



PETAL TONES



Newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of the Gesneriad Society

Volume 54 Number 1

January 2023



Dena's *Saintpaulia* 'Mac's Virtually Velvet'



Doug's purple *Streptocarpus*

Saturday, January 14, 2023 Zoom Meeting

10:30-11:30: Business meeting
11:30am : Dale Martens program about the Impatiens Necrotic Spot Virus

Join Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86496598933?pwd=c294NGRTc3lqUzd1RFM3SXNWR2NzUT09>

Meetings for 2023: January 14th March 18th June 10th
September 9th October 14th December 9th

**Congratulations & thanks to our
President: Barb Stewart
Vice President: Minh Bui**

President's Message:

Welcome to the New Year! Our chapter continues to evolve to meet the needs of our members. We have reduced the number of meetings this year, as many of our members have a long way to travel.

We shall continue to meet in person at Emmanuel United Methodist Church in Laurel, MD for some of our meetings, and have Zoom available for those who can not attend in person. Minh is working on planning some great programs, starting with a talk via Zoom by Dale Martens on the dreaded INSV. Other clubs have been invited, so we anticipate good attendance, as Dale always draws a crowd.

Since Dale's program is on Zoom, **we will not meet in person this month**; however, our next meeting in March will be held at the Church. Our March program is a club favorite, the "Propagation Workshop". During this in person meeting we shall get our hands into the soil, sharing plants and seeds to propagate and get a kick-start growing plants to sell at the Gesneriad Society's 2023 National Convention in Richmond, Va. Excellent attendance is expected at the convention, which means a great show with lots of new plants to buy at the convention sales.

So join us this Saturday as Dale will share her expertise on the INS Virus which wiped out most of her collection and will help us recognize and prevent problems with our Gesneriads. Hope to see you there.

Barbara Stewart, President



Last month I published the picture of Barb Borleske's MAAVS's blue ribbon gesneriad: *Deinostigma tamiana*. We all knew the previous name of this floriferous little blooming plant as *Chirita tamiana* or *Primulina tamiana*. Then it was reclassified to *Deinostigma tamiana*. Now with more molecular research the current name has been changed again to ***Metapetrocosmea tamiana***.

December 18, 2022 on Gesneriphiles this name change was announced in an email from Tsuh Yang. He attached the following file for further details: <https://bioone.org/journals/annals-of-the-missouri-botanical-garden/volume-107/issue-1/2022767/Molecular-and-Morphological-Evidence-Supports-the-Inclusion-of-Deinostigma-into/10.3417/2022767.short>



[Greater New York Gesneriad Society](https://www.facebook.com/GesneriadSociety)
[osrpnotdSe4uhh0uutiua7ct6179111faqth212901uh57ut31a48l12c3m](https://www.facebook.com/GesneriadSociety)

Metapetrocosmea 'Avery's Serrated Heart'

An interesting hybrid by Avery, between two species of *Deinostigma*. Apparently all *Deinostigma* species will soon be subsumed under *Metapetrocosmea*, which up to now had only one species... get your markers and labels ready to make the change.

For those keeping track, the plant that was first introduced into cultivation as *Chirita eberhardtii* was then determined to be incorrectly identified, and it was determined to be *Chirita tamiana*. then *Chirita* was broken up (and became invalid), and this and various other species were placed in a section under *Primulina*, then later into *Deinostigma*. and now a new genus, *Metapetrocosmea*!

Michaelmoelleria vietnamensis Conversations on gphiles when Barb Stewart asked for help:

Kelly Ates pictures I also bought one on eBay. I was a mature plant with a lot of spots and buds on it. The first photo is on 10/29/22 after receiving the plant on 10/6/22. The second photo taken today and shows the newer leaves in the center with fewer spots. I am wondering if it is getting too much light or too much fertilizer. It is growing in the center of the bottom shelf under three 3' LED tubes. The lights are about 14" away from the top of the plant. Lights are on 12 hours a day. I have not repotted it yet, so it is still in the seller's soil mix which appears to be a standard soil mix containing mostly peat with some perlite. I water it from the top and do not let it sit in water.



