

# PETAL TONES



Volume 49 Number 10

October 2018



The smallest of the Micro-Minis: *Sinningia minima* grown from seed by Dale Martens. Photo: Martens

## President's Message:

Everyone is busy this time of year, but we still had a great turnout last month for a wonderful program on *Streptocarpus* by Brian Connor. We have another guest speaker this month, Pat Bowling, to tell us how to grow beautiful mini-sinningias. This month we will also be selecting a nominating committee to elect new officers for the next 2 years.

Just a reminder that our November meeting has been postponed until the third Saturday due to conflict with the MAAVS convention in which many of our members participate.

Whether you are going to MAAVS or not, NCAC members are invited to participate in a practice gesneriad show held by the Richmond African Violet Society during their normal meeting time on November 3, 2018.

## 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" due to children with allergies so do not bring any food items that include nuts or peanuts. The area is a day care.**

October 13th: Mini Sinningias with Pat Bowling  
Plant of the Month: Miniature Sinningias

November 17th: Growing *Smithianthas* and *Eucodonias* webinar

December : Holiday Party TBA

(RAVS is now an affiliate of the Gesneriad Society.) The location is Friends Meeting, 4500 Kensington Ave, Richmond VA with entries being accepted 9:30 - 10:30 am. This is a good opportunity to prepare for entering gesneriads at MAAVS or just get some practice exhibiting, since NCAC does not have a gesneriad show planned for the coming year. Details will accompany the Petal Tones email.

Our Treasurer, Sharon Long will be accepting dues for 2019 at the October meeting. Dues are still \$10 a year.

Don't forget to share your extra babies on the raffle table, and bring a nut-free snack.

Barbara



Pat's babies grown from leaves proves leaves can work!



Pat Bowling's bowl of mini sinningia cuttings



Bright Eyes Tetraploid Form Pat Bowling



Pat's babies of *Sinningia minima* with bud!

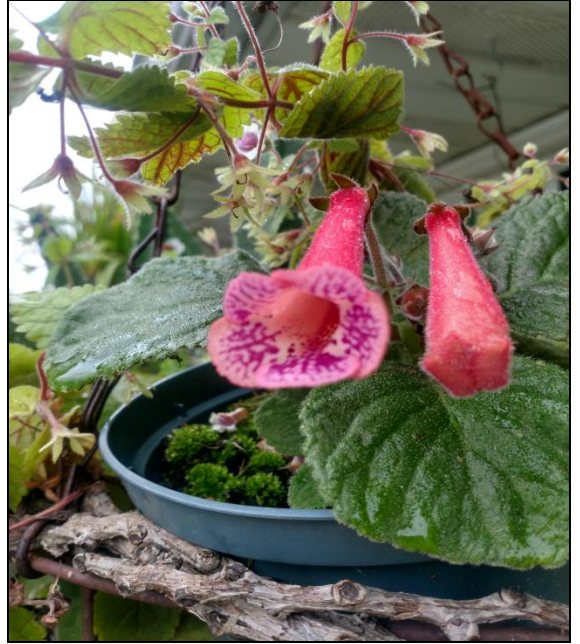


Join us for Pat Bowling's presentation on how she grows these precious plants and all the amazing hybrids that exist.

# Bloomin' Now



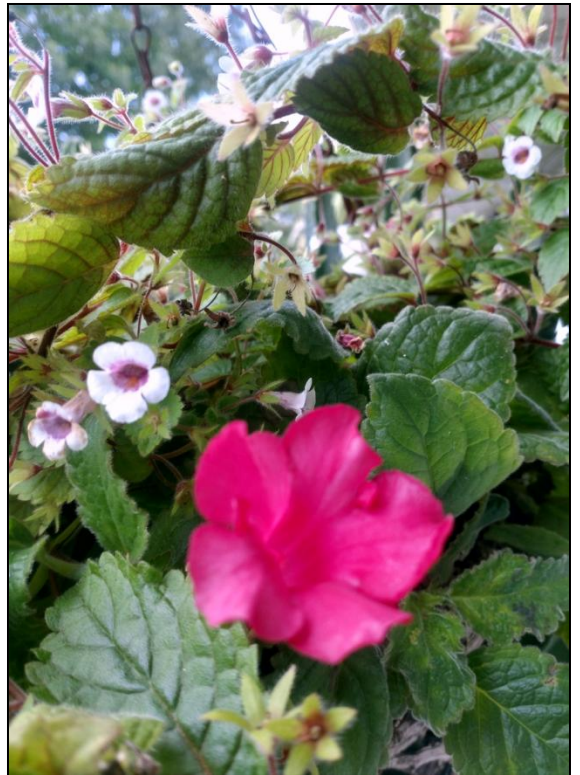
Bill's *Titanotrichum oldhamii* blooming !



