being mixed with my pickled Bokashi. After some mixing and time to break down, I have soil mix that just needs a bit of extra perlite to be ready to go!

I've only recently finished the first cycle of this process, but so far it has been easy and fun. I don't spend that much extra time caring for the Bokashi bin (maybe 20 minutes a week) and it only smells of pickles a bit the few times I open up the bucket to add kitchen scraps and plant trimmings. If you're already composting in another form, it's easy enough to feed your Bokashi to your worms, toss it in your compost pile, bury it in a container as you plant it, or bury it in your garden. I've now got a system that produces compost and living soil for me to use, and reducing waste!

The only truly bad thing about this is once you toss a plant into that bucket don't expect it to re-sprout like it sometimes does in compost piles!

I've switched from trying to be sterile to fighting fire with fire, and in discovering something new to me I've returned to something old, and all while reducing waste. Seems like a win to me. If you're interested in Bokashi, there are a lot of online resources you can read, or feel free to ask me about it at Chapter meetings.

I guess it's time to finally get around to raising up some of those seeds I wanted to use for hybridizing... which is a process I also modified with microbes. I'll be talking about that next month!

Magnificent Sinningia Tubifloras Donna Beverin

I just love *Sinningia tubiflora*! Their blooms are so beautiful and the scent is heavenly so how can one resist? Plus, they are so easy to grow. I received my first *Sinningia tubiflora* bulb at a NCAC meeting at the Arboretum from Ki who brought several to the meeting for the raffle table. She was so generous and encouraging folks to take them because she had a lot of bulbs. And from there I realized how true it is that they are so prolific!

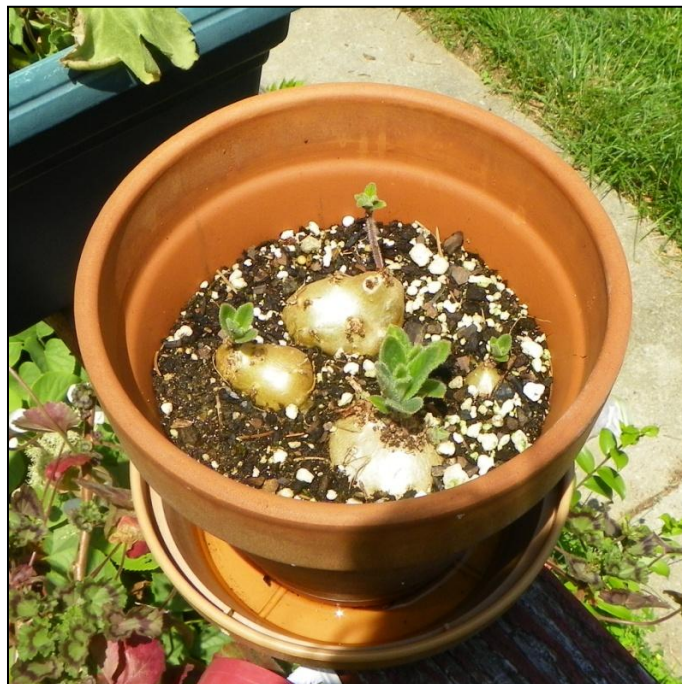
Generally the bottom of the bulb is round and relatively smooth, with maybe a few sparse roots showing and this side should be down in the pot.



But if you see large, thick rhizome-like roots such as these in the photo they lead to the growth of new tubers. They can be divided or planted together.



These bulbs will continue to grow and can circle the flower pot until they are crowding one another and can grow out of the pot or break a plastic pot. The



plants sprout from any size tuber really. I have had tiny tubers and huge tubers. I have observed tubers sprouting at various times of the year. I had one sprout in January and kept it watered and placed it close to the lights in a cool basement until spring when I could put it outside to receive high intensity sun light. On average though, the bulbs will sprout in



spring. To pot up I just place the tuber(s) in a pot of soil with about $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ of the bulb exposed. I prefer clay pots since these tubers seem to like a dry, hot location and I do not want to risk rotting the bulb.

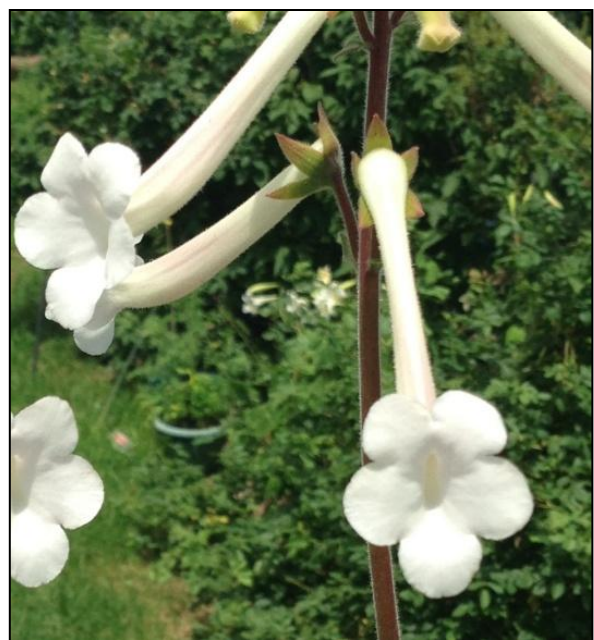


Plus the weight of the clay pot keeps the plants from tipping over since they tend to be top heavy. Also being either close to the lights or outside in the sunshine will keep the growing leaves tight so when the bloom stalk arises the plant is not leggy. The leaf stalk stem will begin arising and I find them to be very strong if not damaged. I have not had to stake very much.

It is not a problem to stake if you need to because saving the stalk from breaking off will save the fragrant, white flowers! I really keep my eye on my plants that have growing stalks and I bring them inside during summer's storms. I would be crushed if the beautiful blooms were destroyed in a burst of wind.



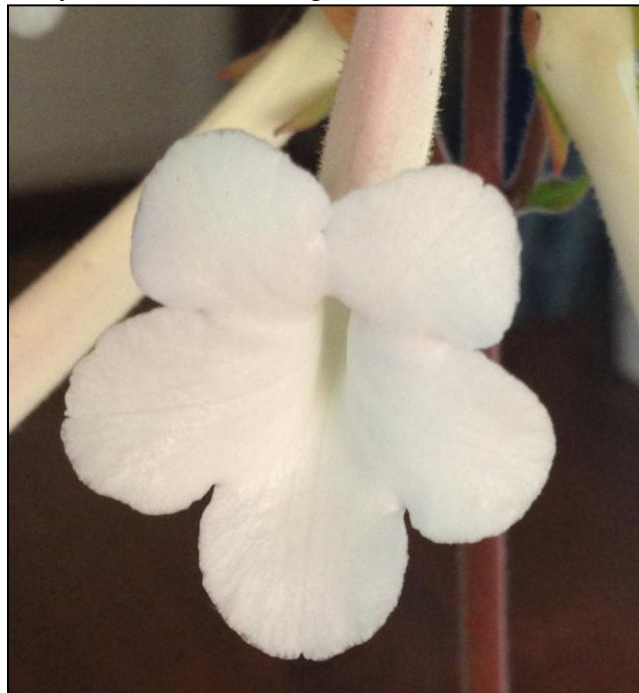
And finally waa lah!



I also like to pot up tubers a few weeks apart and have a succession of pots of blooming *Sinningia*

tubifloras to enjoy. I don't do lot of fertilizing. I usually just add some fertilizer pellets to the potting soil in spring.

As autumn approaches I watch the weather and eventually bring in my pots of tubiflora and put them in my basement under lights at the end of the tubes.



Then as the season progresses the leaves will die back leaving the bulbs resting for the winter. I clean off the dead leaves as they brown and die off usually keeping the bulbs right in the same pot until they sprout again. I do not water them during winter. I only begin to water when I see a sprout.

This spring I had a pot that was overflowing with bulbs so I had to divide. It was challenging and fun. But I had so many bulbs that I sold some on eBay and gave some away at the raffle table. One can grow these plants from seed also and grow your own tubers! The baby tubers may not bloom right away but pot them up anyway and let them grow into a blooming size tuber.

Sinningia tubiflora is supposed to be hardy in zone 7 and I did plant a few out one spring several years ago, but without success. In retrospect, I should have planted them in a hot, dry place and I may try again this summer if it ever stops raining! It would be phenomenal if I can grow them outside too! I hope you will enjoy growing this rewarding gesneriad!

Barry Wolfe's Bloomin' Now



Red *Sinningia*



Purple spotted *Sinningia*

NCAC website: www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

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

dcgesneriads -at- gmail

Directors:

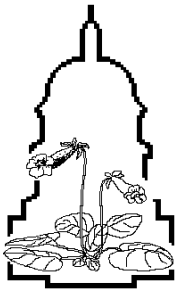
Andrew Norris

Barb Stewart

Donna Beverin

The Gesneriad Society website

www.gesneriadsociety.org



Petal Tones



National Capital Area Chapter of the Gesneriad Society Newsletter

Volume 46 Number 7

August 2015



Sinningia 'Owlsee Red Hot' courtesy Alcie Maxwell

Hello Everyone!

This Saturday, August 8th Jim Roberts is welcoming us to picnic at his house starting at 11:00am. His address is 2408 Henson Drive, Marriottsville, MD 21104, so you can MapQuest or put in your GPS. Please bring your own meat or food for the grill and a side dish or dessert to share. Jim has plates, utensils, condiments, beer and soda for everyone.

Directions: Baltimore Beltway to exit 16, Route 70 west. From Route 70 take exit 83 to Marriottsville Road North. Then, 3.5 miles up the road you'll cross some railroad tracks. Take the second left after the tracks onto Marriottsville Road #2. Continue on

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

August 8th: Picnic at Jim Robert's home:
2408 Henson Drive, Marriottsville, MD 21104

Please remember to bring things for the "Sharing" table!!

September 12th: Plant Show Preparation
October 10th: Review of the Symposium Show in NJ
November 14th: Culture and Care of Gesneriads
December 12th: Holiday Get Together, location TBA

Marriottsville Road #2 for 1.7 miles to Henson Drive on the right side of the road. The house is #2408 – the driveway is directly across from the mailboxes for the street. (GPS will drop you off at the first house on the street. We're directly behind it).
If you're coming down Route 70 from the west (Frederick area) take exit 82 (Route 40). Turn left at the first traffic light onto Marriottsville Road and follow the above instructions when you cross Route 70.

