

# Petal Tones



National Capital Area Chapter of the Gesneriad Society Newsletter

Volume 49 Number 2

February 2018



Kitty's *Sinningia* 'Prudence Risley'

## President's Message    Barb Stewart

Well, Puxatony Phil is predicting more winter ahead, although I think we have had enough already. My summer sinningias are already popping up, and I am focused on summer by registering for the national convention in Boston and propagating plants to sell. Due to conflicts with our regular meeting location, we are postponing the "dog show" until next month and having a great program on sinningias this month. I have a *Sinningia reitzii* that will probably win some award in the "dog show", but it blooms continuously and brightens a dreary winter day in my bay window.

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.

February 10<sup>th</sup>: Joy of Sinningias webinar with Alan LaVergne. Jim Roberts presenting at Sally Lendhart's home. Bring sinningias and raffle plants!

March 10<sup>th</sup>: At Behnkes, 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' (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

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I just don't have the heart to do what is necessary to make it show better. Hopefully, you have some nice sinningias to show for "plant of the month" and we will learn a lot more about these interesting plants and how to grow them. Don't forget to bring in some extras to share at the raffle table. See you there.  
Barbara

February 10<sup>th</sup>: There will be a brief board meeting after the regular meeting and everyone is welcome to attend.



### Ask Mr. Gesneriad

Question: Attached is photo of some mystery rhizomes (probably *Kohleria*) which I want to repot, but which end is up? One looks like it has roots on one end but also

looks like the same end is starting to sprout. The other just has one end smaller and more pointed than the other but no other clues. Even if I plant it horizontal in the pot, I would like to know which end will sprout so I can center it. Barb



Mr. G: Look closely at the rhizome. The scales are really just a form of compressed leaves. The points on each scale will be pointing towards the back of the rhizome.

Question: I have had little success trying to propagate *Sinningia* 'Deep Purple Dreamin' from cuttings. Any suggestions? I usually plant it in a pot with Clonex and keep it in a covered container, but it still rots. Would rooting it in water work better? Barb

Mr. G: Once the stem of *Sinningia* 'Deep Purple Dreamin' has a hint of flower buds the plant will not root. This is true of many *Sinningia*. You have to remove the stem from the tuber just as soon as it emerges, even better if you can get a little of the tuber with the cutting. An alternate would be to try rooting a leaf. Pin the leaf to the media surface and make tiny cuts through some of the veins. Long fibered sphagnum would be my suggestion as the medium.

Question: Can members of the genus *Amalophyllon* be pinched to stimulate branching or new growth from the base of the plant? I have the same question about the members of the genus *Monopyle*. Johanna

Mr G: Both *Amalophyllon* and *Monopyle* can be pinched to produce extra crowns.