Dave's *Sinningia micropoda* and *Achimenes misera*



Peggy's *Saintpaulia* NOID on windowsill at work!



Dave's *Achimenes misera* & *Sinningia* 'Prudence Ridley'

# Bloomin' Now



Dave's *Sinningia* 'Roxy'



Barb's *Sinningia* 'Owlsee's Red Hot'



Barb's *Achimenes* 'Robert Dressler'



Barb's *Primulina* 'Silver Surfer'

# Bloomin' Now



Barb's *Sinningia leucotricha*



Barb's *Saintpaulia* 'Wonderous Girl'



Barb's *Sinningia* Micro Mini from December's workshop



*Streptocarpus* 'Cindy' from Buxton Branch  
Begonia Show photo: Johanna Zinn



*Chrysothemis puchella* grown by Lynn Ackerman at Buxton Area Gesneriad Show  
photo : J. Zinn



*Aeschynanthus fulgens* at Buxton Show  
photo: J. Zinn



*Kohleria 'Grenada'* grown by Judith Becker at Buxton Show photo : J. Zinn



*Seemannia nemantanthoides 'Evita'* grown by Darren Norton at Buxton Show photo: J. Zinn

## Desperately Seeking

Donna.....Eucodonia andrieuxii 'Wooly Morrion'



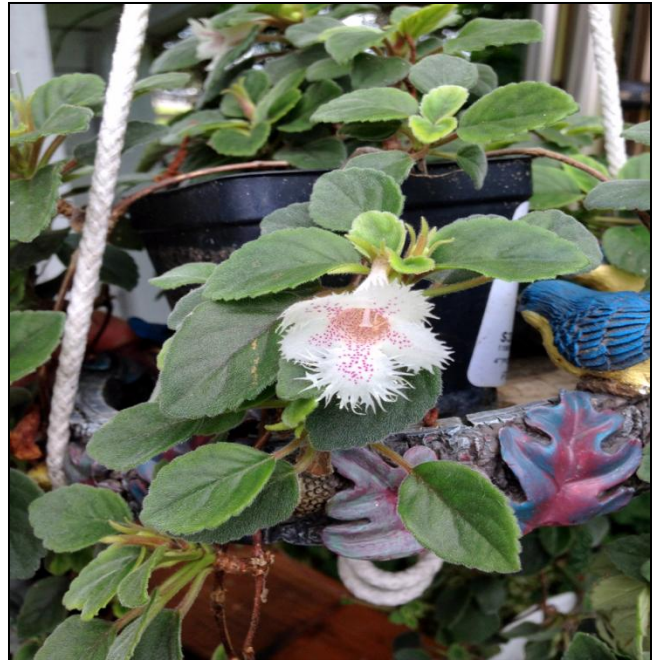
*Seemannia gymnostoma* grown by Judith Becker at Buxton Show photo; Johanna Zinn



*Petrocosmea kerri* grown by Dee Stewart at Buxton Show photo : J.Zinn



*Sinningia macropoda* grown by Dee Stewart at Buxton Show photo : J. Zinn



Donna's *Alsobia* 'San Miguel'



MAAVS 2018 Convention and Show!  
Radisson Hotel in Camp Hill, PA  
"Violets and the Chocolate Factory"  
November 8 – 10, 2018  
More information: <https://www.maavs.org/>

# *Drymonia decora*

This plant, known from only one locality in Costa Rica, features square stems with a descending habit, long narrow leaves, and light-yellow flowers. The leaves are opposite and anisophyllous, which means that in each pair one leaf is much larger than the other.