Barb Stewart: I went to a plant swap last weekend and Sharon Long and I picked up *Michaelmoelleria vietnamensis*. She got a small plant and I got a leaf with two babies coming up. Any suggestions on how to grow this new species (humidity, watering, light, etc)?

On Sat, Dec 17, 2022 at 10:36 PM Marian Yeager via Gesneriphiles wrote:

Kathy Spissman was our guest speaker at the Tampa Bay Gesneriad Society's November meeting. She has found *Michaelmoelleria vietnamensis* easy to propagate. She said that the plants were very small and not ready for sale yet. I bought the plant on eBay for less than I'd seen it advertised elsewhere. (A few months ago even Walmart carried it online!) Mine had no spotting on arrival, but the spots are developing now. No bloom yet. I'm growing it under a T5 fixture at the end of a tray.

Clay Anderson via Gesneriphiles wrote:

I've been growing one for about four months. It seems to be very easy and undemanding. I grow it on an open shelf in an east window, and it doesn't seem to mind my relatively low humidity and top watering. I've been told that it prefers low light, and my window with a couple of hours of sun in the morning seems to suit it fine. It bloomed from September through November for me. It propagates easily from leaves or cut-off leaves. It's one of my new favorite plants!

Leve Hajdu via Gesneriphiles wrote:

I find it easy to grow using my Primulina\Violet mix, it will produce a little bit of a neck. No dome is needed at 50% humidity. I put down the top 1/4th of a leaf tip in 4 parts perlite and 1 part peat moss and it made 4 plants. I got mine for free from a fellow member. Would you believe I put two of these on our (LIGS) sales table last weekend for \$6, I pointed out that there were two on the table pointing to the one in the little show, and they didn't sell. It may go for high prices on eBay and Etsy now but I think the market will saturate quickly given how easy it is to propagate. I put it back on the top shelf to grow out a little bit. I'll palm it off on somebody at the LIGS Christmas party hopefully and reclaim the space.

Karyn Cichocki via Gesneriphiles wrote:

My first experience propagating this plant was from a leaf that was highly spotted. Although I cut the leaf up into several pieces it only gave me one plantlet per piece. Most of them were spotted except for two, which were all green. They were too small to bring to the Gesneriad Society convention but now that they are getting bigger the new leaves have spots.

I'm also growing some from seed and thus far all the seedlings are green. The parent was spotted, so I'm hoping that once the plants get larger that the spots will start to appear. The flowers are the same regardless of whether the plants have spots or not.

Bloomin' Now



Bill's *Achimenes* 'Glory'



Bill's *Eucodonia* 'Adele'



Bill's *Henckelia* 'Moonii'



Bill's *Saintpaulia* 'Jersey Rose Trail'



Longwood's *Henckelia* "Moon Walker"



Bill's *Metapetrocosmea tamiana*

Hi Mr. Gesneriad,

Just wondering if you can share some advice. Growing *Sinningia concinna* 'Seropedica' is successful; however, one of my plants in a small container has grown several crowns which I am very happy about. Do you think growing in a wider but not deeper pot would encourage crown growth or multiple crown growth? Another plant I have seems to always just have one crown. All my *S. concinna* Seropedica plants are grown from seeds; yet, there does seem to be subtle differences in the flowers. Some having dark purple on the back/bottom of the corolla and some white. It is a cute and interesting little plant and I find it amazing. It is a species that comes relatively true from seeds and is so easy to grow. Donna Beverin



Mr. Gesneriad:

DO NOT put your *S. concinna* into a wider pot. Multiple crowns are quite normal on the micro *Sinningia* as will happen as the tubers age. Too much soil will more likely rot the tuber than encourage crowns. Dale Martens puts multiple tubers into small pots to get lots of crowns and flowers. By the way, the color differences are quite normal in *Sinningia concinna* just like *Sinningia muscicola*.



First photo is the multi-crowned *Sinningia concinna* 'Seropedica'. In the second photo these tenacious little *Sinningia concinna* 'Seropedica' survived with a *Sinningia hirsuta* seedling in a plastic container with a tight fitting lid without any care for over a year. When I opened the container they were dried out. After watering all the plants revived. The *Sinningia hirsuta* should be potted up and moved but for now they are all still growing together.



