

# Petal Tones



National Capital Area Chapter of the Gesneriad Society Newsletter

Volume 49 Number 4

April 2018



Kitty's *Saintpaulia* 'Ian Minuet'

## President's Message:

Still waiting for spring to really be here. It snowed on the first day of spring, and again this past weekend; however, my summer sinningias are sprouting and ready to go. Actually some of them never really went dormant since I grow them in a bay window in the kitchen. I put one large dormant tuber in the attic for the winter and it is now coming to life. Looking forward to learning about how to better handle these seasonal plants at our next meeting.

Meanwhile, April is a very busy plant month with violet shows to enter and shows to judge. We have scrapped the May program on propagation to participate in a plant sale in Baltimore where we can promote the club and gesneriads; however, we can share our propagated plants at the raffle table at any meeting. Last month we shared achimenes rhizomes which should be sprouting any time now. I try to pot mine up when they go dormant in the fall so they are ready to go when they wake up. Maybe a little water will help them along... Barb Stewart

## NEW MEETING LOCATION:

Emmanuel United Methodist Church  
10755 Scaggsville Road, Laurel, MD 20723  
We gather at 10am to get set up, with the meeting beginning at 10:30am. Meet the second Saturday of the month. Calendar yearly dues of \$10 are due in January or whenever joining. Renew by March to keep your Petal Tones subscription.

April 21<sup>st</sup>: Joy of Growing Summer Sinningias:  
Tubiflora, 'Towering Inferno', 'Butter and Cream',  
'Banana's Foster', 'Apricot Bouquet' and 'Carolyn'  
Plant of the Month: Episcia

May 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>: Propagation meeting with Jim Roberts is canceled. Instead we are running a plant sale at Cylburn Arboretum. 4915 Greenspring Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21209

Preview Party Friday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 5:30pm to 8:00pm

Market Day Saturday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 8:00am to 2:00pm

June 9<sup>th</sup>: Road trip to a botanical garden and no business meeting. Location TBA

## **Richmond African Violet Society Judged Show and Plant Sale**

April 13 – 15, 2018

Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden

1800 Lakeside Avenue Richmond, VA 23228

April 13<sup>th</sup> 1:00-3:00pm    April 14<sup>th</sup> 9:00-5:00pm

April 15<sup>th</sup> 9:00-4:00pm

Garden admission \$13 Adults, \$11 over 55 Seniors

Free Admission to Violet Show and Sale



Johanna's *Diastema racemiferum*. While checking her shelves of terrarium plants, she came across her *Diastema racemiferum* in bloom.

Says the Gesneriads Reference Webpage: *Diastema* is comprised of around 20 small herbaceous plants distributed from southern Mexico southward into Bolivia. The genus has been characterized morphologically using 5 finger-like nectary lobes, purple-spots on the corolla lobes (aside from red-flowered species), and fruit dehiscence. *Diastema* appears to be an assemblage of more than one genus based on multiple lines of evidence and continuing research will resolve these relationships. Most of these species have significant ornamental potential, but most need plenty of extra humidity. Several intergeneric hybrids have been crossed and produce some interesting variation in flower color. Note the emerging flower stalk, the raceme from which the species takes its name. Other *Diastemas* have flowers that are more often solitary, from axils. *Diastema racemiferum* is one of the parents of the relatively new intergeneric cross, *Gloxistema* 'First Frost'.

Brazil Plants: Mauro Peixoto says its habitat is Ecuador. Plant size 4 to 7 inches with blooms a little larger than ½ inch. Grows with scaly rhizomes, needs a lot of light and less water in its rest period when it dies back to the ground.



Close up of Johanna's plant.