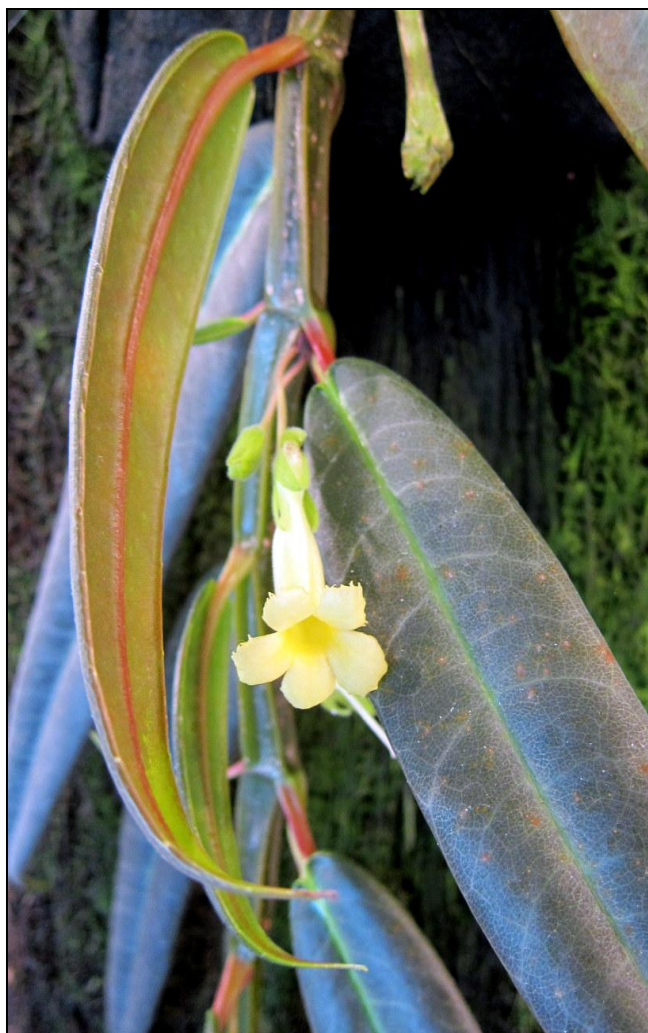
I have had the plant for nine years now. The first eight years it struggled along, eventually reaching about eight inches long after many setbacks. It never seemed to like being in a high-humidity box on a light stand, and it also didn't like being in a pot like other plants. I eventually decided to try the scheme that you see, as an imitation of its natural habit. This year it has finally decided to start growing.

The stem sends out roots where it is in contact with a wet "tree trunk", so I have added a wet pack part way down.

The "soil" mix is very loose, with lots of perlite. It is contained in a folded bag of black polyester quilt batting. This material allows air and water to go through, and it does not rot. The minimum night temperature in winter is set at 66F; I don't know whether this is necessary or whether a lower temperature would work. Eventually I will get another plant going and try it cooler.

Johanna shared information about this beautiful and unique, *Drymonia decora* grown by Bob Stewart and exhibited at the Buxton Show. "My favorite in the show. This was really cool. I'd love to grow this one, but I don't know if I could grow it without a real greenhouse...or a giant slab of tree fern bark."

Photos : Johanna Zinn





# Delaware Gesneriad Show and Sale at Delaware Center for Horticulture



Gloxinia 'Dragonsong' grown by Barbara Borleske & hybridized by Jim Roberts photo by Ray Ruger



Sinningia 'Polka Punch' grown by Ray Ruger photo by Ray Ruger



xGloximannia 'She's Dancing' grown by Barbara Borleske photo by Ray Ruger



Primulina 'Starburst' grown by Elizabeth Varley photo by Ray Ruger



*Streptocarpus* ssp. sect. *S. 5a.* cl. *grandifolius* No.23 grown by Bobby LaFashia photo by Ray Ruger



Achimenes 'Salmon Pink' grown by Barbara Borleske photo by Ray Ruger

This summer as I was reading old issues of our National magazine "Gesneriads", (which was called many names over the years including, 'The Gesneriad Journal' and 'The Gloxinian') I read about miniature Sinningias that led to the hybrids we enjoy today.

