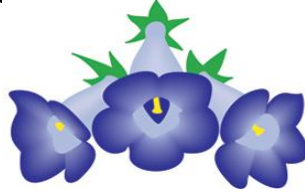


Petal Tones



National Capital Area Chapter of the Gesneriad Society Newsletter

Volume 48 Number 12

December 2017



Jim's *Aeschynanthus* 'Thai Red'

President's Message Barb Stewart

Happy Holidays! As we wind down our year and start planning for the next one, it is a good time to reflect on where we have been and where we want to go as a club. We had a lot of great programs this year and a beautiful show and sale. We continue to grow our membership and make improvements to the way our organization operates. If you come regularly to the meetings, you have most likely picked up some new plants you haven't grown before and learned more about the plants you are growing.

The mission of this club is to serve its members, so we want to make sure we are meeting the needs of our members. We hear regularly from those who

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 the second Saturday of the month. \$10 yearly dues.

December 9th: Holiday-Get-Together at Sally Leonhard's home.

January 13th: Designs Basic with Barb Stewart

February 10th: Dog Show and Culture (bring plants in dire need of help and we shall learn how to fix them) with Jim Roberts and Barb Stewart

attend the meetings, and are planning programs for 2018 that members have suggested. If you don't attend regularly, feel free to contact any Board member with any ideas that would motivate you to come more often. The success of our chapter depends on the participation of the membership. We currently need someone to fill the position of Secretary as well as several committees. (Thanks to Johanna and Sally for temporarily filling in as Secretary.)

At this meeting, we will enjoy a holiday potluck lunch, a gift exchange, and the always popular raffle table. So, what is on your holiday wish list? Specific plants? More time to work with your plants? More knowledge about how to grow your plants well? More blue ribbons? This is why we have a club where we can get together and learn from each other. Hope to see you at the next meeting for some holiday food and fun.

Barbara



November Meeting
Miniature *Sinningias*-
Growing These Small Wonders in Glass Containers
Jim Roberts

At the NCAC's November meeting which was held in Behnkes' Bonsai House classroom, Jim Roberts gave an

excellent demonstration and lesson in making miniature terrariums to give away as holiday gifts.

The assortment of possible containers is endless. At craft and dollar stores small containers can be purchased for a few dollars.

Glass and plastic containers that have some type of lid are best to conserve humidity. However, corks or plastic film can be used as well.

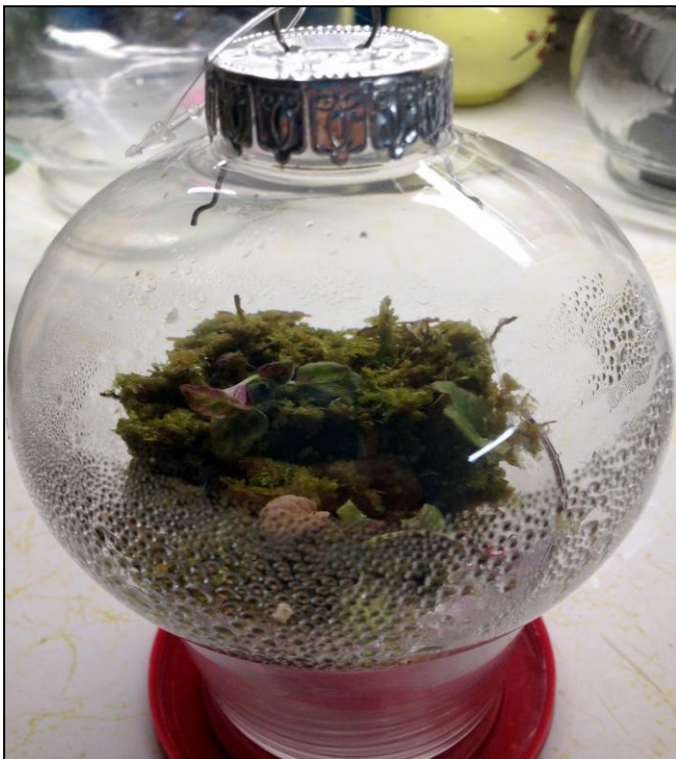
Jim brought in micro mini and mini *Sinningias* to share so each member could make a container to take home.

Jim uses sphagnum moss that he cuts up using a blender, after the moss is rehydrated. You can also cut the moss in small pieces with scissors. Use a long skewer or tweezers, put put the moss into the container and add the little plant.

Whaaa Laaa! A perfect, tiny terrarium to share!



Small plastic container with lid becomes home for little *Sinningia* that will bloom soon!