Barb's *Diastema racemiferum*

**Bloomin' Now: following pages**



Kitty's *Saintpaulia* 'Watermelon Snow'



Kitty's *Streptocarpus* 'Somerset Indigo Ice'



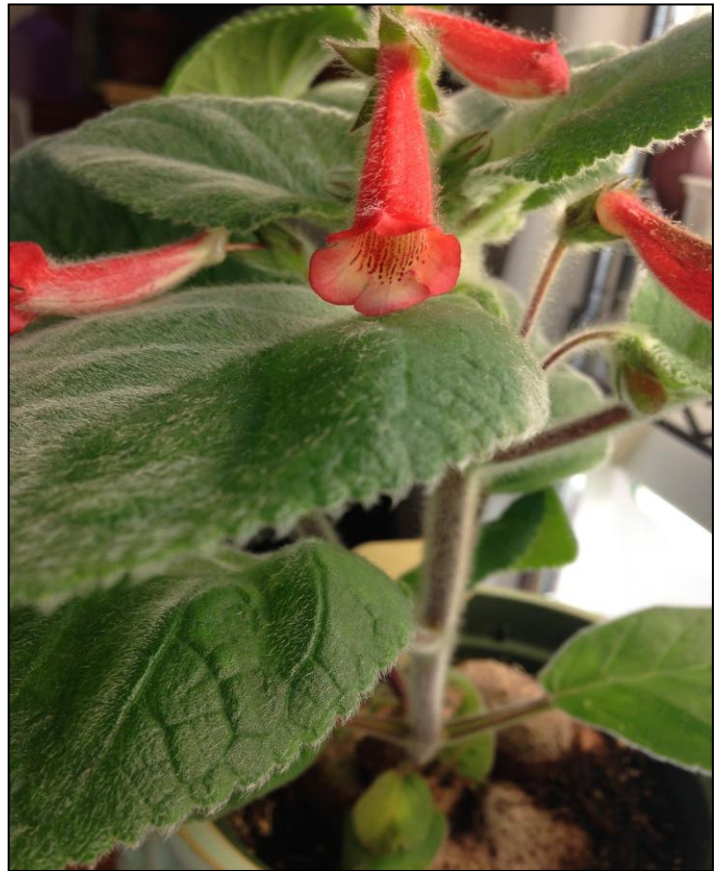
Kitty's *Streptocarpus* 'German'



Kitty's *Saintpaulia* 'Wild Irish Rose'



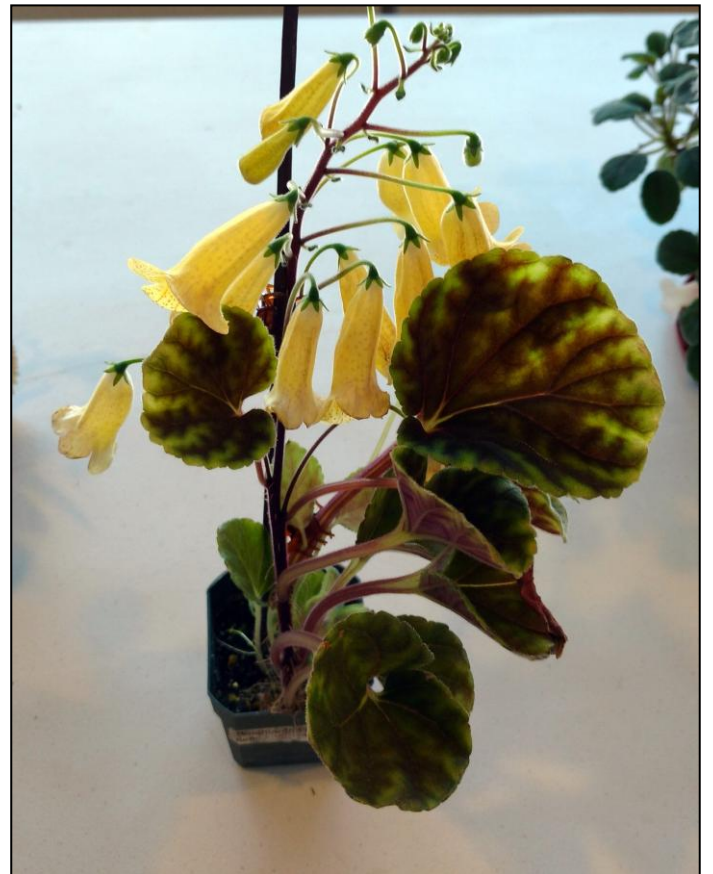
Barb's *Streptocarpus* 'Wow'