### Delaware African Violet & Gesneriad Society Display and Plant Sale

Saturday, March 20, 2018  
10:00am – 4:00pm

Boscov's Department Store

Christiana Town Center

Christiana, Delaware

### Desperately Seeking Wish List:

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

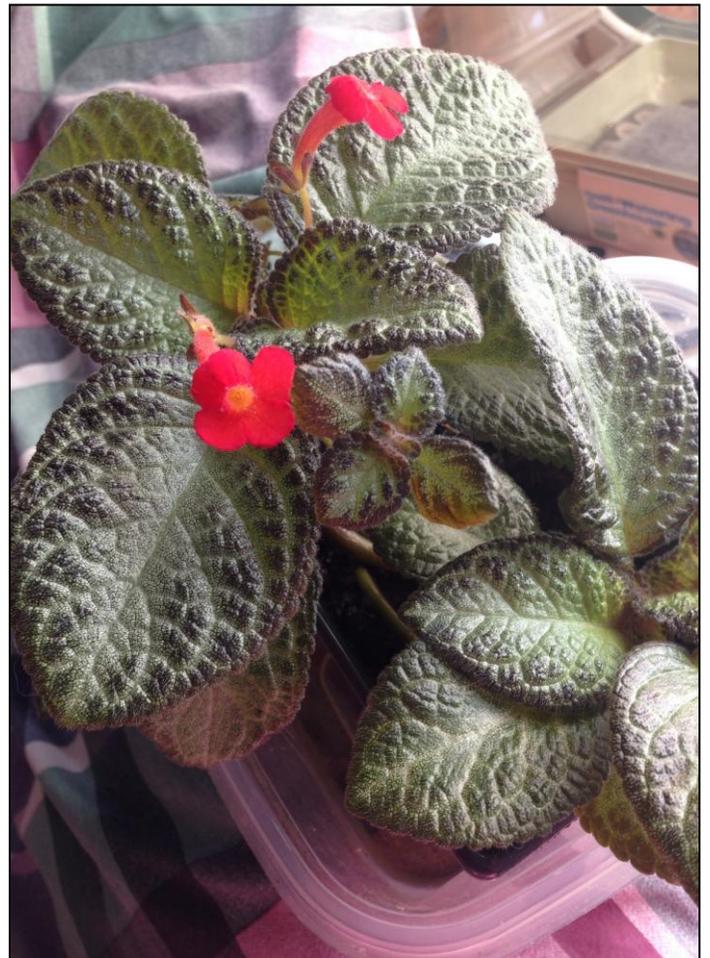
### Bloomin' Now



Kitty's *Streptocarpus* 'German'



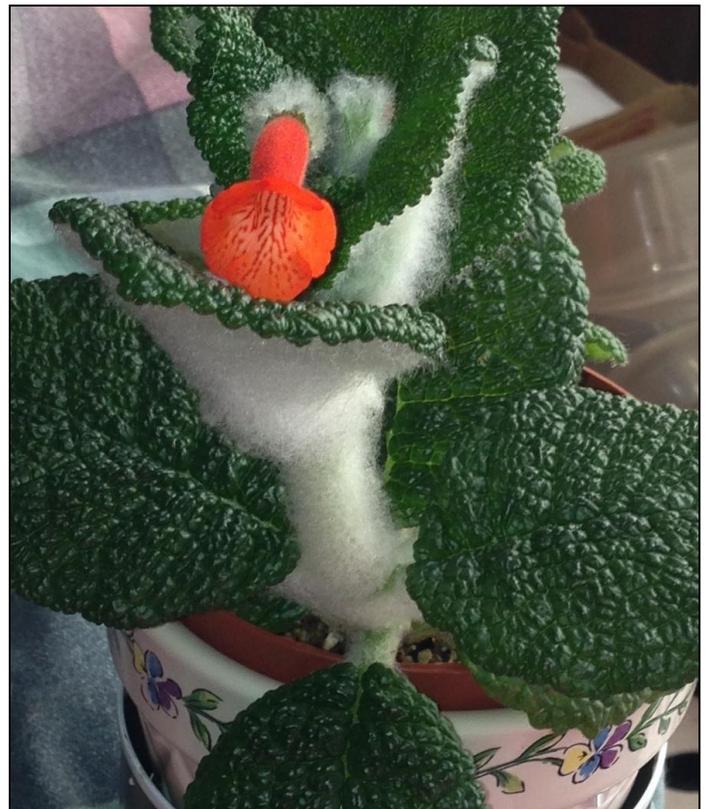
Kitty's *Primulina* 'Nimbus'



Donna's *Episcia* blooming. Labeled 'Red Bloom'



Dave's *Kohleria* 'Strawberry Fields'



Donna's *Sinningia bullata*, first blooms from seedling. Love the fuzz!

Our seed order has arrived from Mauro Peixoto of Brazil Plants. To learn more check out the Facebook page and his website.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Brazilplantsclub/461609077355873/>

[www. Brazilplants .com](http://www.Brazilplants.com)

## January NCAC Meeting

Our January meeting was a lot of fun at Sally's home. Besides our enjoyment of watching all the birds that visit Sally's bird feeders outside her dining room window, we saw a herd of deer come to the feeder area and eat seed on the ground.



Not the best photo thru the glass but you get the idea!

Barb gave an excellent presentation about how to make Artistic Gesneriad Arrangements, explaining how the judges score the designs that use cut, dried and growing materials. She had lots of handouts explaining elements of design, principles of design, suggestions for plant material, supplies needed, mechanics of design and how to manage the space around the design. Barb gave all members in attendance a big baggie full of supplies to take home and make their own designs. Here are pictures of three designs that our members made.



