

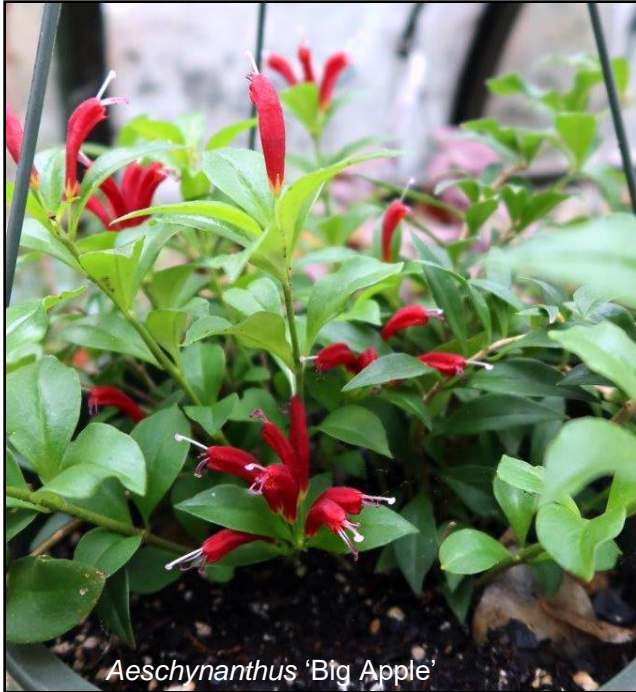
# PETAL TONES



Newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of the Gesneriad Society

Volume 54 Number 2

February 2023



February 2023 No Meeting

Meetings for 2023: March 18th June 10<sup>th</sup> September 9<sup>th</sup>  
October 14<sup>th</sup> December 9<sup>th</sup>

**Congratulations & thanks to our**  
**President: Barb Stewart Vice President: Minh Bui**  
**Secretary; Dena Horton Treasurer; Andy Meier**

Johanna: "*Aeschynanthus* 'Big Apple' In the summer, it hangs outside in the middle of the covered plant area where it gets dappled light. In the winter, it gets bright, indirect light in the plant room. It propagates well from cuttings."

**Gesneriad Reference Web:** "This attractive and very floriferous hybrid of *A. micranthus* and *A. humilis* was created in the mid 1980's by Bartley Schwartz. It is capable of an incredible display of flowers on a generally upright or spreading plant."

**Gary's Speciality Plants:** "Why does A. 'Big Apple' flower?"

A. 'Big Apple' is not commonly grown in commercial horticulture. Strike that --- it's never seen.

The hybrid is very colorful when in flower with red tubular flowers in clusters on an upright plant. *Aeschynanthus* is a Genus with many species and hybrids of all sizes and shapes. And we know that flowering is variety specific. The one that everyone knows as the Lipstick plant is still sought after with its bright red flowers. A. 'Big Apple's' flowers are much smaller, but a cluster of them is impressive.

What makes 'Big Apple' flower? From our production of 'Big Apple', I now know the trigger for bud-set and flowering.

**It is a long-day plant!**

We see small buds on every shoot now in April. So, they were probably starting in March when the day length started to get longer. We should see open flowers by May and continuous flowering though the Summer.

So here it is. Propagate in the Fall, pinch and build plant in the Winter. Get buds in April, flower in May/June-----

Guaranteed. So, what's a hobby grower to do? If it's a windowsill houseplant, don't expect flowers in the Winter. Wait till Spring and Summer. If you grow under florescent lights, understand that you can manipulate flowering with the number of hours of lights-on. 8-10 hours for growth, then 14-16 hours for setting bud. I would expect once the buds are set they will open no matter what the day-length is.

<http://garysspecialtyplants.blogspot.com/>

Happy mid-winter, or whatever season it is where you are!

Today it is spring in Richmond, VA & last weekend it was winter. While I do miss our monthly meeting, it is nice to have an extra Saturday to work on my neglected plants and many seedlings. Four more seeds have sprouted in my containers this week and some others are ready to be potted up.

I hope to have some young ones strong enough to share next month at our propagation workshop. The rest are destined for the convention sales room in July. Hopefully, you have checked the GS website for the convention registration which is now open. We expect a great convention!

<https://gesneriadsoc.regfox.com/2023live>

## Propagation Diary

By Barbara Stewart

Feb 2023

Warning: Propagating gesneriads can be addicting! Whether it is seeds, leaves, or cuttings, there is something about getting plants to reproduce themselves that is exciting. Planting seeds is kind of like playing the lottery. You never know for sure if they are going to sprout and what they will grow into, especially if they are the result of a cross.