My memory of Sinningia pusilla started when I placed a plant order with Michael Kartuz in the 1970's. He needed to substitute one of my selections and sent me S.pusilla with a note to not throw it out if I think it died and that it is a little flowering plant with a bulb. It will re-grow.

So I did a little searching (pre-internet days!) and found some information in several of Charles Marten Fitch's books. Love at first site opening my world to the beautiful flowering plants of Gesneriads.

Another book where I learned more about the little sinningia and a bit of the history of these plants is the "**African-Violet Book**" **By Helen Van Pelt Wilson** First published 1951. My copy 1970.

#### Chapter 16: Excerpt "Sinningia and Gloxineras"

"The small sinningias are the easiest to obtain, including the two species, *S. concinna* and *S. pusilla*, plus their hybrids. The variable wine-to-orchid-to-almost-white 'Wood Nymph' with an edging or dotted throat on blooms of different forms, is a cross between them; a third generation backcross produced 'Bright Eyes', and these two are different enough for you to want both.

Other hybrids produced with these two species have involved a much larger plant. Most popular because of their ease of culture are Mrs. Katzenberger's lilac-and-white 'Dollbaby', a cross of the lavender *S. pusilla* with the white *S. eumorpha*, and 'Dollbaby's' counterpart, 'Cindy', a first generation from *S. concinna* with *S. eumorpha*, the flower picking up the purple *concinna* spots and elongating them into stripes. (Cindy comes from a cross made by Dr. Thomas E. Talpey.) 'White Sprite' is a sport of *S. pusilla*, and 'Snowflake' a chemically induced mutation from it. 'Freckles', with blossoms of the *S. concinna* type, is choice and easy to grow. Fisher's 'Tom Thumb' is a true miniature of the florist's gloxina (*Sinningia speciosa*), a delightful diminutive, red with a white-bordered corolla, a nice contrast to the pastels.

Intergeneric cross between *Sinningia* and *Rechsteineria* provide pink flowers in this group of miniature tuberous gesneriads. Often offered as a pink 'Dollbaby' is 'Dollbaby's' progeny, correctly called *Gloxinera* 'Cupid's Doll', but this is not the true pink of such gloxineras as 'Pink Petite', 'Ramadeva', or 'Krishna', these being also smaller."

Back to 2018 where you can find a list of miniature sinningias with history on the '**Sinningia and Friends**' website where much more detailed information can be studied thanks to Alan LaVergne.

<http://www.burwur.net/sinns/3mini.htm>

#### Hybrids involving only the miniature species

- Bright Eyes ([*pusilla* x *concinna*] x *concinna*)
- Li'l Georgie (*musciola* x *concinna*)
- Razzmatazz
- Ruffled Wood Nymph ([*pusilla* x *concinna*] x *concinna*)
- Wood Nymph (*pusilla* x *concinna*)
- Snowflake
- musciola* x 'Snowflake'
- 'Mighty Mouse' (*concinna* x 'Snowflake')

#### Hybrids involving *S. concinna* and larger species

- Cindy (*concinna* x *eumorpha*)
- Deep Purple Dreaming (*concinna* x *sellovii*)
- Freckles (*concinna* x *hirsuta*)
- Hircon (tetraploid (?), *concinna* x *hirsuta*)
- Oengus
- Tinkerbells (*concinna* x *aggregata*)



Sinningia 'Cindy-Ella' from Fitch's Terrarium Book



### Hybrids involving *S. pusilla* and larger species

Cupid's Doll  
Dollbaby (*pusilla* x *eumorpha*)  
Heartland's Flashlight (*pusilla* x *helioana*)  
Oengus  
Pink Petite (*pusilla* x *leucotricha*)  
Quasar (*pusilla* x *conspicua*)  
Ramadeva (*pusilla* x *leucotricha*)