Special Note: We shall bypass the raffle and have a "sharing" table! Bring baggies, a marker and a shopping bag/box to hold all the goodies when you've filled them up. Bring lots of plants, cuttings, rhizomes of any type of plants including garden plants, to share. Other items are welcome also such as pots, and other plant enthusiasts' paraphernalia.

Gasteranthus and Gesneria

Notes from program given by Jim Roberts

By Barbara Stewart

For easy to grow gesneriads, terrarium loving plants are worth a try. *Gasteranthus* and *Gesneria* are two less commonly seen genera that enjoy the humid environment of a terrarium with high humidity!

Gasteranthus

There are 35 species of *Gasteranthus* which are native to Central America. The *Gasteranthus* species are found mostly in the dense rain forests of Ecuador, Columbia, and Peru at various elevations. They are endangered or extinct in the wild due to their limited range and habitat destruction. *Gasteranthus* are unique among gesneriads with puckered circles on the underside of the leaves. These are caused by grouping of the stomata, or breathing pores. *Gasteranthus* are easy to grow, but require terrarium culture because of their need for high humidity. *Gasteranthus atratus* is the variety most commonly grown in cultivation.



Barb's *Gasteranthus atratus* with new shoots growing

Gasteranthus was originally found in lower elevations with warmer climate near waterfalls and streams. It is easy to grow, as long as it gets 100% humidity, preferring low light and does not need to be grown under lights. Actually, too much light will cause the dark, almost black, leaves to turn yellow. This variety is extinct in its native habitat in Ecuador. *Gasteranthus* are fibrous-rooted plants which are easy to grow and propagate. They can be grown in a moist loose soil mix or long fiber sphagnum moss. Propagation can be done by leaf cuttings rooted in soil. With the humid environment, they also root easily by laying a leaf on damp moss. *Gasteranthus* easily produce new growth from the roots. In a terrarium, they develop roots along the stems which drop down and grow where they reach the nearby soil. *Gasteranthus* roots also spread under the soil and sprout new plants from the soil. They rarely self pollinate, but when they are pollinated will develop fruit. The flowers come in 2 forms. Some species have yellow or white flowers which are tubular shaped, thought to be pollinated by bees. Other species have red or orange flowers which have a pouch shape, probably pollinated by hummingbirds. Some of the tubular flowers, such as those on *Gasteranthus diverticularis*, have a unique "spur" on the back of the flower. *Gasteranthus* can be enjoyed even out of bloom, and can be shown for ornamental value, particularly *Gasteranthus atratus* with its beautiful dark bronze and heavily puckered foliage.

Gesneria

There are about 50 species of *Gesneria*, found mostly in the Caribbean islands. Several species are found in South America. The genus was named in honor of Conrad Gessner, a Swiss naturalist in the 1500's. It is the oldest genera of the gesneriad family *Gesneria* and are fibrous rooted plants which are unique because leaves are arranged alternately, unlike other gesneriads whose leaves grow in pairs. A close relative is the *Rhytidophyllum*, which may eventually be merged into the *Gesneria* genus. Although *Gesneria* do not require as much humidity as *Gasteranthus*, they do not tolerate drying out, as they will quickly die, so are often grown in terrariums or are wicked. In nature they grow on limestone cliffs, so will benefit from adding limestone to the soil. *Gesneria* are somewhat difficult to root. Using a rooting powder on stem



Jim's *Gesneria* 'Ako Cardinal Flight' (now an intergeneric hybrid recently renamed *xRhytidoneria* 'Ako Cardinal Flight' because one of its parents was recently changed from *Gesneria rupincola* to *Rhytidophyllum rupincola*).

cuttings may improve chances of success. A leaf will root, but may not send up a new plant. Some *Gesneria* will reproduce by underground runners. In nature, *Gesneria* are pollinated by bats. *Gesneria* and *Gasteranthus* are interesting plants and are fairly easy gesneriads to grow, given the right conditions. They require little maintenance when kept in an enclosed container, and will reward the grower with beautiful blossoms throughout the year.

It's ALIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIVE!! Part 4

Fighting Damp Off in Seedlings with Live Soil

By Corey Wickliffe

My hybridizing efforts have meant I've been working on germinating a lot of seed. I've learned a lot along the way... jiggle the new sprouts occasionally to encourage growth, their changing light needs as they age... but damp off was the silent killer, the thing that really scared me when I started out. Why did some fail and fade, while other batches tried to press the lid off their containers even with no care? What could I do to stop it?

I tried cinnamon, sphagnum moss, various sprays and soaks. I was skirting the line of what I would allow for use on my plants (as many of these could end up in terrariums with sensitive skinned amphibians) but I was still losing a batch there and there. If it wasn't damp off, or the stringy white fungus, it was algae.

Seriously, who loses a batch of seedlings to blue-green algae?!

So I started throwing some seeds into pots with larger plants. They did great! But what was the difference? I was using the same soil mix wasn't I? Yes, but – this was around the time when the larger plants were now getting compost and beneficial microbe mixes added in. Those soils were alive and had a heavy dose of microbial life; in fact those pots have yet to have the fungal and algae issues of my seed starting. I would get plants with soilless mix from other vendors that almost right off will start to fungus over, but it doesn't spread to the pots with my mix. I was adding the compost/beneficial microbe mixes to my terrariums as well, and they helped combat the “new terrarium” fungal outbreak that always happens – a relatively sterile environment with plenty of food options and no competition means they proliferated. When I make these “live” soil mixes there was just too much competition. So I tried it with my seeds.

I probably shouldn't have tried it with my seeds the way I did – I learned the importance of another rule of seed starting... don't start all the seeds in the packet at once! I now have cups full of seedlings that need separating and it's pretty intimidating. Eek!

I found an additional benefit of starting seeds in this style mix (granted, without the perlite I use in my wicked pots) – the first couple of fertilizations are critical in a plantlet's life, and often even if damp off doesn't kill them they can end up fading away just from lack of food. In the organics based soil mixes I've not had that issue at all since the food is available in a stable form and waiting for them as they grow. There is nothing for me to do until they are ready to be thinned out and repotted.

Truly, the organics/compost based way is the lazy way in the end. Now I'm overwhelmed with baby plants that need separating and no room to spread them out!

This is just the early stages in my living soil journey, but it has been a fascinating one. With all the talk of the nutritional benefits you don't always hear about the other benefits of living soil – and these may actually be even more important. I hope it's given you something to think about with your plant growing!



Drew's Bloomin' Now *Codonanthe venosa*



Drew's *Gesneria* 'Ako Cardinal Flight'



Drew's *Gloxinia erinoides* 'Red Satin'



Drew's *Pearcea* species 'Equador'



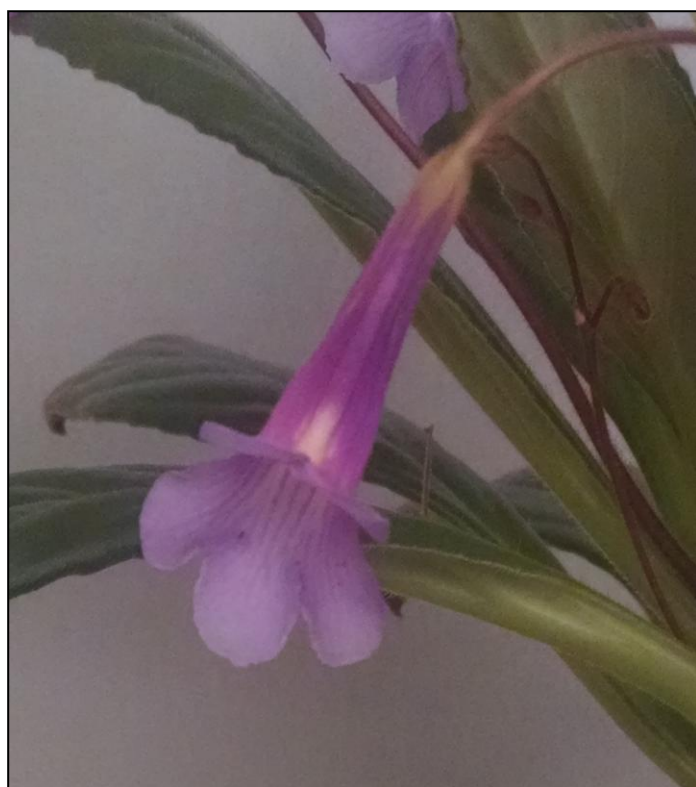
Drew's *Sinningia* 'Amanda's Penny'



Drew's *Xgloximania* 'She's Dancing'



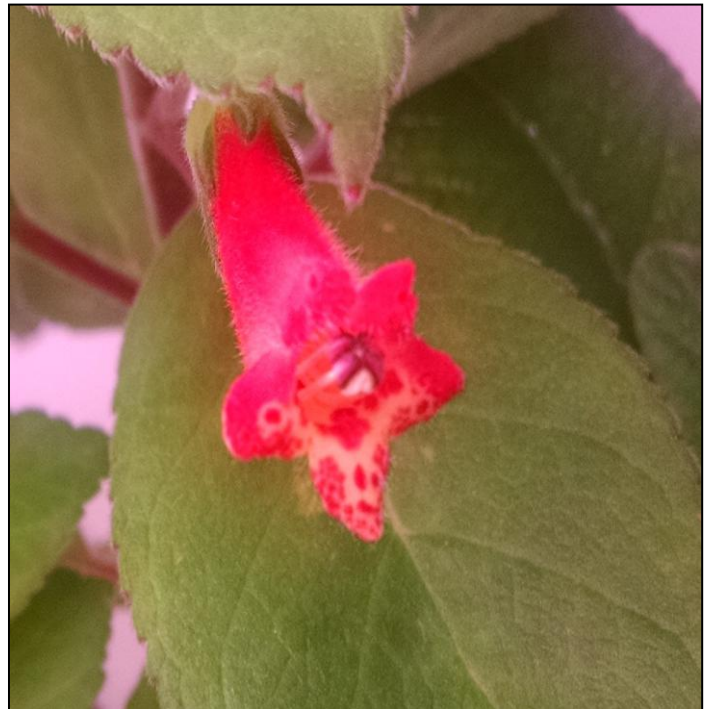
Drew's *Xsmithocodonia* 'Elizabeth'