Jim explaining how to put the moss in the container

The Saturday Observer

By Marilyn Heinrich

Reprinted with permission from Gesneriad News
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November 2017 Meeting Program

“Not Your Typical Gesneriads”

Jeanne Katzenstein was our November speaker on the topic of “Not Your Typical Gesneriads”. She gave us a PowerPoint presentation with many photos of unfamiliar and/or new gesneriad plants, flowers and leaves. This assemblage of photos and information represents a tremendous amount of research work on Jeanne’s part. The way gesneriads are classified has changed greatly in the almost 40 years that Jeanne has been growing and researching them.

Classification used to be based upon physical appearance, but now is also based on analyzing the plants’ DNA. There are approximately 150 recognized genera and 3500 species now. Most are perennial herbs, but there are annuals, and some plants are as large as shrubs and even trees. Some gesneriads have tuberous growths and some have scaly rhizomes. Many are terrestrial, but some are climbers and some are epiphytic. Most have simple leaf structures with different types of edges.

Drymonia species can have many differing patterns and colors in their leaves. The backs of leaves can be very colorful in species of *Columnea*, and helpful in attracting pollinators.

Most gesneriad flowers have bilateral symmetry, but some, like star-shaped African violets, *Bellonia*, *Ramonda* and *Niphaea* have radial symmetry. Differing flower shapes, even within the same genus, are attractive to different pollinators (bees, hummingbirds, sunbirds, butterflies, moths, and bats).

Gasteranthus flowers come in orange, red and pink colors to attract birds, and cream and white colors to attract bees. Some *Columnea* flowers have odd appendages that have no known function. Various *Drymonias* and *Nematanthus australis* have fantastic display fruits that are meant to be eaten by animals as a means of seed dispersal.

Some alpine and other cool growing gesneriads can be grown outside on Long Island such as *Haberlea*

rhodopensis (from the Balkans), *Ramonda myconi* (from Spain and the Balkans), and *Jancaea heldreichii* (from Mt. Olympus in Greece), which has furry leaves with silver hairs. *Conandron ramondioides* (China & Japan) needs protection from frost.

Temperate zone plants from Chile and nearby areas include *Asteranthera ovata*, which grows on trees in cool rain forests; *Mitraria coccinea*, which is a small shrub growing on trees on cool mountains; *Sarmienta scandens*, which is a small trailing plant growing on mossy rocks and trees. All have reddish flowers of different shapes.

Another unusual plant, and recent introduction, is *Sinningia helioana* that grows its flower stalks and its leaves directly from its tuber — but not at the same time.

Sinningia sp. "Pancas" has a very large flower. It is well grown by Nancy Kast in Florida.

Many new species of *Primulina* have been introduced in recent years. Look for *P. spinulosa*, *P. petrocoides*, *P. martinii* with silver leaves, *P. leprosa* with oddly elongated lower petals, and *P. bullata* with textured leaves.

Genus *Aeschynanthus*, which typically has red flowers, has some other-color species: *A. chrysanthus* with yellow flowers; *A. sp.* NAPE008 with half orange/half yellow flowers; *A. sp.* "Thai Pink" with pink flowers.

Anethanthus gracilis comes from Peru, Bolivia, central Colombia and southeastern Brazil. It is similar to a creeping fig, growing on banks or rocks in the forest.

Bellonia spinosa from Hispaniola and Cuba is a small, shrubby plant with white flowers. It is the only gesneriad with thorns.

Besleria is a New World genus with over two hundred species. Few are in cultivation. *B. laxiflora* can grow two to three feet tall. The whole genus is very intolerant of drying out.

Boea is a rosette-forming genus that comes from Southeast Asia and Australia. They are small plants with blue flowers similar to *Saintpaulia*. *B. lawesii* has silvery green leaves.

Corallo-discus lanuginosus is a rock garden plant that grows at 14,000 feet — one of the highest growing

gesneriads — in Bhutan, China, northern India, Nepal and Thailand.

Chautemsia is a small rhizomatous genus that grows on rock walls in Brazil. *Codonanthopsis* comes from northwestern South America, Brazil and the Guianas. Eleven species were moved into this genus from the genus *Codonanthe*. Over fifty species were transferred from *Henckelia* into *Codonoboea*. *C. malayana* has patterned leaves and lemon yellow flowers. It must be grown enclosed. Coincidentally, a specimen of this plant was on the chapter sales table and a special auction was held for it after the program.

Columneas can have different flower shapes. *C. paramicola* has dark green leaves and white, rosy-veined bracts. *C. coronata* is new to cultivation and has four pink, elongated petals. *C. purpureovittata* has striped maroon and greenish yellow flowers and is hard to grow.