### Hybrids involving *S. muscicola* and larger species

Toad Hall (*muscicola* x *conspicua*)  
*muscicola* x *macrostachya* (by Jim Steuerlein)  
Yma (*muscicola* x *bullata*)  
*muscicola* x *polyantha* (by Jim Steuerlein)



*Sinningia minima*

- Good information with pictures can be found on Linda Zillick's website: <https://www.freewebs.com/sinningias/>
- Cultural information from Vincent T. Parsons, "Understanding Your Sinningia pusilla and Other Microminiature Sinningias" <http://www.angelfire.com/or2/jipiter/pusilla.html>

### Sinningia minima

The latest microminiature sinningia discovered is *Sinningia minima*. According to Mauro Peixoto, Dr. Andrea Onofre de Araujo went to Carajás, Brazil in 2012 to search for this small plant discovered in 1968. DNA proved it to be a Sinningia. With several generous donations a trip was planned to find *Sinningia minima* again in the wild. February 2016, Isabele Maia, Raymond VanVeen and Mauro Peixoto traveled to various sites to try to find the plant. Although much of Minima's habitat will be lost due to excessive iron mining, one site was discovered where it will be able to live in a protected area. The details of the challenging trip can be found in The Journal for Gesneriad Growers: Gesneriads, Volume, 66, Number 3, Third Quarter 2016, page 5.

February 15, 2016 Mauro announced success in finding *Sinningia minima* in the wild on his Facebook page. Mauro donated seeds at the the 2017 Gesneriad Convention auction and then distributed seed through Brazil Plants. First success from seeds besides Mauro is by Hung Nguyen, Dale Martens, Jim Roberts and David Zaitlin.

### The Challenges of Growing Sinningia Minima From Seed

National Capital Area Chapter of the Gesneriad Society (NCAC) is a member of Brazil Plants supporting the work of Mauro Peixoto and thus ordered seeds of *Sinningia minima* when he made them available. I distributed seeds to our members and send seeds to Pat Bowling and Linda Zillich. There was many challenges in learning how to grow these seeds that were not experienced by seasoned growers with other sinningias. I tried to keep a record of the experiences we shared on Facebook and thus help others who want to grow Minima from seed.

[Dale Martens](#) October 12, 2017

One of the most fun events at The Gesneriad Society conventions is the live auction! Thanks to Mauro Peixoto for donating *Sinningia minima* seeds to the auction. I was one of the winners. Patience is a virtue because I now have the first seedlings sprouting after 43 days. In the little container, I put NZ sphagnum on one side and a Pro-Mix mixture on the other. The seedlings germinated on the Pro-Mix side. This very tiny species goes dormant at the end of its season. I'll have to make sure I get seeds before it goes to sleep.

[Donna Beverin](#) Dale. What medium did you use for germination? I meticulously prepared sphagnum cut in small pieces. Microwaved 5 minutes 3 times. In a small glass globe. Covered w plastic. Cooled and rested for 2 days. Then rolled in the tiny seeds which was half the packet. No germination. This was last year when seeds first became available. The sphagnum was damp. Not soaking.

[Dale Martens](#) I'm sorry you didn't see my comments last fall when I said I had a container with sphagnum on one side and my regular soil mix on the other side. Nothing sprouted on the sphagnum side. I believe Jim Roberts also mentioned using sphagnum and losing his. Unfortunately sphagnum is too acidic.

[Dale Martens](#) "For whatever reason, in the same container none came up in the sphagnum, but did come up in the ProMix side. I'm wondering about acidity in the sphagnum"

[Jim Roberts](#): When I transplanted my seedlings into long fibered sphagnum I got a warning right away from both you (Dale) and Mauro that they wouldn't like sphagnum. So I repotted the same day into my normal mix. Checking the seedlings last weekend, when watering, the entire flat was covered in a thick growth of moss, burying the small plants. None of the other seedlings transplanted that same weekend in the same mix have this moss problem. I'm afraid I've lost all 40 precious little plants.