Donna's *Sinningia* (*conspicua* x *bullata*) x *leucotricha*  
'Max Dekking'



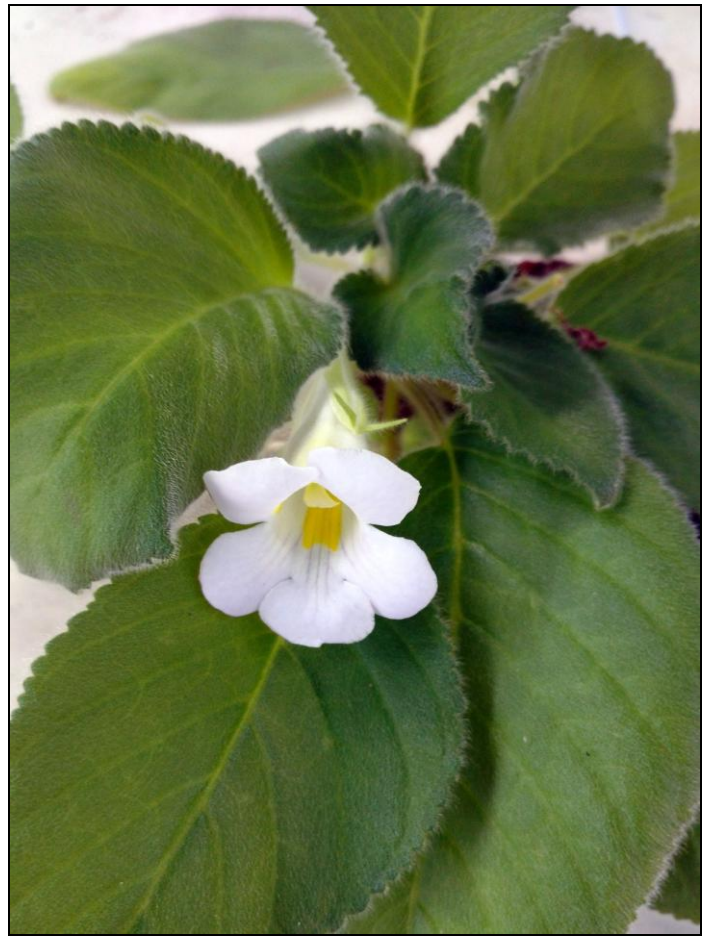
Barb's *Streptocarpus* 'Tunnel Vision'



Barb's *Smithiantha* pink hybrid seedling



Dave's *Sinningia* 'Roxy'



Jim 's *Henckelia ceratosyncus* Photo; Barb Stewart



Peggy's *Saintpaulia* 'Cajun's Lil Diva'



Barb's *Columnnea linearis*

**The Gesneriad Reference Web**

An excellent website for researching your plants with lots of pictures and detailed information about all gesneriads.

<http://www.gesneriads.info/>



Sharon Long's *Saintpaulia* 'Black Tie Affair'



Sharon's *Saintpaulia* 'Poetry Man'