Barb's Bloomin' Now *Primulina* 'Chastity'



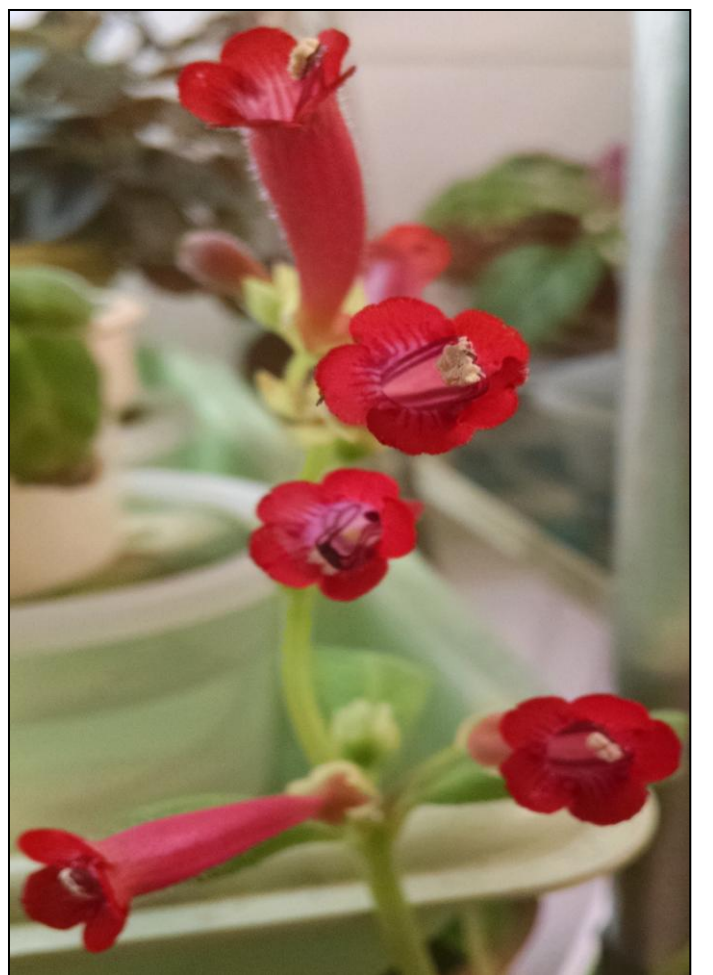
Barb's *Sinningia* 'Texas Zebra'



Barb's *Kohleria hirsuta*



Barb's *Achimenes*



Barb's *Sinningia*, unnamed



Barb's *Petrocosmea formosa*



Barb's *Sinningia guttata*



Sinningia 'Owlsee Red Hot' hybridized & grown by Alcie Maxwell



Close up of *Sinningia* 'Owlsee Red Hot'



At the July meeting Jim and Drew shared many cuttings, plants and rhizomes from their personal collections to our raffle table and many of us members benefited from their generosity!

Thanks to Jim and Drew!!!

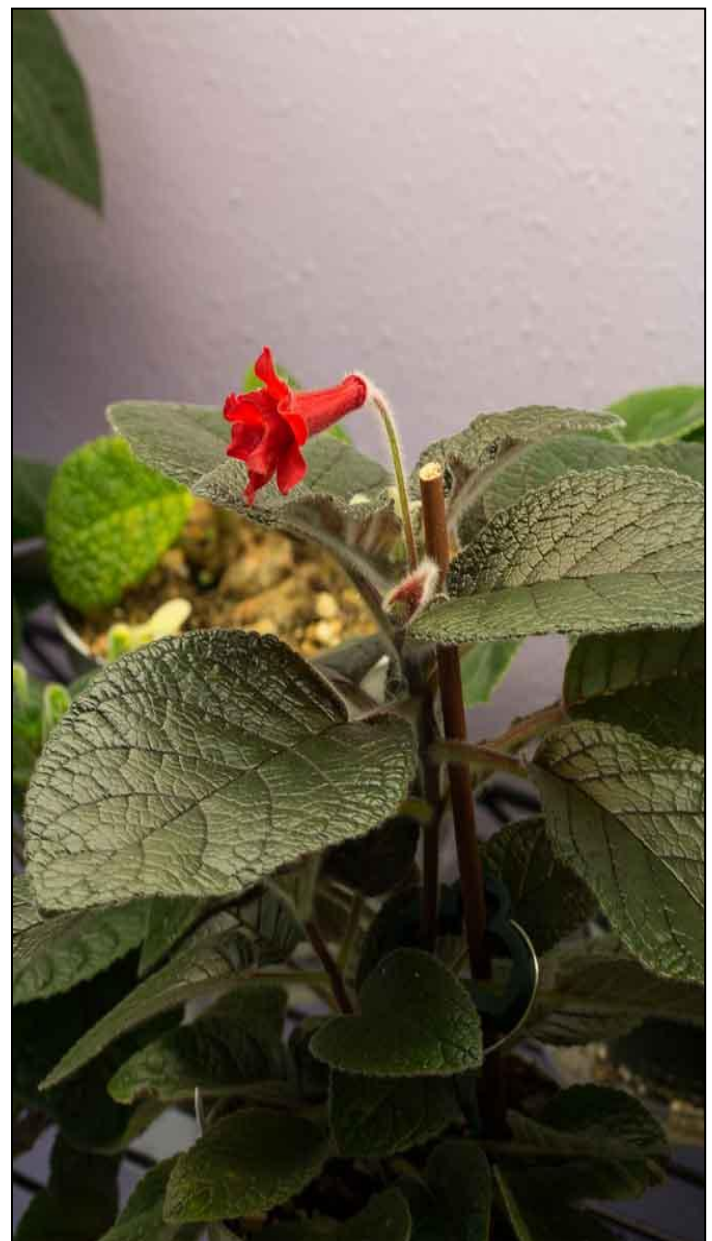
On the raffle table Jim shared large cuttings of a new plant that was hybridized by Alcie Maxwell called *Sinningia* 'Owlsee Red Hot'. It is a nice double red that is a cross with *Sinningia bullata* and *Sinningia* 'Kevin Garnett'. It has great color, village leaves

and a double calyx per Jim, who sent a message out to members that he, had mislabeled the baggies. So take note if you were lucky enough to inherit a cutting! Alcie was impressed with Jim's beautiful plant and very happy that he was able to distribute it to other members / growers! Alcie is propagating it and has six coming up and then plans to register the new plant. Alcie has also crossed *S. 'Owlsee Red Hot'* with other plants in his plant room and seeds from these crosses will soon be available through the National Gesneriad Society's seed fund.

In the contact sheet picture shown here, Alcie produced these seedlings from a cross with *Sinningia* 'Clara Louise' and *Sinningia* 'Owlsee Red Hot'. He said seedling #4 reminds him of *Sinningia* 'Thad's Party Dress'/Diva hybrids and seedling #1 has nice contrasting colors! Thanks Alcie for sharing!



Alcia Maxwell's contact sheet



Sinningia 'Owlsee Hot Red' courtesy of Alcie Maxwell

National Capital Area Chapter of the Gesneriad Society July 11, 2015 Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order by Jim Roberts, President. Nine members were present: Jim Roberts (President), Drew Norris (Vice President), Barbara Stewart (Secretary), Barry Woolf (Treasurer), Kitty Hedgepeth, Peggy MacDonald, Harold Belcher, Donna Beverin, and Victor Nicholas. Eight other guests attended the program on African Violet Species. Three guests became members: Sharon Long, Carrie Seltzer, and Sherry Costas. Minutes:

Drew motioned that the April minutes be accepted, Donna seconded, and the motion passed. Treasurer's Report: Barry reported a balance in the treasury of \$3,778.67. Programs: Future programs were planned through group discussion. They are as follows: August – picnic at Jim's house September – prepare for show (Symposium in New Jersey on the first weekend in October and MAAVS convention on the third weekend in October) October - Symposium review November – general/basic culture (soil, light, etc) December – Christmas luncheon at a member's home (TBD) Spring Show: Jim discussed plans for the spring show. A date and location are needed. Several members agreed to check some suggested

locations and available dates by the August meeting. Several members volunteered for committee positions: Drew and Donna for plant sales and Barbara for speakers. Brazil Seed Fund: There was discussion about what level to select for participation in the seed fund. Barbara motioned to get seeds at the minimum level of \$60 for 18 packets of seeds. Drew seconded the motion which passed. Program: Barbara and Jim showed an AVSA slide program on African violet species, and Barbara and Drew shared specimens of a number of different species from their collections. Budget: There was discussion about creating a club budget and who would be responsible. Donna suggested the board meet and draft a budget. Petal Tones: There was discussion about restricting Petal Tones to paid members only, rather than publishing it on the club website. Barry made a motion to make it available only to paid members. Drew seconded the motion which was passed. In light of significant opposition to restricting Petal Tones, Barry made another motion to archive them until the end of the year, and then post them on the website. Donna seconded the motion and it passed.