Crantzia has four species with branching and colorful flowers and calyces. The species were transferred from *Alloplectus*.

Cyrtandra has over six hundred species located in Asia and some Pacific islands, including Hawaii. They are shrubby plants, seldom grown, mostly with white flowers — although a few have red or patterned flowers.

Drymonia umecta has flowers with a slimy coating.

Fieldia australis is a climbing, shrubby plant growing in the temperate zone. As a result of research work in the Caribbean area, two new species of *Gesneria* are coming into cultivation:

G. celsioides, a small grower with yellow flowers, and *G. shaferi* with four color forms in various amounts of burgundy and yellow.

Gesneria pulverulenta (*G. saxatilis*) is native to the Dominican Republic. It was in cultivation in the 1980's and available from Buell's Greenhouses, but now may have been lost.

Gloxinia xanthophylla has small white flowers and can grow to six feet tall.

Gloxiniopsis racemosa is the only species in this New World genus. It has plain green leaves, white flowers and scaly rhizomes.

Some small rhizomatous herbs are *Goyazia rupicola* and *G. petraea* from central Brazil. They grow on mossy rocks, going dormant in winter.

Henckelia has more than fifty species.

Henckelia sp. nov. comes from Southeast Asia. It is a compact, herbaceous grower with plain green leaves that have toothed edges, although some have leaves with contrasting veins. *Henckelia* flowers can be lavender, white or yellow.

Kohleria has twenty-one species found in the western Cordillera from Peru to Mexico, Venezuela, Trinidad, the Guianas, and with a center of diversity in Colombia. The plants grow in sun-exposed margins of rain forest. *K. allenii* has two inch flowers on three foot plants.

Lembocarpus amoenus is the single species in the genus. It is coming back into cultivation. It is tuberous and looks a little like a sinningia but is not closely related. It is found in French Guiana and Surinam and grows on wet, moss-covered rocks in forests.

Loxostigma are semi-rhizomatous herbs that grow on mossy rocks and tree trunks in forests. There are eleven species native to northeast India, Bhutan, Burma, Nepal, southern China, Laos and North Vietnam.

Mandirola has four species, but only one is in cultivation — *M. ichthyostoma*. It is small and good for growing under lights. The species are very similar to *Achimenes* and once were included in that genus.

Monophyllaea, from south East Asia, produces small flowers along the midrib of a single large leaf like some *Streptocarpus*. It tolerates low light levels.

M. horsfieldii has a small three inch leaf, but *M. merilliana* has a gigantic leaf.

Negria rhabdothamnoides is a twenty-five foot tree growing in the moist mountain forest on Lord Howe Island off the coast of Australia. It has large orange flowers.

Neomortonia rosea is a single-species genus from Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama and Peru. It rambles over fallen trees in shady areas.

Nomopyle dodsonii is one of two small, rhizomatous species from South America. It requires low light, high humidity and constant moisture — it grows in muck.

Oreocharis now includes over 120 species.

O. pankaiyuae grows in a lightly shaded rock garden, in moist but well-drained soil (zones 7-8 in the USA). It forms a small, tight rosette of hairy, crinkled, dark green leaves; the rosette is two inches tall by six inches wide. The six inch flower stalks produce dainty yellow flowers in early September.

Ornithoboea is a shrubby herbaceous Asian genus typically with purplish or blue flowers.

O. arachnoidea has densely hairy stems and inflorescences. *O. wildeana* is also in cultivation. *Pachycaulos nummularia* (formerly *Neomortonia nummularia*) can completely defoliate and come back. It has pouched red flowers, and odd stem tubers (looking like bumps on the stems).

Pearcea comes from the north and central Ecuadorean Amazon region and central Peru. It occurs in lowland rainforest and up to cloud forest. There are now more than eighteen species.

P. rhodotricha was shown by Nancy Kast at the Northeast Regional Convention. It is a challenge to bloom.

Petrocodon now has twenty-seven species.

P. coccineus was formerly known as *Calcareoboea coccinea* (with red flowers) and has been shown by Bill Price at convention.

New *Petrocosmea* species are being discovered and there is a new book by Chinese author, Qui Zhi-Jing, with lots of photos.

Reldia consists of five species of terrestrial herbs with small, whitish-yellow flowers. They come from Panama through northern Peru, and grow in forested, deeply shaded, highly humid ravines usually along streams.

Resia has three species from Colombia and Venezuela. They are found around moist shaded rocks in the mountains. The flowers are white, yellow or orange, depending on the species.

Rhabdothamnus solandri is a small temperate zone shrub from New Zealand. It is dry growing, and has orange or yellow flowers that bloom well in cultivation. There is only one species in the genus.