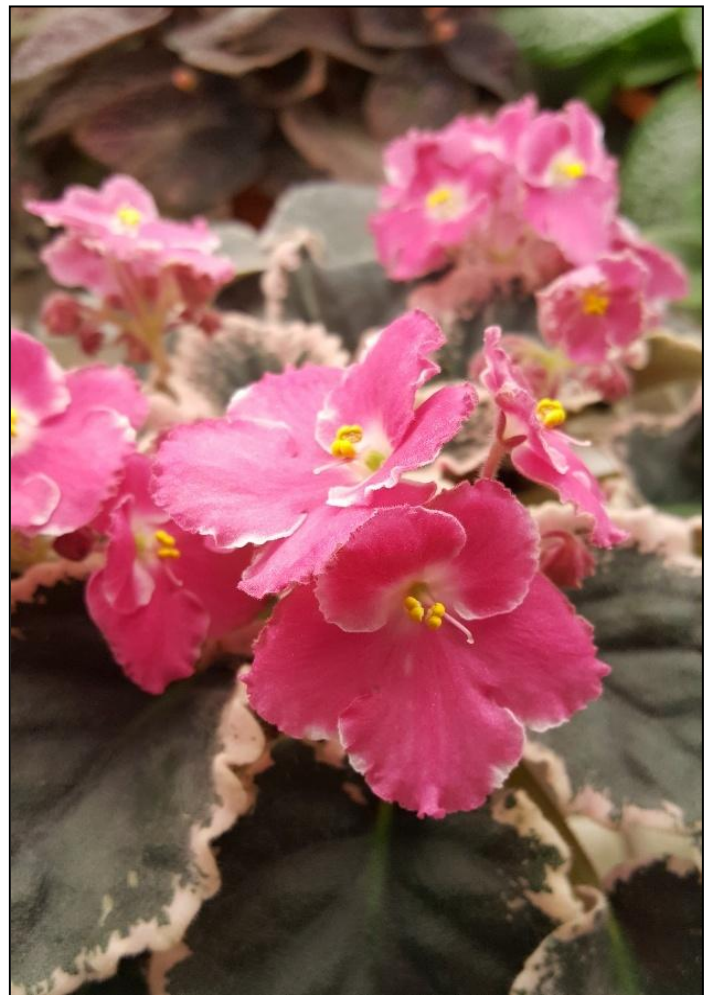
Sharon's *Saintpaulia* 'Carousel'



Bill's *Kohleria* 'Silver Feather'



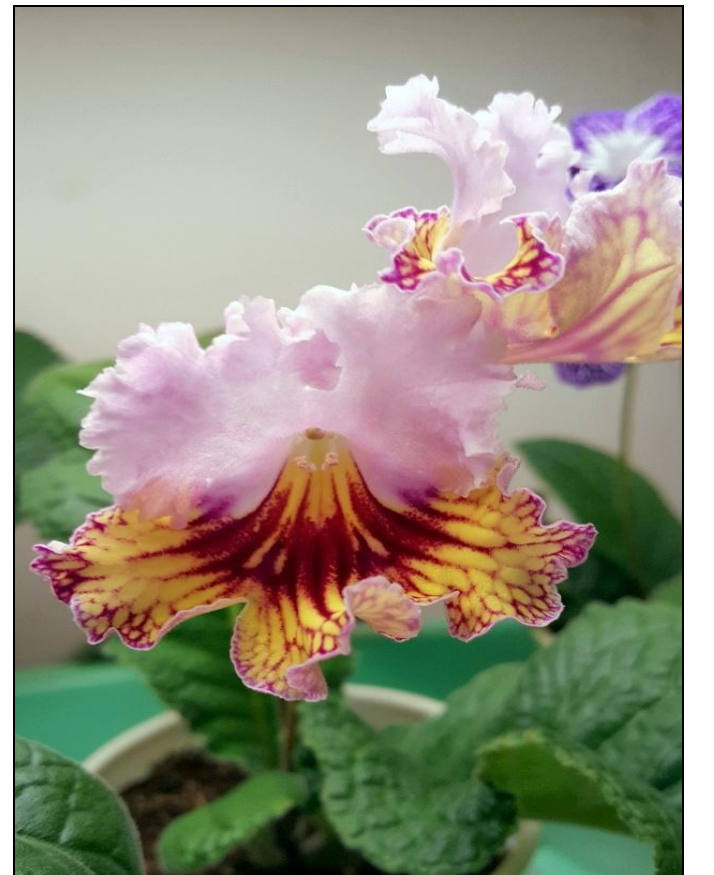
Bill's *Pachycaulos nummularia*



Kitty's *Saintpaulia* 'Aca's Summer Parfait'