Question for Mr. Gesneriad,

What photo editing program do you use for Gesneriad pictures? I am not getting the true flower colors with my program. What lights are you using for your Gesneriad plant stands presently? I am setting up a second plant stand and finding the cost of Sunblaster T5's to be rather expensive. Peggy MacDonald



Mr. Gesneriad: Peggy,

"I find that flower color in a photograph has more to do with the optical properties of the camera sensor itself. If the flower doesn't come true to color on the screen then no amount of color adjustment in a program is going to help much. When I do try to adjust the flower color the rest of the picture gets skewed in some other strange direction.

We've got a *Crossandra* relative that has a green/blue flower. No matter what I use to photograph it, the flower color looks blue/purple. If I adjust the flower color the foliage looks sickly green. So I've just stopped trying.

If you're a true Photoshop expert you can probably adjust the flower color in its own layer but even with a perfect flower color adjustment on your screen (PC or Phone), your screen will not necessarily show the same colors as your friends' or neighbors' phone or computer. There are instruments that you can buy which will calibrate the computer monitor, so the color on your screen might be perfect, but may still look off on many other screens. Just think about looking at a wall of TV screens in a Walmart store. Do all the screens look the same?

As far as lighting on my stand (down to one shelf now - everything else is outdoors) I use a combination of 4000K and 6500K LED tubes. Two of each in a four tube fixture. This gives plenty of light."

Bloomin' Now



Dave's *Sinningia* 'Freckles'



Dave's *Sinningia* 'High Voltage x self'



Dave's *Sinningia* 'Maiden's Blush'



Dave's *Sinningia minima*



Barb S. *Aeschynanthus* 'Mira'



Barb's *Saintpaulia* NOID



Barb's *Sinningia* 'Clara Louise x Bullata'

Mystery Smithiantha



Barb Borleske's *Smithiantha*

"I have a mystery: this lovely short *Smithiantha* started blooming for me a few weeks ago. I love it because it is short and keeps sending up blooms; however, I don't remember where I got it! It has a tag that says "22u388b *Smithiantha*". Could I have gotten it at the National Capital show in Sept? If anyone in the club could help I would appreciate it."

Does anyone remember bringing a plant with this name to the show to sell?
"22u388b *Smithiantha*"

Barbara Borleski



Heat Mats & Bottom Heat for Seed Germination: Yah or Nay? Donna Beverin

When making seed propagation containers I do use bottom heat if I have my heat mats set up & I am not being lazy, I would guess for at least 50%+ of my prop' containers. In the 'old' days I would put my seed trays on the top of my fluorescent light ballasts. Or checking around the house have used the ambient heat from the refrigerator, stereo receiver, TV cable boxes, radiators, pilot light area of a stove, shelves above a wood stove, clothes dryer, or any appliance that give off heat. I remove once germination occurs. I find bottom heat speeds germination for all types of seeds, except cool growing gesneriads such as Haberlea, Ramonda, and Jankaea.

Geraniums, schlumbergera, begonias, vegetables, summer annuals and perennials all respond to bottom heat except those needed stratification. I often give gentle bottom heat to my freshly planted rhizomes like Eucodonia, *Smithiantha*, Kohleria, until they take off. I find young plants respond well to some bottom heat when starting off after being transplanted, like Pilea & Peperomias.

My heat mat is set at 75 degrees, depending on the set up and where you put the heating mat's sensor. Just be careful the mat is not too hot as it can dry out the media and then you'll lose the tiny germinated seeds or pots of young transplants.