Bill's design



Kitty's design



Irene's design

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

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



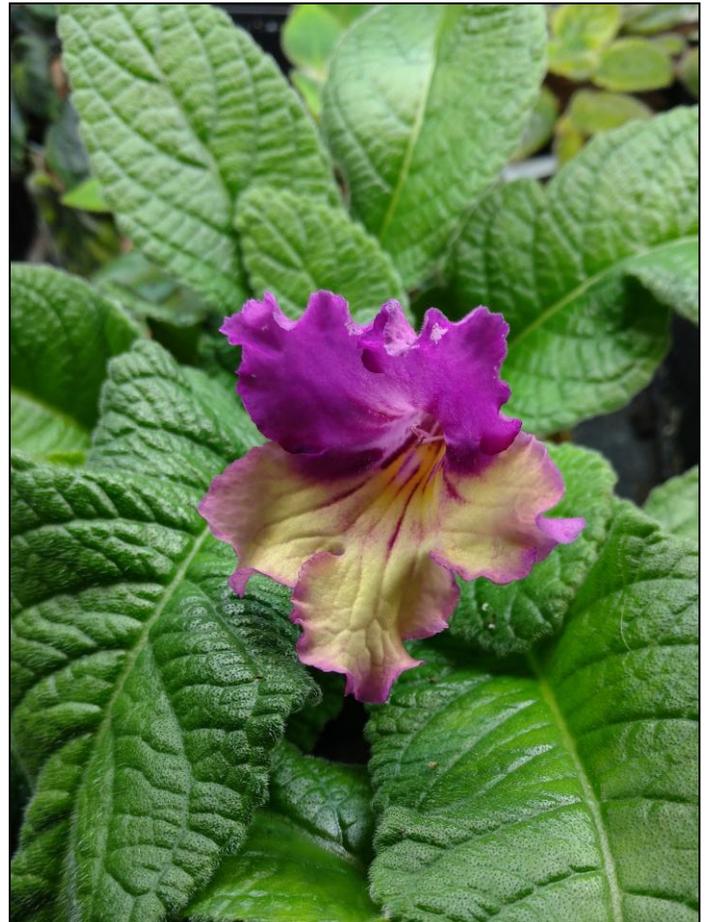
Barb's *Gasteranthus atratus*



Barb's *Sinningia reitzii*



Johanna's favorite, *Amalophyllon clarkii*.



Barb's *Streptocarpus* 'Can Can'



Barb's *Alsobia dianthaflora*

**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> 9:00-5:00 April  
 15<sup>th</sup> 9:00-4:00  
 Free Admission to Show and Sale

## Sinningia Tubers

Barb Stewart

I have a wide variety of *Sinningias*, from an unnamed micro-miniature in a glass jar to a large tuber of *Sinningia speciosa* 'Touch of Spice'. *Sinningias* seem to come and go under my conditions, so I rounded up my scattered collection of *Sinningias* to see what I have. Most are putting up new growth at



*Sinningia tubiflora* tubers

this time; however, a couple were dried up and lifeless, and one seemed like it was still viable, but showing no growth. (I'll give that one a while longer to show some signs of life.) Others, like *Sinningia tubiflora* have produced a pot full of tubers, or produce a cluster of tubers stacked on top of each other which can be separated. Although I am not really an expert on *Sinningias*, I shall share some of my experiences as well as photos from other members who probably grow them better than I do. *Sinningias* are New World *gesneriads* mostly from Central and South America. They form tubers to store nutrients while dormant during the dry season. I store dormant tubers in different ways. Large ones remain in their pots, and I move them from the wet matting to an unmated tray where they can dry and not rot while dormant. For smaller ones, I have tried removing them from the pots and storing them in a snack size Ziploc bag clipped to the edge of my light fixture so I can watch for new growth. The first time

I tried this, I wrapped the tuber in a damp paper towel as someone suggested, and was excited to see it sprout within a couple of months. Others did not fare as well. Some re-sprouted, and some dried out. I found that if they stay too long in the bag, the paper towel develops a severe case of black mold, so I now use sphagnum moss instead. Most people want to know how to get a tuber out of dormancy. The general consensus is that there is nothing you can do



*S. 'Tampa Bay Beauty'* tubers

to wake up a dormant tuber. Just keep it on the dry side so it doesn't rot. (I occasionally give mine a little plain water if it has been dry a long time. Do not fertilize, as accumulated fertilizer may burn the new growth.)