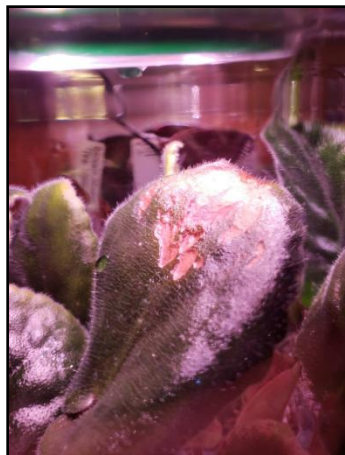
Over the years, I have propagated gesneriads in a variety of containers, including muffin, cupcake, and sub sandwich containers. I am now using some prop boxes I ordered from Amazon. I have some plain ones and also some that have a small LED light at the top. These are on a shelf in natural light. The others are on my plant stand.

I had some older seeds that I planted which were not sprouting, so I added heat mats to see if that would help. Not sure if that was necessary. There are still some seeds that I planted as far back as November that have not shown any signs of life. (They are about to be booted out to make room for more viable seeds.)

Research on using heat mats resulted in mixed opinions. I figured first that a thermostat would be necessary in order to maintain a consistent temperature that I didn't have to monitor daily. I think that was a worthwhile investment. It maintains a temperature around 80 degrees, and so far my seedlings have been happy with that. Some people think a heat mat is not necessary for gesneriad seeds, but it probably depends on the temperature of the room. Others have said that it may help speed up germination, but is not necessary once seedlings get bigger.

Seeds generally need good light to germinate, and most gesneriad seeds need to be exposed to light in order to sprout. I am currently using the LED containers to root *Saintpaulia* leaves, as the domes are higher than my plain containers and fit the leaves better. Some people have expressed concern about the LED lights may burning seedlings. I have one large AV leaf that is right under the LED light in its container and it has browning on the leaf tip, which could possibly be from being too close to the LED. I will just trim that leaf which is too big anyway. However, the babies are all doing fine. Gesneriad seedlings might be more sensitive and need to be moved as soon as they are big enough.

More on growing from seed in my next month's article. Now, off to pot up some big babies.



# New & Little Seen Gesneriads



Fig. S1. *Primulina cerina* (A-F) A: Habit. B: Flowers. C: Leaf blades. D: Lateral view of the corolla. E: Front view of the corolla. F: Pistil and calyx.

*Primulina alba*, a new cave-dwelling species of Gesneriaceae from a Limestone Area in Tiandeng County, Guangxi, China Rui-Feng Li, Bo Pan Published on: 03 February 2023 Page: 79 – 84  
<https://taiwania.ntu.edu.tw/abstract/1909> DOI: 10.6165/tai.2023.68.79 #Taiwania 2023 vol.68 no.1: pp.79-84



*Phinaea albolineata*: Dale Martens shared this unusual Gesneriad on Facebook. Dale: "I like growing *Phinaea albolineata*. My first rhizome at least 25 years ago was purchased from the "Rare and Unusual" plant sales table at The Gesneriad Society's convention. The first photo shows how I grew it previously, not in total high humidity because I didn't cover the jar. If the humidity is too high, the seedpods burst open and may sprout before I can harvest them.

This time I'm trying a Solo cup, but setting seeds might not happen unless the humidity is higher. Flowers last 24 hours. I enjoy the Plant Sales during The Gesneriad Society's convention (July 3 - 8 in Richmond, Virginia this year). The first table I go to is "Rare and Unusual" where all sorts of plants, tubers, and/or rhizomes are available. Well over 2 decades ago I got rhizomes of *Phinaea albolineata*. It's such a sweet little plant. I'll try to create some seed pods so I can donate to the Society's seed fund. The fruit is "splash cup" in that raindrops disperse the seeds."

# Bloomin' Now



Donna's *Sinningia* 'Spanish Skirts'



Donna's *Achimenes misera*



Donna's *Saintpaulia* 'Owlsee Strength'



Donna's *Sinningia reitzii* 'Iporanga'

# BLOOMIN' NOW



Donna's *Sinningia* 'Anne Crowley' seedling. "I am growing this in a 10 inch pot. The plant is huge and the photos really do not show how big it is. This sinningia has a tendency to trail like *S. bullata* which looks like it may be in its background. Once sprouting the plant is always in bloom although not always at the end of every stem. The tuber is approximately 6 inches across. I love the two tone orange flowers. Close up below left and tuber below right."