Business for next meeting:

- show location & date
- plans for culture program in November
- budget

Submitted by Barbara Stewart, Secretary

NCAC website: www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org
NCAC Blog: <http://dcgesneriads.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

Secretary: Barbara Stewart
bstew771@verizon.net

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

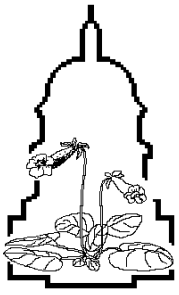
Website and Blog: vacant

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

Dcgesneriads -at- Gmail

Directors:
Andrew Norris
Barb Stewart
Donna Beverin

The Gesneriad Society website
www.gesneriadsociety.org



Petal Tones



National Capital Area Chapter of the Gesneriad Society Newsletter

Volume 46 Number 8

September 2015



Barb's *Henchelia moonii*

Jim Roberts, President's Message

It is hard to believe summer is over and here we are ready for our September meeting this Saturday! The temps outside have still been up in the 90's but that's going to change quickly. It's time to think about where you're going to put all the plants that you've moved outdoors for the summer. Did you save their space so that they can move back in? And even if you did I am sure the heat and humidity have at least doubled the size of many of them. Many 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

September 12th: Plant Show Preparation
October 10th: Review of the Symposium Show in NJ
November 14th: Culture and Care of Gesneriads
December 12th: Holiday Get Together, location TBA

you have been to my house so you know the situation there. But before anything comes back into the house it needs to be treated for potential pests! Achimenes, Smithiantha and other rhizomatous which are going to go dormant can be left outside until the cool weather makes them all look half dead! Then simply cut off the top dead growth and bring in the pots for the winter. You can gather the rhizomes now or wait until spring when you see them starting to grow again. It's not a bad idea to give the pot a dose of liquid Imidacloprid (marathon) to make sure you're not bringing in any soil pests. But what about the Columnea, Aeschynanthus and other fibrous rooted plants, or tuberous plants which are finally getting big enough to flower, or are covered with buds? All should be treated and kept away from the rest of the collection for at least a month. White fly, aphids, mealy bugs, thrips.....none are welcome in the home! The surprising thing is that very few of these pests will show up on your houseplants put out for the summer. Natural predators keep them under control, and I am

guessing the local native plants have a more familiar taste to the local pests and that's what they go after. But treat and isolate anyway.

Our season of meetings is back with us. And with it comes a season of many shows. The Regional Gesneriad Symposium sponsored by the NY, LI and NJ Chapters is being held in NJ the weekend of Oct. 2-4. The Mid Atlantic African Violet Society (MAAVS) is holding its annual show October 15-18. And the Orchid Society is having its show at Behnkes the weekend of October 9-11 (yep, we've been booted out of our meeting place). I hope you'll all at least visit all three shows, and if possible have some entries. Our meeting this month will help you understand what the judges will be looking for in your plant entries. Get it all right and anyone and everyone in the Chapter can win a Blue Ribbon!

Desperately Seeking:

Petrocosmea begoniifolia.....Donna Beverin
Petrocosmea kerrii 'Crème de Crug'.....Donna Beverin
Gesneria rupicola.....Jim Roberts
Sinningia 'Star Eyes'.....Jim Roberts

Bloomin' Now



Kitty's *Saintpaulia* 'Pixie Blue', a vintage trailer



Barb's *Achimenes* 'Golden Jubilee'



Barb's *Streptocarpus* 'Spiritual corridor'



Barb's *Achimenes Mexicana*



Barb's *Kohleria* 'Red Ryder'



Kitty's *Saintpaulia* 'Broadway Star Trail'



Kitty's *Sinningia speciosa*



Barb's *Sinningia* 'Li'l Georgie'



Barb's *Sinningia Amambayensis*



Barb's *Kohleria* 'Ingrid'



Barb's *Streptocarpus* 'Miss Mabel'



Jim's *Sinningia* 'SimSim Salaviem'



Northeast Regional Show and Sale

October 3, 2015 1:30pm - 4:30pm
October 4, 2015 11:00am - 3:30pm

Frelinghuysen Arboretum, Haggerty Education Building, 353 East
Hanover Ave., Morristown, NJ 07960

African Violets and their exotic cousins will be featured in the show.
The plant sales tables will offer African Violets and other exotic house
plants

Free Admission

Hosted by

Greater New York Gesneriad Society
Frelinghuysen Arboretum Gesneriad Society
Long Island Gesneriad Society

For additional information contact;
Mary Lou Robbins - marylourobbs@hotmail.com
or
Jill Fischer - HFJG.Fischer@comcast.net



Jim's *Seemannia purpurescens* 'Red'



Jim's *Seemannia purpurescens* 'Red' flower close up



Jim's *Achimenes* 'Double Yellow Rose'.
Both colors on the same plant that blooms open as yellow and turn to the rose color!



Jim's *Streptocarpus* 'Fred's Yellow Ice'

**African Violet Society of Philadelphia Annual
Judged Show and Sale**

Cathedral Village Retirement Community
600 East Cathedral Road
Philadelphia, PA 19128
Saturday, October 10, 2015
11am – 4pm
Contact: Carol Hastings, 610-272-6961
Scut2@aol.com
<http://Phillyviolets.org>



Drew's *Agalmyla parasitica* (rare to see and bloom)



Jim's *Aeschynanthus splendidus*



Close up of *Agalmyla parasitica*



Drew's *Sinningia* Bristol's Galaxy Tour



Drew's *Saintpaulia* 'Kei Yoki'



Drew's *Saintpaulia* 'Louisiana Lullaby'



Ask Mr. Gesneriad!

I am wondering why this unnamed *Sinningia speciosa* has such yellowed leaves. It is

grown in a clay pot and wicked under 2 old T-12 bulbs. I regularly use Dyna-gro 7-9-5 (1/4 tsp/gal). Would Epsom salt help, even though the Dyna-gro has some magnesium in it? Barb S.



Mr. G says:

The *Sinningia* sure does look like it's missing something. When's the last time it was repotted? Tubers grow and go dormant and grow and go dormant repeatedly and we tend to forget sometimes that they may want some fresh mix around the few roots that they have. The pH changes over time. Our potting mix compresses and holds too much moisture. Extra fertilizer, when a plant can't utilize it because of root damage or pH issues, will not solve this one. I would cut the crown off of the tuber and attempt to root it in fresh mix. The yellowed leaves are not likely to turn green again at this point in their lives, but why waste a perfectly good crown? Let it root and form a new tuber. Take the old tuber out of the pot, wash off as much of the old soil mix as possible, and pot it up in fresh mix. Do not water it until it starts to show some active growth. If it shows top growth you can be sure that the bottom of the tuber is putting out new roots too. The new roots can utilize the nutrients in the soil, and would appreciate any fertilizer that they find there. This should solve your problem! Enjoy your *Sinningia*!

NCAC website: www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

NCAC Blog: <http://dcgesneriads.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

Secretary: Barbara Stewart

bstew771@verizon.net

Treasurer: Barry Woolf

1301 Malus Court

Fallston, MD 21047

410-879-1654

Woolfphoto1@comcast.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://dcgesneriads.blogspot.com/>

Dcgesneriads -at- Gmail

Directors:

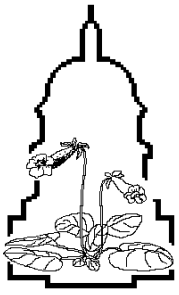
Andrew Norris

Barb Stewart

Donna Beverin

The Gesneriad Society website

www.gesneriadsociety.org



Petal Tones



National Capital Area Chapter of the Gesneriad Society Newsletter

Volume 46 Number 9

October 2015



Sinningia hirsuta: Drew started growing & Donna flowered!

President's Message

Fall is here. Nights are getting cool even though the day temperatures are absolutely perfect. I've still got a number of *Sinningia* on the patio and Drew has lots of *Achimenes* and *Smithiantha* still outside on wicks. We've got to figure where to put them when we bring them in. We could cut them back and just salvage the rhizomes and tubers, but they're just coming into full flower. Would hate to lose seeing all those blooms!

That's the problem with growing outdoors for the summer. The indoor spot no longer exists when the plant wants to come back in. And even if it did still exist, we would need for it to expand to three times the area.

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

October 17th: Review of NJ Symposium Show
November 14th: Culture and Care of Gesneriads
December 12th: Holiday Get Together, location TBA
March 18 – 20, 2016 Tentative Show Dates

This is show time for many plant groups. The Regional Show in Northern New Jersey was a huge success the first weekend in October. This weekend the Orchid Show is bringing in the crowds. And the week after our meeting is the MAAVS show in York, PA. If you haven't made any of the other shows, try to hit this one. Lots of violets and gesneriads will be on sale. Well, it is time to get back to working on the indoor plants. Plenty of time to get show plants ready for a March show. But we ALL have to start working on our show plants now.

Good growing! Jim

Violets Visit the Fair
MAAVS 2015 Convention & Show
October 22 – 24, 2015

York, the first Capital of the USA, is also the home of America's first fair which began in 1765. Continue in the celebration of the York Fair which is in its 250th year!
Wyndham Garden York Hotel, 2000 Loucks Road, York,
PA 17404

<http://www.maavs.org/>



Ask Mr. Gesneriad!
Update from Barb Stewart

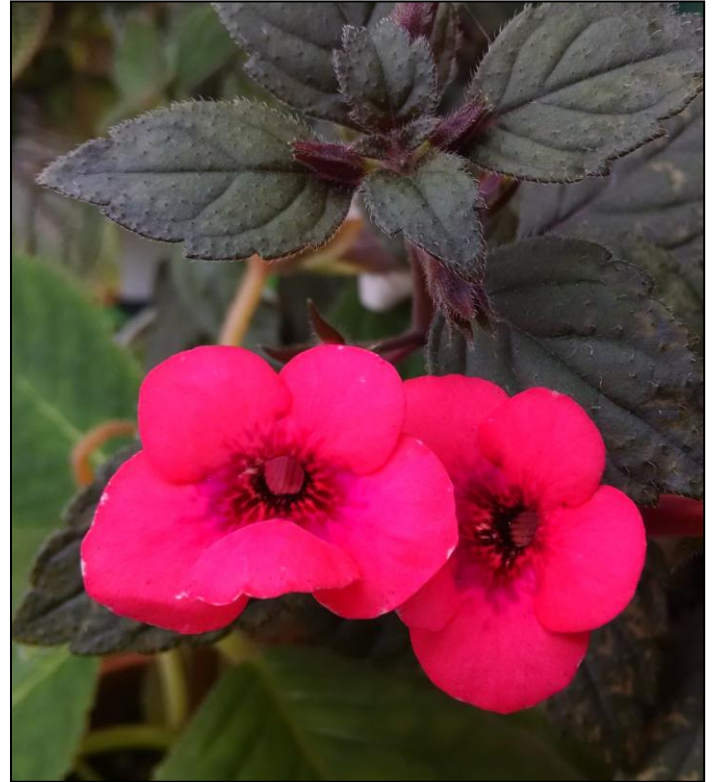


To follow up Mr. Gesneriad's response to my query about my yellowed *Sinningia speciosa*, the plant was overdue for repotting as suggested. It has been in a small clay pot since January 2014. I did not want to repot it or cut off the crown while it was so close to blooming, so it is still in the same pot. However, I did give it a weak solution of Epsom salt which really made a difference. I have included the before and after photos. (Unfortunately, I missed the in between photo of the opened blossoms. Maybe next year.) Editor's note: Guess it needed some magnesium! Amazing transformation!



