

PETAL TONES



Newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of the Gesneriad Society

Volume 50 Number 11

November 2019



Barbara Stewart's *Primulina* 'Chastity'

President's Message:

Just returned from the Mid-Atlantic AVS convention in Virginia Beach. The show was beautiful and included many lovely gesneriads which you will see in this issue. A number of our members had entries in both horticulture and design.

At our last meeting, we had a lot of good discussion on cultural issues. It went so well that we decided to continue this month, as there were still a lot of unanswered questions to discuss. We have many knowledgeable and experienced growers in our group with good information to share. Feel free to bring new questions. Hope to see you there. Barb

MEETING LOCATION:

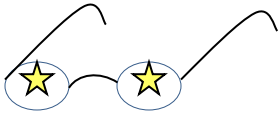
Emmanuel United Methodist Church 10755
Scaggsville Road, Laurel, MD 20723

We gather at 10:00am 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.

Attention: The Church is a "NUT FREE ZONE" Please do not bring any foods containing nuts

November 16th : Continuation of 'Cultural Issues"
December 14th : Holiday Party – Johanna Hosting
January 11th: Webinar : Growing Show Plants
February 8th: Propagation: Donna & Barb with the expertise of all members. Bring plants, cuttings seeds to share. Discuss Mini Show
March 14th : Mini Show Bill
April 11th: Design, Companion Plants (Idea)
May 9th: No Meeting. Field trip to BAVS
June 13th: Propagation for Show plants (idea)
July No Meeting. National Convention
August 8th: Meeting on Show/Sale Prep
Sept 11, 12 13th: NCAC's Show and Sale
October 10th:
November 14th:
December 12th: Holiday Party TBA

Programs may change with agreement of members.



Wishfully Seeking to Grow

Donna Beverin..... *Liebigia speciosa* & *Achimenes pedunculata* Has *S. tubiflora* to share.
 Janet Carlton.....*Streptocarpus* 'Harlequin Damsel' leaf, cutting, plant
 Sharon Long.....*Streptocarpus cyanandrus*
 Kitty Hedgepeth..... leaf or small start of *Saintpaulia* clone *tongwensis* Uppsala 3397

Bloomin' Now



Dave's *Sinningia* 'High Voltage'



Dave's *Sinningia* "NOID"



Dave's *Sinningia* 'Laura'



Donna's *Sinningia* NOID in a prop box. Most likely a 'Mark Twain' x self seedling



BLOOMIN' NOW



Dave's *Eucodonia* NOID



Dave's *Kohleria* 'Strawberry Fields'



Dave's *Streptocarpus* NOID



Dave's *Sinningia* 'Mark Twain'

Raffle Table

DON'T FORGET THE RAFFLE TABLE!

At every meeting our members bring extra plants, cuttings, growing supplies, magazines, books , seedlings and donate them to the raffle table. Tickets for the raffle are only 2 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, magazines, pamphlets , pots and gardening supplies and other plants we love to grow like begonias and houseplants. We are getting a great election of items for the raffle table. Please remember to label your plants and check for pests. Also, it is a good practice to isolate your new plants when you get home before adding them to your collection.

Bloomin' Now



Kitting Hedgepeth: "Sending developmental photos of my *Sinningia leucotricha*. This is the plant generously sent to me by Karyn Cichocki in April of 2017 in response to my post in Petal Tones 'Desperately Seeking' column.. Desperately Seeking works! What began as a small starter plant now has a tuber about the size of a pool ball. It currently has two stems coming out of the tuber and is enjoying its first blooms!"



Donna's *Primulina* 'Aiko' purchased at Green Spring Show from Gary's Specialty Plants as a young starter plant.

Bloomin' Now



Donna's *Gloxinia* 'Dragonsong' hybridized by Jim Roberts from *Gloxinia perennis* and *Gloxinia erinoides*



Donna's *Achimenes* NOID, maybe *A. erecta*. Came up in a hanging basket of *Begonia intergerrima* formerly *B. solanthera* and a *B. 'Ikon'* seedling.



X*Glokoheria* 'Goblin' John Boggan's hybrid of *Gloxinia erinoides* 'Red Satin' and *Kohleria rugata*.

Bloomin' Now



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



Donna's *Kohleria* 'Bud's Little Pig'



Donna's *Deinostigma tamiana*



Janet's *Streptocarpus* 'Janet's Cloudburst'. Janet grew this plant from seed she received from Dale Martens. The seedling was grown on by Doug.





Propagation Box

If you have never tried propagating gesneriads, you should give it a try. It is so easy! This picture shows a container (has a clear lid) that I bought for \$1.00 at the end of summer at Walmart. It came with little peat pots for starting seeds in the spring. So I discarded the peat pots and filled the container with a mix of perlite and Pro Mix and watered it. Then when I found a leaf that fell off of a plant or a tiny bulb that was not doing well I stuck it in this prop box. Be sure to put the clear lid back on to keep in the humidity. When I brought home the plants from Gary's Specialty plants in my car for the Green Spring Sale in May 2019, there were quite a few leaves that fell off in the process of cramming all those plants into the back of my Yaris!