Cross section of a tuber

Then it is up to nature. If all goes well, it will sprout when it is ready. One suggestion is to leave a stub of the old stem when the plant goes dormant. This reduces the risk of pulling out the growing point and nothing for the new growth to sprout from. *Sinningias* vary in their growth habits. Some sprout one stem, and others produce many sprouts but only a

few fully develop unless something happens to the main stem. My favorite *Sinningias* are the ones that never really go dormant. When the plant dies back, new sprouts begin to form. Another question about *Sinningia* tubers is how deep to plant them. This



*Sinningia piresiana*

varies by species and depends on where they grow in nature. Some grow on hillsides or cliff faces where erosion exposes the tuber, or are epiphytic. These can be planted with the top of the tuber exposed. Some have interesting and decorative surfaces which add to their beauty when entered in a show. Others



If the pot's too small, the tuber will find a way to fit: *Sinningia reitzii* 'Magenta'

grow where there is more soil and can be buried below the soil surface. Since I have no idea where

my different *Sinningias* come from, I generally plant mine at the soil level. The tubers seem to find their own optimal level eventually. However, a good reference for a number of species can be found at [www.burwur.net](http://www.burwur.net) ("To Bury or Not to Bury"). *Sinningias* are fascinating yet sometimes challenging plants that are generally easy to grow. It is always exciting to see one sprout from dormancy, and most of them quickly reward us with beautiful blossoms in a wide variety of colors. Large tubers are also called caudex. Enjoy this wonderful group of plants!



Johanna's *Primulina* noid (possibly Aiko?)



Johanna's *Alsobia* 'Cygnet'



Johanna's *Aeschynanthus gracilis*



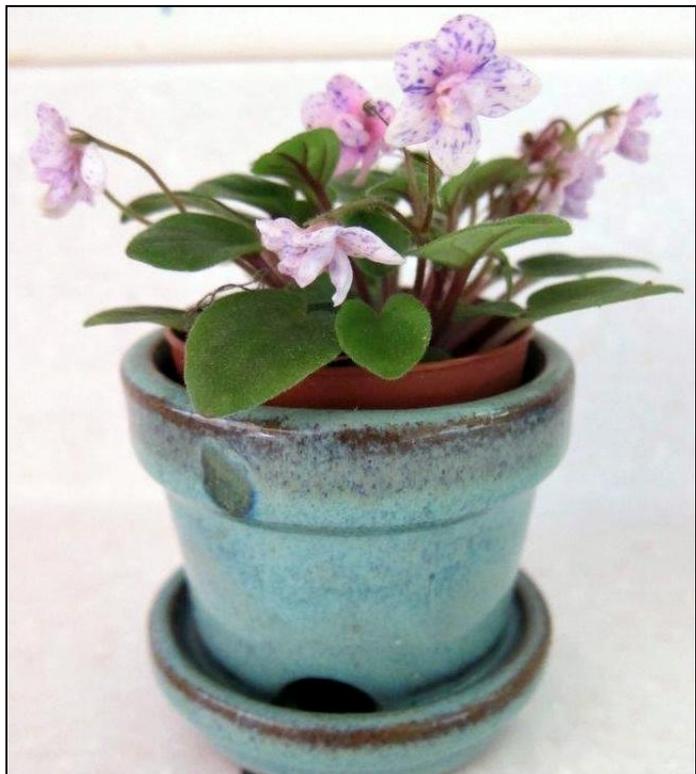
Group effort! *Sinningia* 'Grable x self' from Dave Anderson's seedlings, repotted by Johanna, grown by Donna who has used their pollen to try hybridizing other sinningias.

### What Is All the Fuss About?



The wonderful, recently discovered gem of a tiny plant growing on iron ore rock as seen in the picture is called *Sinningia minima*. Mauro Peixoto has shared seeds of the little gem and several growers have grown some plants from seed and if you follow the Gesneriads and *Sinningia* Facebook pages you can keep up with the ups and downs of growing this plant from seed. Mauro explains it has a 6 month dormancy and he recommends germination in regular gesneriad soil. It does not like Sphagnum Moss, beware! I am sure Jim will share more information about his experience with minima at our meeting this coming Saturday!

<http://www.burwur.net/sinns/4minima.htm>



Johanna's *Saintpaulia* 'Fun Trail'

## 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>: Show Prep with members

October 13<sup>th</sup>: Streptocarpus with Brian Connor

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

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.

President: Barb Stewart  
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Vice-President: Jim Roberts  
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[Petaltones@gmail.com](mailto:Petaltones@gmail.com) or  
[Donnabeverin@gmail.com](mailto:Donnabeverin@gmail.com)

#### **Committees:**

Hospitality: Irene Pittman  
Publications: Donna Beverin

Propagation: Barb Stewart/Donna Beverin

Membership: Jim Roberts

Ways and Means: Brian Connor

Show: Jim Roberts

#### **Directors:**

**Victor Nicholas**

**Brian Connor**

**Ki Imai**

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

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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