# BLOOMIN' NOW



Dena: "This is *Saintpaulia* 'Ness' Orange Pekoe' grown from leaf obtained at propagation workshop from Bill Schmidt. Symmetrical, well-behaved foliage has light variegation on leaf edges.



Dena: "This is *Saintpaulia* 'Ma's Melody Girl', a small standard with girl foliage. She doesn't like too much light.



Nadya: "*Streptocarpus variabilis*. I'm looking to develop a little species Strep collection, as there isn't one in the area, so am usually on a lookout for new seeds."



Donna's *Smithiantha* seedlings from crossing and selfing her plant.

# BLOOMIN' NOW



Nadya's Gesneriad plant shelf!



Nadya's *Sinningia leucotricha* blooming



Bill's *Saintpaulia* 'Precious Red', *Saintpaulia* 'Dolores' Sugar Candy', and *Saintpaulia* 'Jolly Orchid'.



"This plant stays in the walk-in-terrarium year-round where it receives light from fluorescent lights over the roof. Humidity is 70%. It has been in bloom for at least 5 weeks."



Johanna: "This *Nematanthus* plant spends the summer outside living in dappled light, and is in bright indirect light when indoors in the plant room." Does anyone know the variety?"

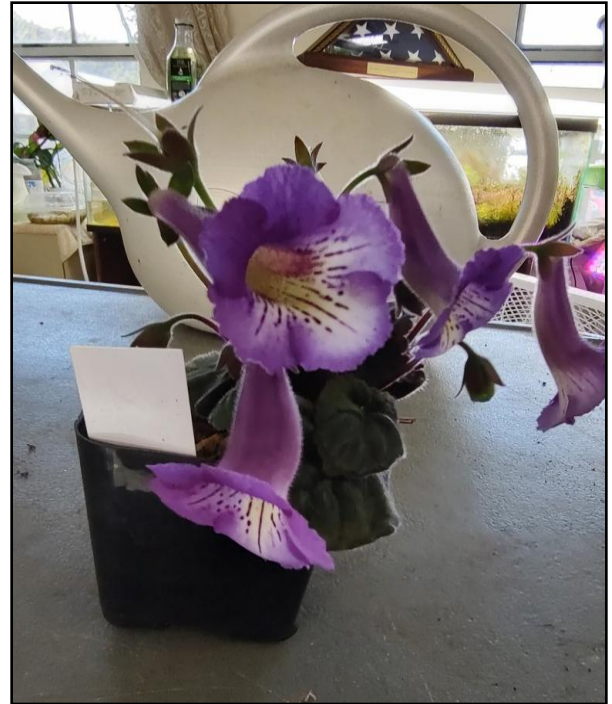
Johanna's *Aeschynanthus augustifolia*

## Helpful tip



Karyn Cichocki found these containers at Walmart which are very good for propagation. Two for \$10.

<https://www.walmart.com/ip/1062302815>



Dave's mini *Sinningia* 'Mark Twain'



Dave's mini *Sinningia* 'Laura'



Dave's mini *Sinningia pusilla*



Johanna: "*Titanotrichum oldhamii* plants grown from this year's propagules. I'm glad I have some to serve as back-ups. This fall, after the stems on my plants died, I put short garden fences around the areas where my 2 plants are growing. I put extra mulch on them, then piled lots of leaves on top to insulate them. Unfortunately, the wind blew all the leaves away on the night where the temperatures went down to 12 degrees. I'm not certain they will survive."



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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 You can send your payment to NCAC into our Assistant Treasurer, Andy Meier via PayPal using the email address: [ncacotgs-gesneriads@yahoo.com](mailto:ncacotgs-gesneriads@yahoo.com).

Please include a note with your Name, Address, Phone number & email address.

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. National 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. You can subscribe on line also.

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

## Richmond African Violet Society

Judged show and sale  
Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden  
1800 Lakeside Avenue  
Richmond, Virginia 23228

Show: April 1st 1:00-5:00 P.M.  
April 2nd 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

Sale: March 31st 1:00 - 5:00  
April 1st: 9:00 - 5:00  
April 2nd: 9:00-4:00

Free Admission to show and sale  
Info: Sharon Long, 804-740-5322  
Email: [slong15781@aol.com](mailto:slong15781@aol.com)



### **Virginia is for Gesneriad Lovers**

**July 3 to July 8, 2023**

The Richmond area convention team invites you to attend The Gesneriad Society's 66th Annual Convention

"VIRGINIA IS FOR GESNERIAD LOVERS"

Venue: The Westin Richmond