In this picture you can see many various small plants of Primulinas, Tradescantia, Begonias, and Sinningia with one blooming. Now for the task of separating the baby plants and transplanting them into pots.

Try picking any plastic container with a clear lid and get a start of some young plants. You may have a winner for our show in September of 2020!
Donna Beverin



Another propagation success story. *Sinningia tubiflora* creates plenty of tubers without any extra work on your part! Plant one tuber and over a year or two you may be rewarded with so many tubers you will have plenty to share and even sell on EBay! ! From Donna's library: picture of the fragrant *Sinningia tubiflora* in bloom.

Kitty's *Sinningia tubiflora* at the end of the season. It did not bloom this year...Maybe needed to be repotted or needed more fertilizer to feed all these new tubers

BLOOMIN' NOW



Doug's BBS *Streptocarpus* 'Mr. Leach'



Doug's S. 'Moscow Lady'



Doug's S. Niobe'



Doug's S. 'Rubin'.



Doug's Streptocarpus 'Blue Halo'



Doug's S. 'Dibleys Party Boy'

Growing *Gloxinia perennis* Indoors

Peter Shalit 1312 E. Denny Way, Seattle, WA 98122

Gloxinia perennis is not at all difficult to grow or bloom, but it does take some work to grow it well. The effort is well rewarded, though, because a blooming plant of this elegant species can be stunning. I have grown *G. perennis* on and off for over thirty years, and every time I grow it, I am reminded of the pleasures of old friendships. The species has an upright habit, a red stem, and large stiff shiny leaves, gray-green above, and red-purple below. A mature plant is a few feet or approximately a meter tall, topped with a stalk of bell-shaped pale lavender flowers which have a sweet minty scent.

The middle lower lobe of the flower is fringed with little teeth, which Hans Wiehler swore serves as a railing which prevents bees, drunken on the flower's nectar, from falling out of the flower. Although the species epithet *perennis* means "perennial", no portion of this plant lives for more than one season. The aboveground part of this plant is annual, emerging in spring from an underground scaly rhizome which disappears during the growing season. The old rhizome is eventually replaced by new rhizomes as the plant prepares for dormancy after blooming later in the year.

So if you don't do well with your *G. perennis* one year, at least try to keep it going long enough to make new rhizomes so you can try growing it again the next year.

If your plant fails to make rhizomes, you will lose it. This "annual" perennial habit, obligate dormancy, and upright growth pattern with a spike of flowers on top, is very reminiscent to the habit of a *Smithiantha*. In fact, I treat *G. perennis* and *Smithianthas* the exact same way indoors. The genera are closely related, and (sterile) hybrids have been created between them, the best known being \times *Gloxinantha* 'Evlo'. I start the large white scaly rhizomes of *G. perennis* in spring. I bury them approximately an inch or a couple cm under the surface of my current favorite mix in 4-inch pots, and place them close to the lights in order for the new growth to be stocky. The plants prefer to be toward the middle of a two tube fixture for optimal light, and a four-tube fixture pleases them even more.

The problem arises when *G. perennis* grows too tall for the light shelves, as it always does. In my light garden, this happens when the plant has 4-5 sets of full-sized leaves. At that point I cut off and re-root the top of the plant. The new cutting should have two sets of mature leaves, and an additional leaf node at the base of the stem (with leaves removed). I sink the cutting into a fresh pot of soil with the lower leaves right above the soil surface. Ten days in a plastic bag or sweater box are enough to root the fresh cutting, after which the extra humidity is no longer needed. The original decapitated plant may survive and grow, but it will never make a nice plant. I keep it if I want additional rhizomes for friends, but usually I just toss it in the compost once I know the top has successfully rooted. Like *Smithianthas*, *G. perennis* blooms naturally in late summer and fall, and a rooted top will bloom at a much more compact size than a plant grown directly from a rhizome. It will bloom when its time comes, no matter what size it is. Occasionally the cutting will again grow up to the lights without setting buds, in which case I will re-root the top and start over again. Once buds have appeared, the opportunity to do this topping is over because the shock of being cut off and re-rooted is likely to cause the buds to stop developing.

Last year, for the first time, I grew *G. perennis*, along with several *Smithianthas*, in natural light on a south-facing bay window. The plants grew happily to their full natural height of several feet, and bloomed lustily, though they leaned and grew into each other like a tangled jungle. I prefer to top and re-root this species, even though it takes more work, because it creates a more compact and well-behaved blooming specimen which can be kept under the lights and does not need staking.



Donna's *Gloxinia perennis* 'Insignia' grown from seed by Minh, is growing out the bottom of the pot. No blooms yet!



Sinningia 'Mighty Mouse' Norma Griswold



Kohleria 'An's Nagging Macaws' Bill Schmidt



Primulina 'Loki' LaDonna Hopson



Streptocarpus 'Harlequin Dawn' Barb Greenawalt





S. confusa Lisa Bradley's 2nd Best in Show



Donna's *Kohleria* 'Red Ryder'



Donna's *Sinningia* 'Roxy'

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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. Membership runs the calendar year and can be prorated.

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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