Rhynchoglossum is the only gesneriad that is found in both the Old and New World, and Australia, which probably means it existed before the continents separated. There are ten species. *R. notonianum* has true blue flowers.

Rhytidophyllum is a genus of large shrubs closely related to *Gesneria*, surprisingly. The flowers are typically greenish (some red), and the leaves are typically large and rough textured.

Rufodorsia is a Central American genus of low growing plants that climb up on trees.

Solenophora grows in Central America (Mexico and Guatemala) as large shrubs or trees in/near wet areas. The flowers are very large and funnel-shaped, red, yellow or white.

Sphaerorrhiza has two species found in Brazil. *S. sarmentiana* produces stringy rhizomes with tuber-like swellings. *S. burchellii* generally has lavender flowers, but there is a pink-flowering variety.

Trichodrymonia (formerly *Paradrymonia*) has nine New World species. The plants have upright or spreading habits. The flowers form tight clusters in the axils of long, narrow leaves. The individual flowers are short-lived, but the clusters continue to open flowers over a long period of time. The flowers can be white, yellow or orange, and the calyces are red.

Vanhouttea has nine species from Brazil. They grow on damp rocks at higher elevations. They are shrubby sinningia relatives that can make show plants if carefully pruned. The flowers of *V. lanata* are red outside, yellow with red spots inside. The buds are soft, white and hairy. They are hummingbird pollinated.

Sanango racemosum is the sole species and is a South American tree, 25 feet tall. It can be grown as a shrub. It bears many small white flowers held above the foliage.

There are many new species coming into cultivation from Southeast Asia in the near future. The species of *Oreocharis* have many new flower and leaf forms that are quite beautiful.

Paraboea species are rock dwellers. One reason new *Petrocosmea* species are being discovered, is that the plants grow on sheer canyon walls; they are coming into reach because the Yangtze River has been dammed, is rising, and boats can now get to the plants.

Platystemma violoides, from the Himalayas, are tiny herbs with a vertical rhizome and a single hairy leaf.

Pseudochirita guangxiensis is the single species in this genus, now in cultivation. Plants grow to a height of three feet in forests on limestone hills in southern China and Vietnam.

Rhabdothamnopsis sinensis is a small, slightly woody shrub that grows at very high altitude in southern China.

From Malaysia come *Ridleyandra quercifolia* and *R. morganii* — perennial, somewhat woody herbs forming a dense rosette or a loose tuft on top of the stem.

From China, there is *Primulina minus* that is just as small as *Sinningia minima*!

From Colombia, *Cremospermopsis galaxias*, with spotted leaves, may soon be in cultivation.

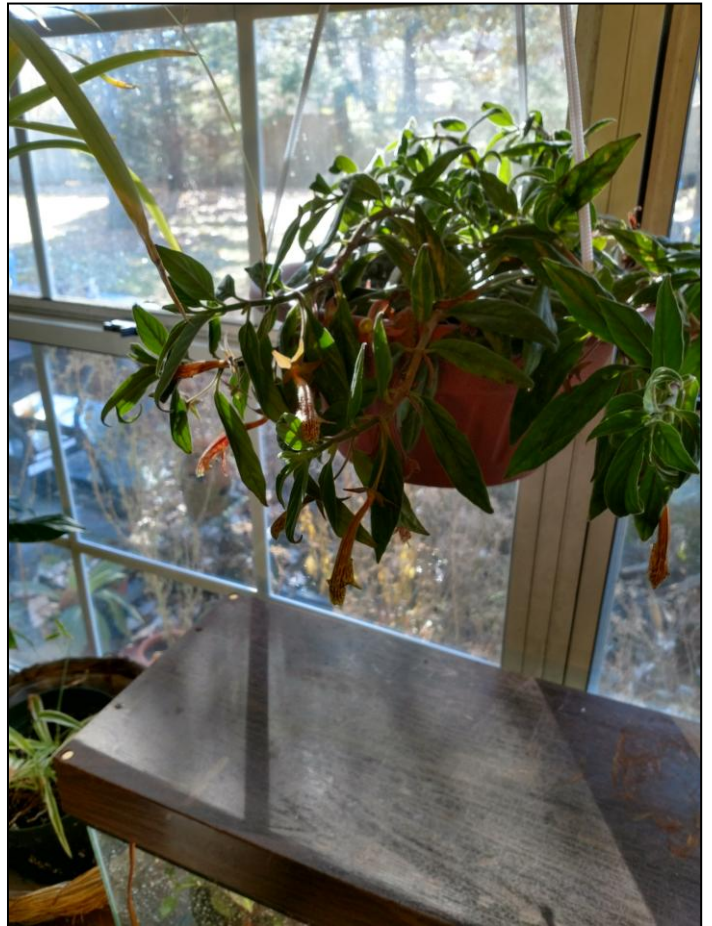
Jeanne emphasizes that many large plants can be grown successfully in small pots, so that size shouldn't discourage growers from trying new genera.