Desperately Seeking:
Petrocosmea begoniifolia.....Donna Beverin
Episcia 'Moon Light'..... Donna Beverin
Gesneria rupincola.....Jim Roberts

Bloomin' Now



Barb's *Achimenes* 'Bird of Paradise'

Barb's *Achimenes* 'Abyss'





Barb's *Aeschynanthus* 'Tiger Stripe'



Barb's *Saintpaulia* 'Granger's Heart's Desire'



Barb's *Gloxinia* 'Dragon Song'



Barb's *Sinningia* 'Country Prayer'



Barb's *Sinningia* 'Royal Raspberry'



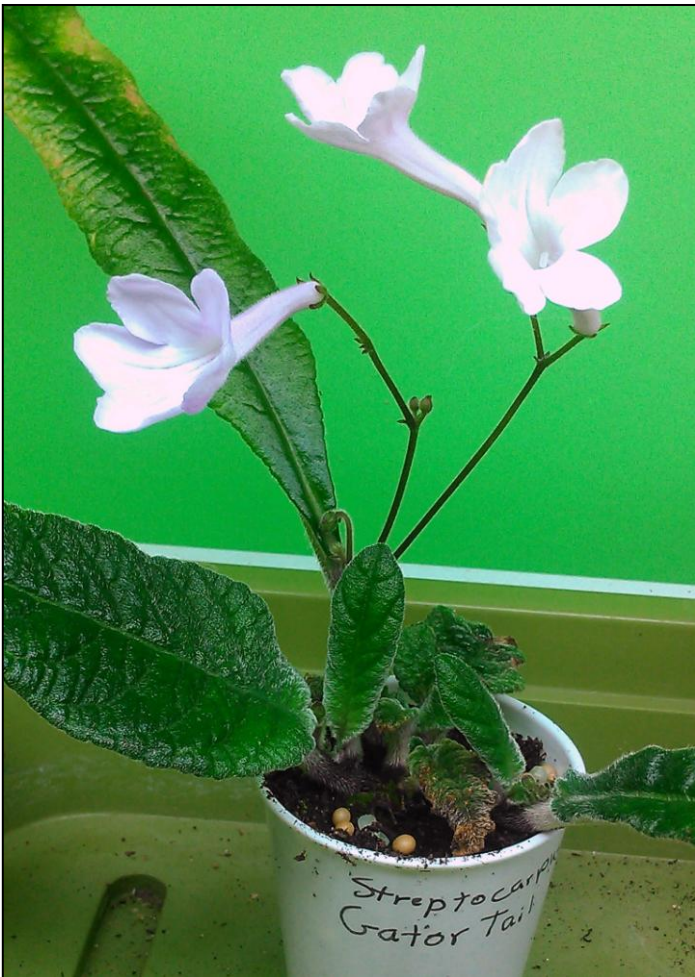
Barb's *XAchimenantha* 'Star of Stars'



Kitty Hedgepeth's *Sinningia* 'Prudence Risley' that she grew from a cutting put down on 5/11/15 !



Peggy MacDonald's *Episcia* 'Show Time'



Peggy MacDonald's *Streptocarpus* 'Gator's Tail'



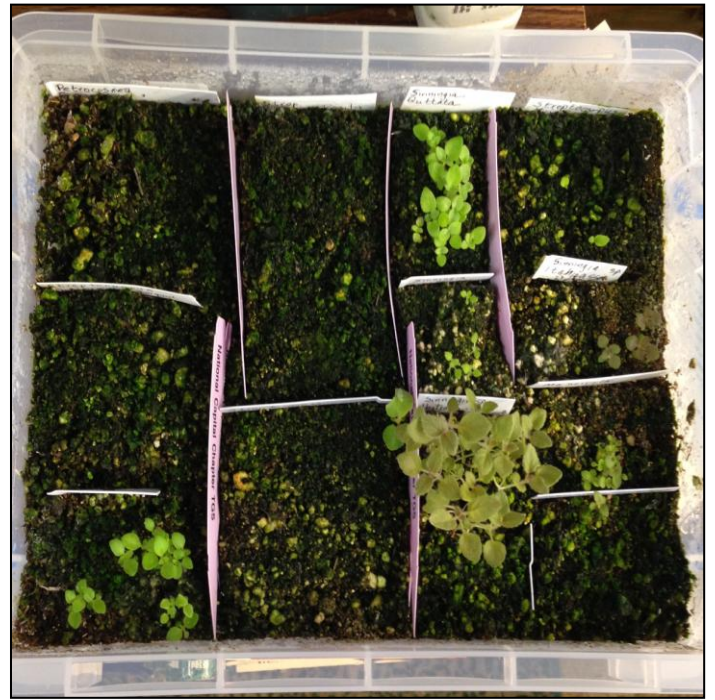
Donna's *Gloxina* 'Dragon Song' close up



Donna's *Streptocarpus* 'Bristol's Goose Egg'



Another view of Donna's *Sinningia hirsuta*. Just love this plant! Thanks Drew!!!



Donna's container of *Gesneriad* seedling babies!



Donna's *Sinningia* 'Bright Eyes'



Donna's terrarium with lots of Mini *Sinningias* in bud



Jim's *Sinningia* Ted Bona hybrid

Our Hybridizers' Corner

By Jim Roberts

I've been out of hybridizing for decades, but have finally started to try it again. Two *Alsobia* species that I really like are *Alsobia chiapensis* for its fringed flowers and Ron Myhr's collection #2 for its color. So I thought "why not combine the two?" So I took pollen from the Ron Myhr plant and put it in *Chiapensis*. A year later the seedlings are starting to flower. There is quite a bit of leaf variation between the seedlings, but all grow more like *chiapensis* than the tall, woody stemmed Ron Myhr plants.

I have about 20 seedlings that I kept. The first two have very different flowers, so I'm probably going to wait for all of them to flower before I select one or two for naming. My favorite so far is the first to flower. The color is better. But the fringe on the second to flower is longer. Hopefully there will be one with lots of color and long fringe.



Alsobia chiapensis



A. Ron Myhr's 2011-2



Jim's hybrid seedling 1



Jim's hybrid seedling 2

Next! The issue of naming the hybrid(s) !

Do You Know Your pH?

By Kitty Hedgepeth

I have recently been experiencing problems with my African violets. They are presenting tight centers, though without the fuzzy aspect that one would associate with mites. I have had problems with the pH levels in my (City of Richmond, VA) tap water in the past, and in the past, tested my water to find that it had a high pH value. I corrected this by adding one quarter teaspoon of Dyna-gro, a liquid fertilizer with a nutrient ratio of 7-9-5, to one gallon of water. This corrected the pH value of my water to 6.8.

Out of curiosity, I recently rechecked my local tap water and discovered that my pH was 7.8. I tested my tap water with the following fertilizers, one quarter teaspoon to one gallon of water. The following are my results:

Dyna-gro 7-9-5 6.6
 Peter's 15-16-176.5
 Peter's 12-36-146.6
 Better Gro 11-35-156.5
 Violet Gallery 12-31-14 6.8

As you can see, the fertilizer with which you feed your plants can alter the pH levels in your tap water. It is advisable to test your tap water along with your fertilizer of choice. Tight centers can indicate several issues, mites, too much light, but tight centers can also indicate problems with the acidity or alkalinity of your water.

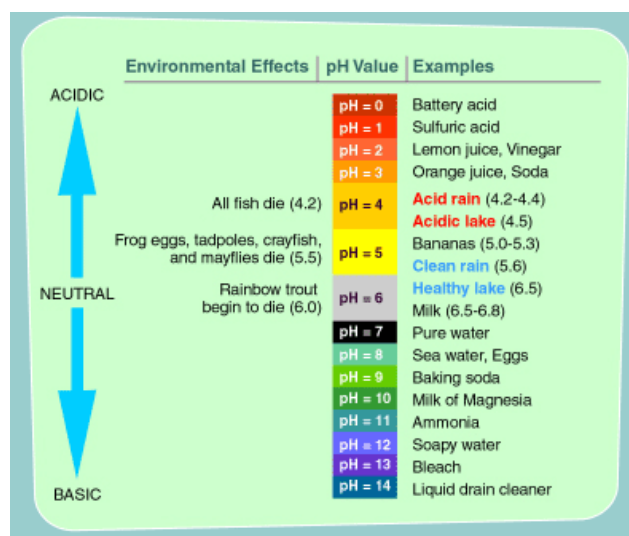


Photo: courtesy USA EPA

Preparing Plants for Show: Your Efforts to Condition Your Plant Could Result in a Blue Ribbon!

By Jim Roberts



Jim gave a very informative demonstration to five members about how to check your gesneriad plants for 'Condition' during our September 12, 2015 meeting at Behnkes.

When preparing your gesneriad plant for a show, condition is a scoring point which accounts for 30-40% of the 100% point system. You don't want to have a dirty pot (no salt or other stains), spent flower stems, pet hair, weeds in the pot, spots on the leaves or plants hanging out over the pot (unless it's part of the plants growth habit). Remove any yellowed leaves and brush off any dirt on the leaves. The soil surface under the plant should be cleaned up and spent stems removed. Too much perlite showing in the soil will cause points to be deducted from the score. The soil may be covered with small stones or long fibered sphagnum as a dressing but be careful that the covering doesn't detract from the plant or the design. You can also use a spray bottle of water to wash off the leaves and adding a drop of Murphy's Oil Soap in the spray bottle will take off any spots on the leaves.

When showing *Petrocosmea* remove the outer leaves and suckers (unless doing so will compromise the symmetry of the plant). You can replant those suckers for more plants in the future. *Petrocosmea* will readily sucker. You can leave suckers on especially on *Petrocosmea*. Fortunately, because of their growth habit, *Petrocosmea* don't have to be quite as perfect as in other categories. You can mix flowering and non-flowering *Petrocosmea* in the same display, since variety is good and helps to show diversity in the family.

If your pot isn't in great shape, slip it inside another pot (often done for support). While gesneriads shows allow slip pots, begonia shows do not allow slip pots. Gesneriad shows don't have restrictions on pot size or color, but when using a slip pot, be mindful of both size and color to be sure they are appropriate and don't detract from the plant. Jim also demonstrated how to trim the leaves of a plant to remove any imperfections in an inconspicuous way.