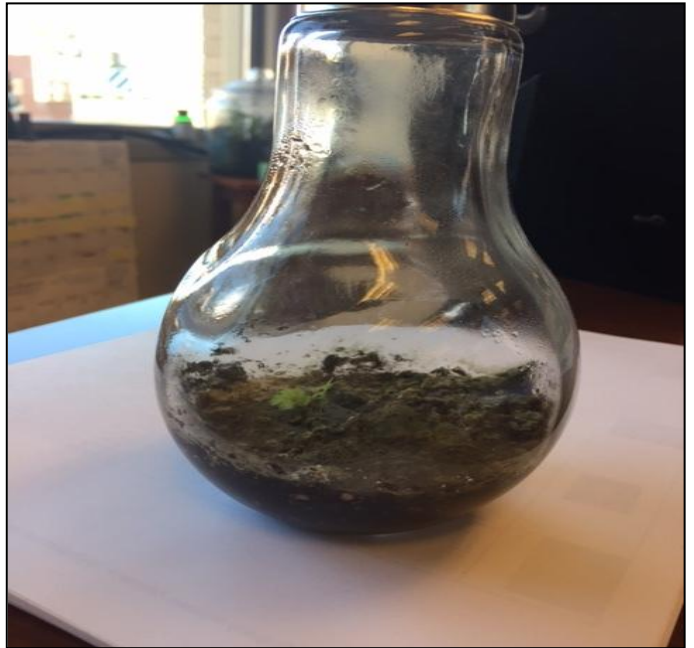
Donna's *Sinningia* 'Apricot Bouquet' Photo: Barb Stewart



Kitty's *Streptocarpus* 'Angela'

## Mini Terrariums    November 2017 Meeting Aarti's Success

Here are some pictures of the terrariums I made at the December meeting and in January I made a few more. As you can see, they are doing well! The light bulb has a mini *Sinningia* 'Bright Eyes' and the teardrop has one of the miniature *Sinningia* seedlings that were passed along. Nothing's bloomed yet (my terrariums are on my somewhat shaded windowsills at work and at home, so probably not ideal conditions) but I have noticed that the ones in sphagnum are doing significantly better than the others. I have 3 terrariums in the office--in addition to the pictures where there's a larger light bulb shape terrarium with soil in the bottom. It is growing *Sinningia* 'Bright Eyes' too, but has barely sprouted, so it's been a neat little experiment.





## Plant of the Month: Episcia

### Back to Basics: Growing Episcias

Dale Martens dalemartens@mchsi.com  
Sherrard, Illinois, USA

The easiest and prettiest gesneriads to grow, in my opinion, are Episcias. Flowers range from orange and orange-red, to pink, blue, white, and yellow. Leaves can have all sorts of metallic colors as well as pink and white variegation. And they are easy to grow from seed. The Gesneriad Society's Seed Fund has many seeds from both species and hybrids available. Sow the seed onto a moist, but not soaking wet, soil-less mix in a container with a lid. Seedlings should sprout within three to four weeks. Keep the mix moist if the seedlings are slower to germinate. Of all gesneriads I've grown, Episcias react the best when



*Episcia cupreata* 'La Solidar Bronze' a species

the seedlings are transplanted often. You'll see them double in size very quickly. Vegetative propagation is also easy, especially by removing stolons rather than propagating a single leaf. Take a stolon and remove the bottom two leaves. Bury the stem past where those leaves emerged and up to the base of the next lowest set of leaves. I recommend that you don't cover the stolon while it is rooting as that tends to make the stolon grow taller and look leggy. Another option for quick rooting is to take a stolon still attached to the mother plant, remove the bottom two leaves, and pin it down into soil in another pot. In either case, roots will form within a week, and by two



*Episcia* 'Pink Panther' a hybrid

weeks time you'll have a nicely rooted plant. The key to getting a solidly rooted plant is to remove all new stolons and flower buds for at least two months. After that, allow only a few stolons to grow as a plant with dozens of stolons can look messy. If you have a pink/white variegated Episcia, taking a leaf for propagation will usually give you a green plant, so be sure to root a stolon.