Winston Goretsky has an article in the November/December African Violet Magazine, describing the changes to *Saintpaulia* classification. The genus is now known as *Streptocarpus* subgenus *Streptocarpella* section *Saintpaulia*. The first-quarter 2018 issue of *Gesneriads* will also list the new African violet nomenclature.

Check out the website of The Gesneriad Society at <http://gesneriadsociety.org> where you will find complete lists of genera and name changes updated routinely by Jeanne.

Also, the Gesneriad Reference Web <http://www.gesneriads.info> has gorgeous photos many of the genera and species described in this article.

Bloomin' Now



Dave Anderson's *Columnnea scheidiana*



Drew's *Sinningia* 'Kevin Garnet'



Jim's *Nematanthus gregarious*



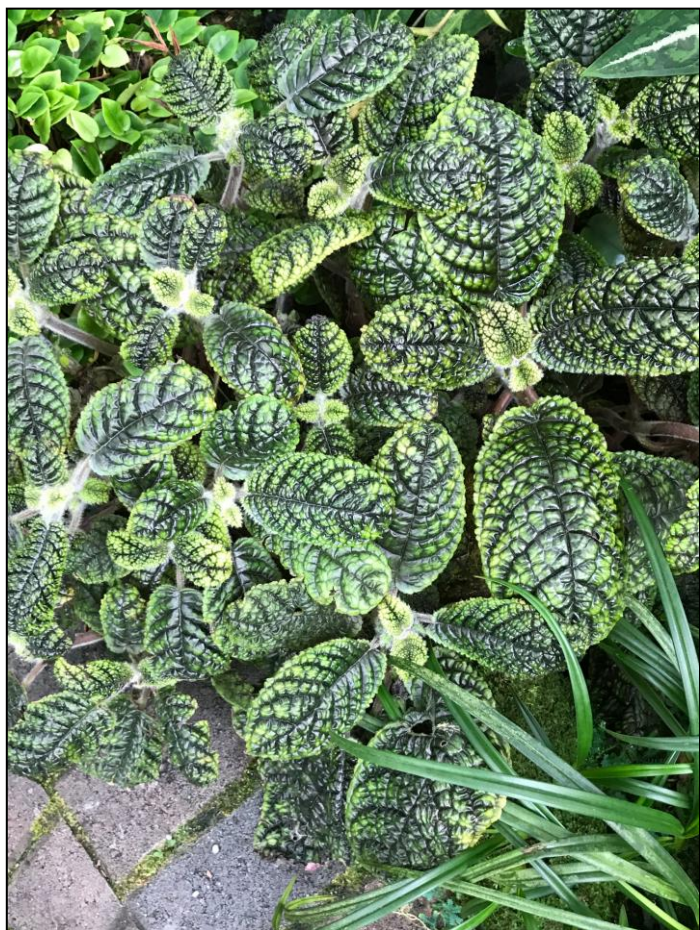
Jim's *Primulina yungfuensis*



Jim's *Kohleria* 'Ruby'



Jim's *Primulina yungfuensis* close up



Jim's picture of *Nautilocalyx erytranthus* at Atlanta Botanical Gardens



Jim's *Sinningia speciosa* 'Pedra Lisa'



Jim's picture of *Nautilocalyx erytranthus* flower at Atlanta Botanical Gardens



Donna's x*Smithicodonia* 'Heartlands Joy' in 10" pot



Close up of xSmithicodonia 'Heartlands Joy'



Barb's *Kohleria* 'Jester'



Barb's beautiful *Columna citriflora*



Barb's *Microchirita micromusa* with seedpod



Barb's *Microchirita micromusa*



Barb's *Streptocarpus* 'Renia'



Barb's *Sinningia* 'Party Dress'



Barb's *Streptocarpus* 'Hawaiian Party'

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.**

Programs Planned for 2018

January 13th: Designs Basic with Barb Stewart

February 10th: 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

March 10th: Sinningia seminar with TBA

April 21st Summer Sinningias: Joy of Growing Summer Sinningias: *Sinningia 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 12th: Propagation Meeting with Jim Roberts

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

July: No meeting

August 11th: Business meeting and Picnic TBA

September 8th: Show Prep with Barb and all experienced members

October 13th: Streptocarpus with Brian Connor

November 10th: Webinar TBA

December 8th: Holiday Party

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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.

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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