Jim's Bloomin' Now

This *Primulina* has been in this solo cup for over a year. My bad! However, it continues to flower with the largest and prettiest of the flowers on any of my *Primulinas*. The flowers are 2" across and 2" long. I have it labeled as *Primulina fimbrisepala*. However, a good friend has suggested that this might actually be a hybrid called *Primulina mineko*. Either way, it's nice!



Jim had an interesting container of scissors that he obtained from a craft shop. The package contained 12 pairs of scissors all of which had different serrated blades for making different patterned cuts. The scissors were used to make cuts which most closely mimicked the leaf's edge growth patterns. Trimming helps to improve symmetry and remove slight blemishes and make the plant look cleaner. Very ingenious!

Perlite history: Frances Batchelor used to allow the perlite to show up during a show because it demonstrated how the plant was 'really' grown. But then Ben Paternoster took over and did not like the appearance of the perlite in the soil and said it needed to be covered up or top dressed. If you lose a flower on your show plant, for example while packing, transporting and unpacking it for the show, you can use an egg white paste to glue it back onto the plant.

A few no no's:

- Name tags in or on the pot
- Pet hairs
- Dust or soil particles on leaves
- Discolors or brown leaves
- Old flowers or seed pods
- Seed pods that were hybridized and labeled are acceptable
- Perlite showing in soil

Condition is a big part of the points score but it is easy to correct prior to the show. Good Luck!

Harold Belcher's Cleaning House (and we are the beneficiaries)

I'm running out of space and have to clear out the area so that new windows can be installed in my basement. I'll keep a few and some of the outside plants. Mandeville, jasmine, clivia and orchids will come in for the winter and will need space. With luck, the first frost will be after October 26th which is the day everything will be installed. Harold's plants are available on a first come first serve basis as he is eager to continue to move forward with his home

improvements. Here are the pictures of some of his giveaway plants. Some are included in one or more pictures. Many of his plants have been in his basement for over 20 years so would like to find some "good" homes. Some of his gesneriads may go as well although he hasn't included any pictures of



them. The raffle table will be a great place to share.

Jade plant, Peace lily, Norfolk Island pine, Christmas cacti, Palm, Ficus, Philodendrums & Rubber plant. You can enlarge pictures by copying and enlarging on your computer to get a better look. Please contact Harold and he can bring plants to a meeting if they are not the huge ones!



Ask Mr. Gesneriad

Mr. Gesneriad,
Do you have any thoughts or experience using pumice vs. perlite in your growing mediums? Donna

I have not personally tried pumice in place of perlite in my mix. However, if you can afford it, it should work fine. It certainly would look better than perlite in the mix. It has the right porosity, but is a bit denser so it probably wouldn't all float to the top of the mix. Try it. If you find a good, inexpensive source let us all know about it!

Mr. Gesneriad,

Might you know what causes the young leaves of *Streptocarpus* to curl? No insects are there so maybe a salt buildup or fertilizer problem? Peggy

If I could see a picture of the plant it would be more accurate to diagnose, but w/o a picture, I would say it *could* be salt accumulation, but I wouldn't really expect newly rooted plants to have the time to accumulate too much fertilizer. Possibly the new plants are being kept too wet. Leaf cuttings have no roots and need to be kept wetter than mature plants; however, once the babies start up they should be kept a little drier or lifted up in the mix so that more air can get to the roots. Other possibilities for leaf curl are humidity: too much or too little. Send a photo or two of what the plants look like and I'll offer more suggestions next month. Or bring some plants to the meeting and let the Strep experts in the group offer some suggestions. We're all here to help each other.

Dale Martens Growing and Hybridizing
Streptocarpus Webinar

A one-hour online lecture with time for questions.

Sponsored by the The Gesneriad Society

October 21st, 9:00 – 10:00pm

October 24th, 2:00 – 3:00pm

Register at : <http://shop.gesneriadsociety.org/>

Cost: \$9.95

2015 Tri-state African Violet Society Show & Sale

Saturday, November 7th 1:30 – 4:30pm

Sunday, November 8th 10:30am – 3:00pm

Frelinghuysen Arboretum, 55 Hanover Avenue,
Morristown, NJ

Jane Riemer: j_reimer@comcast.net for more info.

The Baltimore African Violet & Gesneriad Club will be holding their annual Fall Sale on Saturday, November 7th at The Shops of Kenilworth, 800 Kenilworth Drive, Towson, MD 21204. Hundreds of beautiful African Violets and other exotic houseplants will be offered for sale, plus leaves cuttings, soil mix, plant rings, self-watering pots and much more! Hours are 9am to 5pm with free admission!

60th Annual Gesneriad Society International
Convention

July 5 – 9, 2016

Double Tree Wilmington-Downtown Legal District,
Wilmington, Delaware

Hosted by the Delaware African Violet & Gesneriad Society. For additional information see the Society website in January and the First Quarter 2016 issue of *Gesneriads*.

NCAC website: www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

NCAC Blog: <http://dcgesneriads.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

Secretary: Barbara Stewart
bstew771@verizon.net

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

Committees:

Hospitality: vacant

Programs: Andrew Norris

Membership: vacant

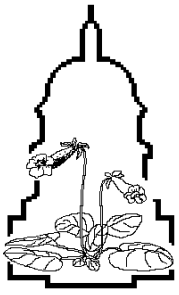
Newsletter Editor: Donna Beverin
editor@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

Petaltones@gmail.com or
Donnabeverin@gmail.com
web@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

Website and Blog: vacant
<http://dcgesneriads.blogspot.com/>
Dcesneriads -at- Gmail

Directors:
Andrew Norris
Barb Stewart
Donna Beverin

The Gesneriad Society website
www.gesneriadsociety.org



Petal Tones



National Capital Area Chapter of the Gesneriad Society Newsletter

Volume 46 Number 10

November 2015



Saintpaulia 'Kazumi' Drew's blue ribbon winner

President's Message

Greetings! It was bound to happen eventually. As many of you know I travel quite a bit for my company. Can't complain too much because I've seen some really nice parts of the US and the world, but I can't always (like never) plan when I'm going to be away.

The date of our meeting this month, November 14, I have to travel to Tampa, Florida to attend a series of meetings which start Sunday morning. So I'm going to have to miss the meeting. And since this is Drew's last chance to travel before he goes for his cosmetology test and license (and starts working), Drew is going with me. Good for both of us but not so good for the meeting. We had planned on an hour long discussion of four genera: Drew on *Saintpaulia*,

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

November 14th: *Primulina* and *Petrocosmea*
December 12th: Holiday Get Together, location TBA
March 18 – 20, 2016 Tentative Show Dates

Barb Stewart on *Primulina*, Karen Allen on *Streptocarpus* and me on *Sinningia*. With half the panel out of town we're postponing that program until January or February next year.

Instead, I'm going to send a copy of the program that I have at the MAAVS Convention on *Primulina* and *Petrocosmea* for either Brian Connor or Barbara Stewart to present to the group. I'll send my projector with Brian. It was well received there and I think the group will like seeing all the new *Primulina* that will eventually be making their way here from China. Other news: many of our *Achimenes*, *Smithiantha* and even a few *Sinningia* are still outdoors. The *Achimenes* have pretty much died back down to the soil level with the light frost we had, but the *Smiths* are still flowering (some leaf damage) and the *Sinningia* are showing very little damage at all. No scheduled frost this week while I'm in Southern California (Nov 2-7) but everything will have to come in on the Sunday when I'm back home. I can't risk a really hard frost.

MAAVS was great, again, this year. I saw a few of you there but it's really a show worth attending. Drew won for best Other Gesneriad for his *Columnea polyantha* but his *Seemannia purpurescens* caught everyone's eye as soon as they walked in the room. He also won horticulture sweepstakes again.

This brings me up to our show, as it is time to start selecting and grooming your show plants. Cuttings removed to shape up the show plants should be potted up for the sales table. The show is only 4 months away. We all have to prepare. Even a single entry can end up as Best in Show. It's all based on the quality of your exhibit, not the size or number of flowers. Impressive plants catch everyone's eye, but perfection catches the eye of the judge.

See you all in December at the Holiday Party. Hope the November meeting is well attended and that everyone has a good time. I shall miss seeing you, but we hope to bring back some more new goodies from Nance Kast and Thad Scaggs while we're down there! Jim

Bloomin' Now Barb's *Sinningia* Stone's Yulia



Barb's *Streptocarpus* 'Sylvia'



Barb's *Sinningia* 'Party Dress'



Barb's *Primulina* 'Rachel'



Barb's *Corytoplectus cutucuensis*



Barb's *Saintpaulia* 'Kentucky Red Devil'



Barb's *Columnea orientandis*



Barb's *Streptocarpus* 'Nerys' with an interesting sport bloom (top)

Winning “The Ugliest Dawg Show Ever”

Barbara Stewart

We all have some of “those” plants. We can't grow all our African violets to win “best-in-show”, so what happens to the others that don't measure up? You know, the ones hidden on the back of the shelf that get overlooked or forgotten. Or the ones we just



don't have time to groom and repot? Well, every dog deserves its day, and a recent “Dawg Show” was the day for the poor, neglected violets on my shelves to win some awards.



Saintpaulia ‘Foxwood Trail’Most ungroomed!

The show schedule included a section for necks: the longest necks and the most necks. A separate section was for violets with the most suckers (before they become necks).



Saintpaulia ‘Neon Fantasy’under potted!

Then there was section for potting issues: over and under potted and most off balanced. The next section was for the most un-groomed violet. Finally the section of special classes included spent blossoms, limp foliage, ugliest planter, and trailer with the largest gaps in the middle of the foliage. The rules were simple. Any ugly plant that was healthy (specifically not diseased or infected with pests), blooming or not, and owned by the exhibitor at least one day was eligible to show.



NOID with a long neck!

Otherwise, “anything goes” was the rule, and bribing the judges was legal. It was decided that everyone present would judge, so it was a people's choice vote. Unfortunately, we could not vote for our own plants. Not a problem, however, because there were plenty of other votes for my plants.