Usually the variegated Episcias tend to need higher humidity and grow well in domed or clear-sided containers. If your show plant is in a clear container, make sure the lid is clean when you take it to show. The judges may take off points if the leaves are pressing against the lid and sides of the container so much that it distorts the leaf shape and/or smashes the flowers. Growing requirements: feed Episcias a balanced fertilizer at the rate of 1/8 to 1/4 teaspoon per gallon of water. If your fresh soil mix is commercially made with fertilizer already added, then begin at the rate of 1/8 teaspoon per gallon after two months. Some growers like to foliar feed, but if you start this process, then commit to it or you may see inconsistent leaf growth. Episcias grow well under two T-12 cool-white fluorescent tubes timed for 11 to 12 hours a day. Four T-8 tubes kept mine more compact and they seemed to have more flowers, but the leaves appeared to be more bleached looking. If your Episcia has resisted blooming, allow the soil to dry out to the point of slight wilting. Then for the next week give it a little water to barely moisten the soil. After that, water as usual. This seems to stimulate the plant to bloom. Episcias are cold

sensitive and 50 degrees Fahrenheit can be lethal. If your plant room is cold in the winter and you are unable to put the *Episcias* in enclosed containers, cut a large piece of clear plastic food wrap and place it loosely over each plant. Another option is to put a couple of plastic straws in the pot and cover the plant with a gallon size, clear baggie.

The straws will keep the baggie from touching the top of the plant. If your plant is on wick watering, it will react better to the cold if the soil isn't constantly wet, so place the plant in a saucer temporarily, keeping the soil barely wet. This helped to save my plants when we lost electric power during winter snow storms. Pests include spider mites, which



*Episcia* 'Moss Agate' a hybrid

destroy the centers of each plant and stolons. Pesticides for spider mites are often too damaging to *Episcia* leaves, so tossing the plants in the trash is often the main solution. Neem oil and commercial products for thrips don't seem to harm the leaves. I tend to spray Neem oil onto leaves of recently acquired plants, being sure to spray the underside of the leaves, too. A species or hybrid *Episcia* can be entered in a flower show grown in different ways. For example, one can enter an *Episcia* as a single plant without stolons, as a single plant with multiple stolons, and in other ways such as on a trellis, or growing on sphagnum as a topiary. Members of The Gesneriad Society are able to read and download some of the back issues of the journal. The Third Quarter 2009 issue of *GESNERIADS* is all about *Episcias*. In that issue there is an article I wrote on creating an *Episcia* 'Silver Skies' ball. In 1995, I entered *Episcia* 'Silver Skies' grown on a trellis, which you can see at Ron Myhr's Gesneriad Reference Web at <http://gesneriads.ca/episcii10.htm>



*Episcia* 'Silver Skies' a small hybrid

Hybridizing *Episcias* is a challenge because high humidity seems to be required in order to set the fruit, which normally is berry-like in appearance and about the size of a pea.

Pollination success is increased if the flower has been open more than 24 hours but less than three days. The fruit needs about 60 days to ripen and then it dries and splits, revealing dark brown or black, round seeds with a covering of whitish material sort of like an egg's albumen. Seed will sprout within three weeks and needs high humidity for the first two months to grow well. Those of us who hybridize *Episcias* have discovered that the final coloration isn't revealed until the plant is around 18 months old. Crossing yellow flowers with blue flowers or orange flowers with blue flowers seems to result in pink flowers and most of the time those pink flowers are sterile. Self-pollinating *Episcia* 'Suomi' with bright yellow flowers usually gives around 90% orange flowers and 10% yellow flowers with light green foliage.