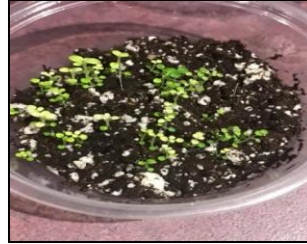
[Mauro Peixoto](#) In Nature they grow on almost pure iron ore rocks in tiny crevices and sometimes are surrounded by moss (not sphagnum). I sow my seeds on regular soilless mixture. That's how it grows, vertically on the rock.



Mauro's photo on rocks



Brazil Plants



Jim's seedlings



David's seedlings

[Donna Beverin](#) Ok I was going to do that using vermiculite and soil. Should I add ground limestone or pumice?

[Dale Martens](#): simple, soilless mix, whatever you use for your gesneriads or AVs. No additives.

[Mauro Peixoto](#) I would take them (or most of them) from the sphagnum. I didn't see any hint of them in the habitat and also they don't grow well in sphagnum under my growing conditions..

[Jim Roberts](#) After hearing from 2 Sinningia experts, I've moved them all again. Into the Sunshine mix that I use for everything else. Fingers crossed!

[Jim Roberts](#) Finally big enough (?!) to move to increase growth by tickling the roots. Moved the seedlings to blender chopped long-fibered sphagnum with a little Osmocote. About 50 seedlings from the packet of seeds I got from Brazil Plants.

[David Zaitlin](#) I have dozens of *S. minima* seedlings from Mauro's seeds that I got in October. They started to germinate after ~3 weeks, and continued for almost 2 months. My 'lawn' of *Sinningia minima*, growing in a 10-cm pot. I sowed seed that Mauro Peixoto gave me in Brazil in early November 2017. The first few germinated in about 3 weeks, and they kept on coming into early 2018. So now I realize that "minima" refers to the size of the flowers, because the plants are larger than *S. pusilla*. *S. minima* seems to do very well in a glass dome under fluorescent lights.

[Hung Nguyen](#): (2017) *Sinningia minima* one month grow (Nov 26 to Dec 26)



Hung's Minima plant in bloom

[Dale Martens](#)

December 5, 2017 ·

I sowed seeds of the tiny micro-miniature *Sinningia minima* on Oct 18 and they didn't sprout until about 4 weeks later. This is what they look like today. I'm growing them in a greenhouse tray with a lid for high humidity.



[Dale Martens](#)

December 15, 2017 ·

*Sinningia minima*'s growth is steadily progressing for me. I removed the tiny cotyledons and planted them deeper in a small pot. The pot is wick watered and inside a glass bowl with clear food wrap to keep humidity high.

**Dale Martens** Mauro Peixoto just cautioned me about this species being wick watered when it grows in nature with dry seasons. This means I will remove it from a wicking situation when it begins to decline so the tuber will not rot.

**Dale Martens** Feb. 1st, Update on my seedlings of *Sinningia minima*: There are buds now! I am growing it under LED tube lights in a large bowl with clear food wrap on top to keep high humidity. I have 5 plants in a 2.5 inch pot that is being wick watered. Fertilizer is 20-14-13 at 1/8 teaspoon per gallon of water. The length of the largest leaf is 1 inch (25 mm). See 2nd photo for red arrows pointing to the buds. (See below)



**Mauro Peixoto** It is the most difficult *Sinningia* to grow that I ever had. The tuber is the size of pin head and it goes dormant from May/June to December/January in Nature, it depends on the rain season. My plants went dormant in June without producing any seed, although I tried pollinate the flowers. So let's hope that they will come back in about 2 months or so...

**Mauro Peixoto** [March 17, 2016](#) ·  
*Sinningia minima* compared to *S. pusilla*.  
Today the first flower bloomed and I put a *S. pusilla* at its side to compare the sizes.