In addition to winning a number of “best in section” awards, I won “best in horticulture”. As in gesneriad shows, however, this did not necessarily mean “best in show”, which went to another exhibitor for a plant with a neck so long and the crown so top heavy that it would not stay upright on the table.

So how does one get so good at growing ugly plants? The best way is to have way too many plants to take care of. It is survival of the fittest, and the weak ones get lost in the jungle of more vigorous plants with prettier blossoms (as well as other gesneriads that take over). A dawg show is a good way for these plants to get some badly needed attention. Also, many of my exhibits were “NOIDs” (no ID) which cannot be exhibited in a regular violet or gesneriad show. Many serious growers toss those NOIDs, so why do I have a tray full of NOIDs? There are several reasons:

- a) the label was missing or worn off when I repotted, and I hope to identify it when it blooms.
- b) people ask me for violets which they can't grow, so I give them a NOID to kill in case they don't read the culture folder.
- c) it can be used in a design which doesn't require “named” varieties or show quality plants.
- d) I just hate to throw out a plant. My top winning dawgs will indeed get their day (soon, I promise). Many crowns and suckers will be chopped off and put in fresh soil, then shared with friends, under potted and over potted plants will be given the appropriate size pot for optimum growth and spent blossoms and damaged or dead leaves will be removed so healthy leaves can grow. Who knows, with a little TLC, some of these ‘dawgs’ may eventually grow into nice show plants. There is nothing like winning, even in a dawg show, to inspire hope for a neglected plant!

The MAAVS Show



Display with Ferris wheel of beautiful violets



The Gesneriad table



One of the sales tables at the MAAVS show Saturday, October 24th. Near the end of the show sale plant prices were reduced for good deals!



Gary Hunter had a lot of nice plants for sale!



Drew's *Saintpaulia* 'Candy Fountain'



Some nice Russians from Black Oak Studio. Jim had to explain to me where to find the English translations which made selecting a purchase much easier!!!



Drew's *Saintpaulia* 'Ma's Secret Child'



Achimenes 'Flamingo' grown by Karyn Cichocki. Magnificent orange!



Susan Arnao's *Saintpaulia* 'Rob's Combustible Pigeon'



Brian Connor's *Saintpaulia* 'Cupid's Jewel'



Brian's *Saintpaulia* 'Optimara EverGlory'



Drew's *Saintpaulia* 'Arcturus'



Drew's *Saintpaulia* 'Double Black Cherry'



Drew's *Saintpaulia* 'Emerald Love'



Drew's *Saintpaulia* 'Lovestruck'



Drew's *Seemannia purpurescens* and the picture does not do it justice. Had to see it in person! Won Blue and Judges Award of Merit.



Brian's *Smithiantha* Keystone's Tapestry



Brian's *Saintpaulia* 'Rhapsodie Cora'



Brian's *Saintpaulia* 'Rebel's Minnesota Haze'



Brian's *Saintpaulia* 'Cajun's Cherished Hope' was the Best in Class

60th Annual Gesneriad Society International
Convention

July 5 – 9, 2016

Double Tree Wilmington-Downtown Legal District,
Wilmington, Delaware

Hosted by the Delaware African Violet &
Gesneriad Society. For additional information see
the Society website in January and the First Quarter
2016 issue of *Gesneriads*.

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

Secretary: Barbara Stewart

bstew771@verizon.net

Treasurer: Barry Woolf

1301 Malus Court

Fallston, MD 21047

410-879-1654

Woolfphoto1@comcast.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:

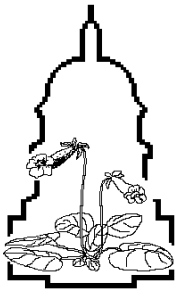
Andrew Norris

Barb Stewart

Donna Beverin

The Gesneriad Society website

www.gesneriadsociety.org



Petal Tones



National Capital Area Chapter of the Gesneriad Society Newsletter

Volume 46 Number 11

December 2015



Sinningia conspicua

Editors' Message

Hello everyone! Jim has been busy so here I am writing a letter from the editor instead of sharing a letter from the President! Bear with me! I am very happy to say my plants are doing well. Since I added an extra light fixture to each of my plant shelves, added some new LED lighting and started wicking 99% of my plants, my successes are surprising me! I still have Christmas cacti, geraniums, clivia, begonias and a few other plants that I hand water, but I must say I encourage anyone to wick water and I should have done it years ago! It sure makes life easier to just refill the containers with water that last for a few days or a week depending on the plant. I rotate plain water with fertilized water. I am using a turkey baster to squirt water into the container holding the plant. Some plants seem to "drink" a lot! My *Episcias* and *Sinningia hirsuta* are very thirsty and I refill their reservoirs a lot. I am using clear plastic drinking cups. The 2 inch up to 5 inch flower pots with a lip will fit in perfectly to various size plastic cups leaving space at the bottom for the wick. I found cups in 3 to 18 ounce sizes.

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

December 12th: Holiday Get Together at Behnkes
January 9th: Propagation Workshop: Preparing your plants for show by Brian Connor
February 13th: Primulina, Petrocosmea, African Violet & Streptocarpus Panel with 4 growers
March 18 – 20, 2016 NCAC Show at Behnkes

They are cheap and I can see through the plastic to check the water level. I also found some green translucent cups that I am experimenting with to see if they create an atmosphere of less algae growth. An experiment with putting a tablespoon of charcoal in the bottom of one of the cups has resulted in no algae growth in that container! I have to buy more charcoal and will try it in more cups and keep you posted! The cups can be used as mini greenhouses also and I put them on top of my plants that need humidity or just need some protection for newly transplanted babies. Tried capillary matting too but seem to like wicking better for now. I am growing lots of plants from seeds from the Gesneriad Society seed fund, Mauro's Brazil Plants and EBay purchases! If you want to grow some babies on for the March Show let me know as I shall be running out of room!!! Happy Holidays and looking forward to our Chapter party!

Donna



Growing High Elevation Tropicals:
Building a Chamber to Accommodate Cool
Growing Tropicals, Alpines, and Species
Requiring Cold Dormancy

By: Andrew Norris

In addition to my love of Gesneriads, I've found myself intrigued by carnivorous plants, especially species that grow high up in Southeast Asian cloud forest, where temperatures drop to from the low 60sF to experiencing brief frost. Not only does the temperature drop occur, but humidity simultaneously rises to nearly 100%.



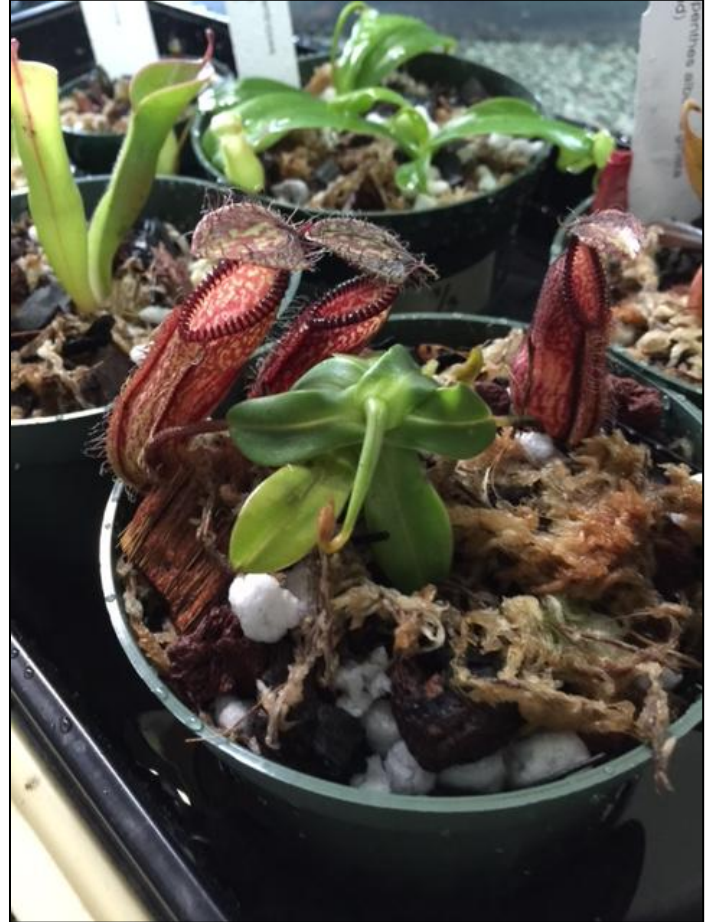
Nepenthes attenboroughii

Carnivorous plants are the only plants that require cool drops in temperature for healthy and blooming. Some plants require seasonal drops in temperatures for a winter rest, still others require the reduction in temperatures to induce blooming. Orchids, flytraps, alpine gesneriads, rarer species such as *Saintpaulia goetzeana* and *Sarmienta scandens*, and even some *Columnnea* are among the plants that enjoy cooler than the typical household environment can provide.



Heliamphora pulchella

I had always avoided obtaining any of the tester (and often pricey) carnivorous plants I saw in books and online, because I was put off by the prospect of providing the humidity and temperature drops they require. Not provided with the nightly chill, some fail to thrive, at best, while many will actually perish, literally growing them-selves to death. The plant is essentially kept at full metabolism, as if it were a human being, jogging perpetually on a treadmill.



Nepenthes hamata

Its respiration is increased and it just exhausts itself. Since many of these species are over \$100, for a small start, they are not plants to experiment on.

I recently decided it simply couldn't be impossible to cool a small area and grow some of these lovelies. I knew there were all sorts of methods out there using water cooled radiators, adapted wine chillers, refrigerator innards, air conditioning units, and even the über simple replacing of frozen water bottles into a terrarium at night. I researched many options and met with frustration at their unsuitability for the average person, either being too hard to regulate, expensive, or otherwise not possible to use inside a home. It was actually months of research and participating in online discussions that finally gave me a viable idea.