This article appeared originally in *GESNERIADS* Vol. 62, No. 4, Fourth Quarter 2012, Jeanne Katzenstein, editor.

Photos: Gesneriad Reference Web: <http://www.gesneriads.info/>



Join the Gesneriad Society

<http://www.gesneriadsociety.org/membership/application/>



Mr. Gesneriad: I grew this cutting of *Nematanthus fluminensis* from a big cutting shared with me quite awhile ago. It took a very long time to root. Can you please give me some cultural advice? I am planning to replot it and acclimatize it to

living outside of a plastic baggie. You can see the water damage on the old, original leaves from condensation in the baggie. I thought if I put it out in summer it may grow a lot and set buds? Thanks for any tips you can share.



*Nematanthus fluminensis* a species

Mr. G: If you put it out it will love the heat and humidity. But put it in pretty dense shade. It'll burn pretty severely if it gets any sun. Can stand a little drying out but should grow like crazy if watered and fertilized.

#### Desperately Seeking Wish List:

Barb..... *Primulina brassicoides* 'Marble Leaf'  
 Barb..... *Aeschynanthus* 'Tiger Stripe'  
 Barb..... *Primulina Angustifolia*  
 Barb..... *Columnea* 'Julia'  
 Donna..... *Sinningia hirsuta*

#### Programs Planned for 2018

January 13<sup>th</sup>: Designs Basic with Barb Stewart

February 10<sup>th</sup>: Sinningia seminar Jim Roberts

March 10<sup>th</sup>: Dog Show and Culture (bring plants in to show how terrible they are and we shall learn how to fix them) with Jim Roberts and Barb Stewart

April 21<sup>st</sup>: Joy of Growing Summer Sinningias: tubiflora, 'Towering Inferno', 'Butter and Cream', 'Banana's Foster', 'Apricot Bouquet' and 'Carolyn' with Donna (Meeting moved one week later due to the conflict with our NCAC members who are in the Richmond AV show)

May 12<sup>th</sup>: Propagation Meeting with Jim Roberts

June 9<sup>th</sup>: Road trip to a botanical garden and no business meeting. Location TBA

July: No meeting

August 11<sup>th</sup>: Business meeting and Picnic TBA

September 8<sup>th</sup>: Streptocarpus with Brian Connor

October 13<sup>th</sup>: Pat Bowling: Mini Sinningias

November 10<sup>th</sup>: Hybridizing Webinar

December 8<sup>th</sup>: Holiday Party

#### Plant of the month 2018

January -	Primulina
February -	Sinningias
March -	"Dog" plants
April -	Episcias
May -	Seedlings & starter plants
June -	None
July -	None
August -	Summer Sinningias
September -	Seemannia
October -	Streptocarpus
November -	Nautilocalyx
December -	Aeschynanthus

#### **DON'T FORGET THE RAFFLE TABLE!**

At every meeting our members bring extra plants, cuttings, supplies donate them to the raffle table. Tickets for the raffle are only 3 for a dollar and everyone who attends the meeting gets one ticket just for showing up (including guests). Here's what you'll see on the table at a meeting:

Gesneriad plants, rhizomes, tubers, cuttings, seeds, companion and/or garden plants, cuttings and gardening supplies.

## Interesting Hybrids



I got *Sinningia bullata x leucotricha* from Mike Kartuz recently. It's really interesting. It is growing with the same pattern that *leucotricha* grows. It is quite hairy. The leaf hairs are much like *leucotricha* but the stem hair is more like *bullata*. Leaves are more *bullata* than *leucotricha*.