**Pat Bowling** September 9, 2018 Donna look what's happening to Minima. Finally, minima has it's first bud.



**Dale Martens** [May 20](#) ·

Sinningia minima seeds took 40+ days to sprout. The plants began blooming November 2017. So 5 months of blooming before the plants began a swift decline. I harvested tubers. I was told to expect about 4 months dormancy, so I put them in a closed container with barely moist vermiculite. It's been an educational experience! Thanks, Mauro !



**Dale Martens**

[August 24](#) ·

Sinningia minima began to go dormant towards the end of April after 3 months of blooming. I harvested tubers which were smaller than peas on May 17. Mauro Peixoto warned me about dormancy being months and not to have the tubers too wet. I put tubers in moist vermiculite in a container with a lid. S. minima does not do well in sphagnum moss so I used vermiculite. The plastic container with a lid sat on a plant stand, so received the usual 12 hours of light. Today 3 of the 5 tubers have sprouts.



**Dale Martens** [March 2](#) ·

This is the first seedpod on the Sinningia minima plant. I did not self-pollinate it. It did this on its own.



Left pictures are my (Donna's) S. Minima as of now



**Jim Roberts** Mine obviously need a little fertilizer, but I like the veination in it. No buds yet

Now onward to cross breeding for new hybrids!

Congratulations to Barb Stewart and Bill Schmidt who won awards at the 2018 Gesneriad Society Convention and were published in 'Gesneriads' this month!



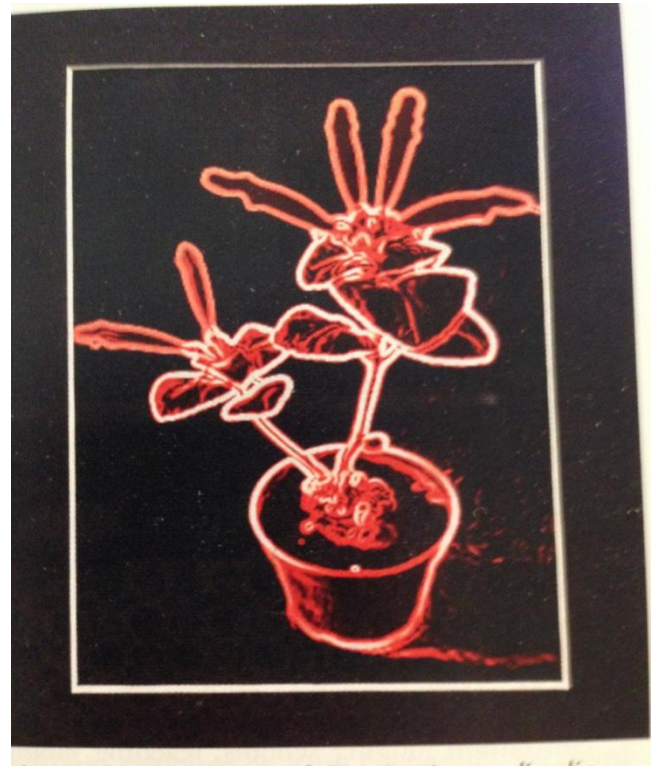
Bill's *Saintpaulia* 'Tiny Wood Trail'



Barb's Curved Terrarium Exhibit



The Gesneriads Magazine, Fourth Quarter 2018



Barb's photo of *Sinningia cardinalis*

## 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

April 21<sup>st</sup>: Joy of Growing Summer Sinningias

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

June 9<sup>th</sup>: Road trip to US Botanic Gardens, DC

July: No meeting, National Convention  
Update: Summer Picnic July 14th at Johanna's

August 11<sup>th</sup>: No Meeting

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

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

November 10<sup>th</sup>: Webinar on Eucodonia and Smithianthas

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

## **Plant of the Month**

September : Streptocarpus

October : Mini Sinningias

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, magazines, pamphlets , pots and gardening supplies.

President: Barb Stewart  
[bstew771@verizon.net](mailto:bstew771@verizon.net)

Vice-President: Jim Roberts  
[Jim.Robert2408@gmail.com](mailto:Jim.Robert2408@gmail.com)

Treasurer: Sharon Long  
[slong15781@aol.com](mailto:slong15781@aol.com)

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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](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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