Nepenthes mikii

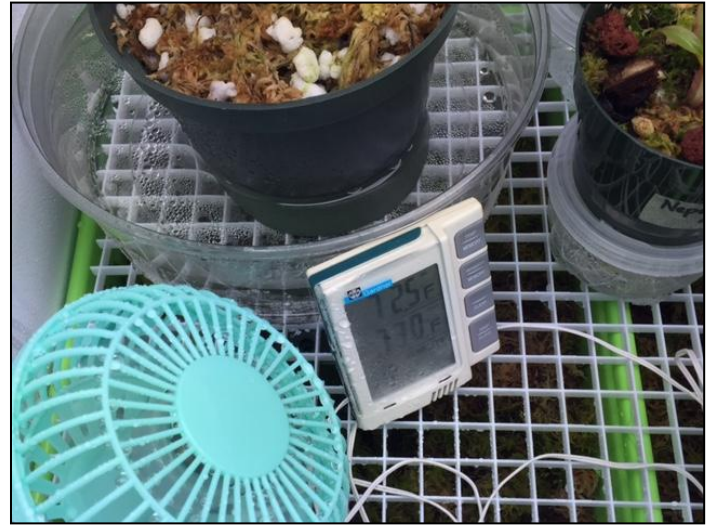
Johnston Controls makes a digital thermostat, which is designed to turn a conventional chest freezer into a wine chiller, keeping the temperatures well above freezing. A chest freezer has the advantage of being easily lit, with traditional sized fixtures, being well insulated, and reasonably inexpensive (for those inclined to grow such pricey plants). The concerns with using a freezer were that it would be so well insulated that it would not sufficiently warm, during the day or that it may exhaust itself by cycling on and off, multiple times per day. Deciding to try the freezer, the Johnston Control, freezer, and 6 tube T5 fixture were purchased.



Nepenthes edwardsiana

A lid was constructed from framed Plexiglas and it was time to play!
First, I was disappointed that the thermostat gave one option for temperature setting and was not paired

with a built in timer. This meant I would have to place the thermostat (the freezer plugs directly into the thermostat, which plugs into a power source) on a timer and manipulate the on/off periods to facilitate a nightly cooking and daily warming.



Inside the chamber

Secondly, it became apparent that the freezer, being so well insulated would become an oven, under the intense lighting required by the plants. The lid of the freezer was easily removed and replaced with the Plexiglas lid and the experimentation began. In my excitement, I plugged in the light, after setting the thermostat to cool the freezer to 55F, from 12 pm until 6am, with the intention that light would allow for a gradual warming to the maximum day temperature. The maximum day temperature would ideally be between 75F-83F, with below 80F preferred. I started with the chamber/freezer at room temperature, plugged in the light and watched the temperature for an hour. The temperature only went up 3F, so I thought I was safe to put one of my beloved carnivorous plants inside, anxious to let it experience ideal conditions, with an appropriately cooled night. I placed the plant inside and went up for supper. About 3 hours passed and went to check on the temperatures and noticed the plastic cup keeping the plant enclosed, for humidity appeared melted! My nightmare was confirmed when the internal temperatures read 150F and the once prized piece of my carnivorous menagerie was reduced to brown mush. That's right, I steamed a \$150.00 plant! I was not pleased, but pressed on.

It was obvious that the lack of programming options in the thermostat would not allow me to set an ideal daytime temp, while achieving the ideal night temperature drop. I would have to have the freezer cycle on and off, while the light was on, in order to keep the growing chamber cool, but not too



Humidity input

cool! It was a matter of a few days of tweaking and monitoring cycles of on time to keep the temperatures suitable. Of course, that wasn't made simple either, due to the fact that most timers run on 15 minute increments and these increments of time dropped the temps too low, creating undesired temperature swings. Other timers that allow single minute increments of time only had 7 program cycles, so I had my work cut out for me. Using a digital timer, I perfected the on/off cycles to keep my daytime temps at no warmer than 83F and no lower than 73F, with a minimal amount of fluctuation.

It was after further consideration, I decided to use the multiple on and off cycles as an advantage and time my lights and nightly cooling to allow for a gradual nightly cooling and gradual daily warming, with a stable day time high. I decided, since the freezer came with a built in shelf, I'd utilize a plastic tote filled with water to create a level surface and act as a stabilizer for the temperature. The temperatures were tweaked to utter perfection and even included the luxury of a very natural daily rise and nightly fall. Even if the engineers of the world weren't genius enough to build timers and thermostats that met my need, I was most certainly a GENIUS!

Next, I noticed the humidity would need to be addressed. Unlike a refrigerator, a freezer of this type has no circulating fans and does not dry out the air significantly. The humidity still needed to be increased, because young plants, smaller than 6" in diameter require RH above 90% and the humidity naturally raises in tandem with the nightly temp drop, due to the defending clouds and fog of the cloud forest.

This was worrisome, because small humidifiers generally only run for one full day, before needing to be refilled and I find that too much bother as well as impossible, when traveling.

Nevertheless, I purchased a 2 gallon capacity, ultrasonic humidifier; having had experience with them for use with terrariums before. I purchased a vacuum cleaner hose, drilled a hole in the Plexiglas freezer kit, placed the working end into the output of the humidifier and the end of the hose destined to fit onto the shop vacuum into the drilled hole and there it was.....the start of the solution to lower than desired humidity.



Humidifier which pumps in the humid fog

Some other small improvements and tweaks were made, including placing the humidifier on a timer to

run all night and for 15 minute increments during the day, hourly. I only need to fill the humidifier weekly and humidity is maintained above 90% at all times, with the chamber being filled with a very naturalistic fog, overnight and into the morning. Weather stripping was used on the bottom edge of the lid to promote a temperature and humidity stable environment, and a small USB fan was added for circulation, which runs at all times. Finally, I cut down some lighting baffle to fit the internal dimensions of the chamber, ordered some plastic trays that fit, placed live sphagnum moss in the trays, placed the baffling over and then placed the individual plant reservoirs on top of the baffling. The reasoning for the moss under the baffling was to have place to grow the moss, promote humidity, and have a place, shaded by the plants above, to grow lower light plants. Currently in the chamber are several carnivorous plant species, ant plants, ant ferns (these are plants and ferns that have symbiotic relationships with ants), *Saintpaulia goetzeana*, and soon to be some orchids and *Sarmienta scandens*.

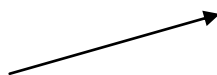
This was an interesting project and can easily be adapted to keep plants that are warm temperate species chilled, but not frozen, for dormancy, force orchids and bulbs into bloom, grow alpine species in



Overall view

warm areas, create warmer environments for desert plants, and even to augment husbandry of exotic reptile and amphibian husbandry. The downside to this project is that although my plants are slow growers, in 3-5 years, I'll either need a new set-up or several more freezers to accommodate their growth. By then, I hope to have a greenhouse with more cooling options available!

Next column Bloomin' Now!!!!



Donna's fragrant *Streptocarpus* 'Bristol's Goose Egg'



Donna's *Saintpaulia* 'Ness' Crinkle Blue'



Donna's *Saintpaulia* 'Rob's Boolaroo'



Donna's *Streptocarpus* 'Neil's Raleigh'



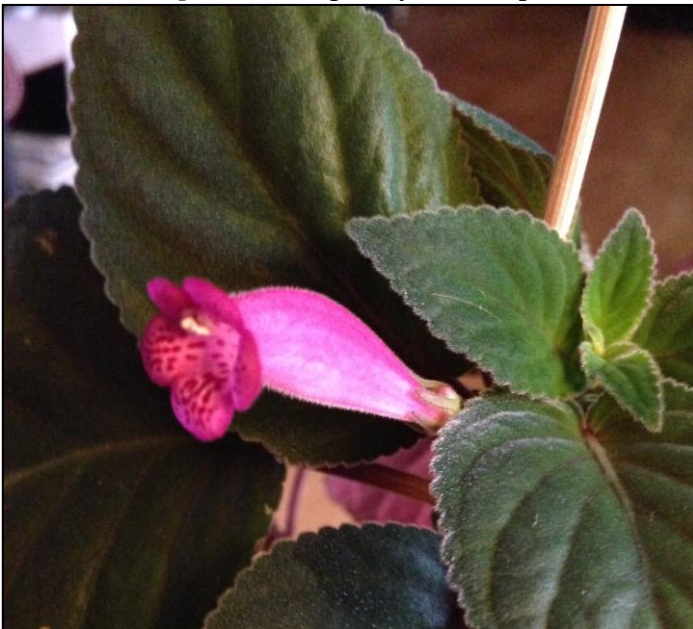
Donna's *Streptocarpus* 'Neil's Camelot'



Donna's *Saintpaulia* 'Raspberry Glow Sport'



Donna's *Primulina tabacum*



Donna's *Sinningia reitzii*



Drew's *Columbia polyantha*



Drew's *Saintpaulia* 'Double Black Cherry'



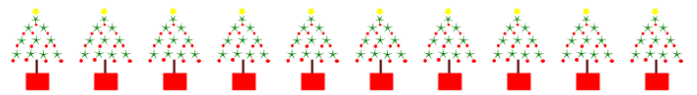
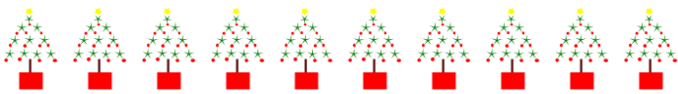
Drew's *Saintpaulia* 'Lovestruck'



Drew's *Saintpaulia* 'Arcturus'



Drew's *Seemannia purpurescens* red





Barry's Bloomin' Now *Rechsteineria cardinalis*

NCAC website: www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org
NCAC Blog: <http://dcgesneriads.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

Secretary: Barbara Stewart
bstew771@verizon.net

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

Committees:

Hospitality: vacant

Programs: Andrew Norris

Membership: vacant

Newsletter Editor: Donna Beverin
editor@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org



Donna's *xPhinastema* 'California Dreaming'

Petaltones@gmail.com or
Donnabeverin@gmail.com
web@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

Website and Blog: vacant
<http://dcgesneriads.blogspot.com/>
Dcgesneriads -at- Gmail

Directors:
Andrew Norris
Barb Stewart
Donna Beverin

The Gesneriad Society website
www.gesneriadsociety.org

Dale Martens' Streptocarpus webinar was such a success that the National Gesneriad Society decided to offer it "offline" for the month of December! The talk and images are the same – the only difference is that viewers will not be able to ask questions because it is not "live". The cost is the same 9.95.

Link:

<http://shop.gesneriadsociety.org/collections/webinars/products/webinar-growing-and-hybridizing-streptocarpus>