Julie Mavity-Hudson From Gesneriphiles

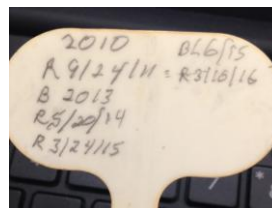


Donna's *Sinningia* (*conspicua x bullata*) x *leucotricha* 'Max Dekking'



Flower close up of *Sinningia* (*conspicua x bullata*) x *leucotricha* 'Max Dekking'

I received this *Sinningia* from Karen about two years ago and I love it! It has grown and bloomed very well for me. Karen acquired it in 2010 and repotted religiously every year.



Last summer I repotted it and put it out on my deck in a shady area that received a little full sun in the very early morning. Its leaves did suffer a bit but it bloomed all

summer. During autumn and winter the stems grew very long and gangly and they stopped blooming. In late winter there was new growth arising from the center of the tuber but stayed very close to the tuber. With Jim Robert's advice I cut off those long stems and the new growth really took off! And now it has been blooming for about 2 weeks! Note the interesting leaves that are different from Julie's hybrid top left. They have a lighter white fluffiness than the regular *S. leucotricha*. The leaves are a nice balance of the beauty of *bullata* and *leucotricha* leaves. The stems are hairy also but not as cottony as *bullata*. I have not tried hybridizing with it yet. Still learning about that! I shall try to remember to bring it to the next meeting for show and tell.

Thanks so much Karen!

Donna Beverin



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Publications: Donna Beverin  
Propagation: Barb Stewart/Donna Beverin  
Membership: Jim Roberts  
Ways and Means: Brian Connor  
Show: Jim Roberts

Directors:  
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Brian Connor  
Ki Imai

NCAC website: [www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org](http://www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org)  
[web@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org](http://web@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org)

NCAC Facebook page:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/174442276299173/?ref=bookmarks>

The National Capital Area Chapter of the Gesneriad Society welcomes all interested Gesneriad growers. The most familiar Gesneriad is Saintpaulia, more commonly known as the African Violet.

Dues are \$10 per year (email copy of current year's newsletter). Back issues from previous years available on website. Membership runs the calendar year and can be pro-rated.

The international Gesneriad Society is a not-for-profit corporation dedicated to the study, growing and enjoyment of the gesneriaceae. Membership dues are \$25 /year for individuals and \$26 for a family. Benefits include seed fund of hard-to-find plants, reference materials, yearly convention & cultural webinars.

Membership requests should be sent to Bob Clark, 1122 E Pike Street, PMB 637, Seattle, WA 98122-3916. Membership includes a subscription to the society journal, Gesneriads.  
<http://www.gesneriadsociety.org/>

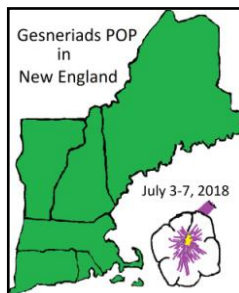
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**July 4 to July 8, 2018**

THE NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER OF THE Gesneriad Society cordially invites you to attend the 2018 Convention, "Gesneriads POP in New England," from July 3-7, 2018. With an exciting program of speakers, once-in-a-lifetime excursions, and some of the best opportunities to learn about and see stunning examples of gesneriads, this

year's convention promises to be one for the record books. All this, and a jam-packed sales room, too!



The convention will be held in Framingham, Massachusetts, less than 30 miles from Boston and easily accessible by plane (Logan Airport), Amtrak train (Framingham Amtrak station), and car (guest self-parking is free at the hotel).

The event hotel is the newly renovated Sheraton Framingham Hotel & Conference Center, 1657 Worcester Road, Framingham, Massachusetts.

Convention rates are in effect three days before and three days after the convention dates so plan to come early or stay later to take advantage of the hotel's indoor and outdoor pools, fitness center, and proximity to many attractions. For more details and how to register and see day to day schedule click on link:

<http://www.gesneriadsociety.org/conventions/2018-convention-framingham-massachusetts/>

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Free Admission to Show and Sale