My biggest challenge growing from small gesneriad and begonia seeds is being about to actually see the tiny green babies that can be so very small, like Begonia Hoeheana....I realized after 3 times I had not been seeing those tiny new borns so began using a magnifying glass with a light to see them. After I see even the smallest green seedling I begin transplanting sooner than later as suggested by Dale and have great success with that advice. Then the challenges of algae growing in the seed container can be a big problem! I try to be very careful to not have any fertilizer in the soil as Dale recommends as it just makes the algae grow faster. Dale shared that some popular brands of perlite actually have fertilizer too, so one has to really scrutinize their potting medium. Moving the babies as soon as I can see them, prevents the challenge of balancing the need for light so they don't get leggy with the light that causes the algae to grow fast. I like to use a layer of milled sphagnum moss on the top of my seedling mix and found over the years it does help damping off. The joy of growing plants from seed is one of my favorite things to do! Magic of nature! What are your experiences with growing gesneriads from seeds?

Bloomin' Now



Nadya's *Streptocarpus* seedling



Doug's *Streptocarpus* 'Midnight Poison'



Doug Bolt's amazing group of *Streptocarpus* this month!

Bloomin' Now *Sinningia Leucotricha*



Donna's *S. Leucotricha*



Pollen laden bloom



Stigma showing nectar at base



Pollination success!



Underside of leaves

Donna's *Sinningia Leucotricha*, "April 16, 2021, I potted up the baby plant grown from BrazilPlants seeds. I grew it on a shelf on my deck in a protected area during the summer of 2021. When bringing it in the house during fall of 2021 it was not in great shape and I thought I would lose it. I put it on a shelf, where it stayed. Forced into dormancy due to lack of watering, it lay unattended from Sept. 14, 2021 until November 2022 when it began sprouting. At Barb's encouragement I self pollinated using its own pollen. So as you can see there are many brown remnants of blooms that did not 'take'. Two blooms are becoming plump and seem to be successful seed pods. I am fascinated by the drops of what appears to be nectar on the seed pods and were on the blooms also. Mauro offers another variety of *Leucotricha* called '*Telemaco Borba*' that I shall request during our next order and see if I can grow it and compare the two varieties. Nadya's plant (below) is just sprouting and it shall be interesting to compare her blooms! There are many pictures of *Leucotricha* on line where bloom colors vary from orange to shades of red. It is also called Brazilian Edelweiss although not related to Edelweiss.



GRW: "*Sinningia leucotricha* has had a confusing taxonomic history, being confused with *S. canescens* which was determined to be a different but related plant, and the name *S. leucotricha* was reinstated.

It is an attractive plant with leaves covered in fine silvery hairs which gives a metallic quality. The orange flowers produced fairly early in the species' annual life cycle display well against the silvery leaves, and a mature plant can make a very attractive horticultural subject.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/42771306> Information about gesneriad nectar.

<http://burwur.net/sinns/4lucMain.htm> Information about *S. Leucotricha*

Sowing Gesneriad and Begonia Seeds

Donna Beverin



Gesneriad and Begonia seeds are super small and dust like.

❖ Use any soil mix you prefer. I use combination of potting soil and fine vermiculite and if I have some, milled sphagnum moss lightly dusted on top of the soil mix.

❖ Dampen the soil and I let the container sit for at least 1/2 hour or overnight to be sure all the soil is moist.

❖ Many growers sterilize their soil in the microwave for 5 minutes. (I usually do not and have better results when I do not) Some growers sterilize their containers with Hydrogen peroxide or chlorine bleach (1/10 solution which I use cleaning all my pots and containers as a habit). Some growers sterilize the soil mix in the oven for 3 hours at 175 degrees. If you do sterilize be sure to let the container or mix cool totally before planting seeds.

❖ Take a piece of plain white paper and I divide in 1/2 twice to make a crease in the center of the paper.

❖ Open the seed container very carefully over the white paper and let the seeds fall into the center crease. I like to use part of the seeds and not plant them all at the same time.

❖ Holding the white paper over the seed container I gently let the seeds roll into the soil mix as I move the paper around to spread the seeds.

❖ Do not cover the seeds with soil as they need light to germinate. Cover the container with a clear lid or plastic wrap. Do not allow a lid or plastic wrap to touch the soil. Label the container in any manner you prefer so you remember what variety of seed you planted.

❖ Place container on your light stand. A warm area will aid germination and if I have florescent light ballast I put containers on top of those where it gets gentle bottom heat or I use heat mats for bottom heat.

❖ Many of the seeds germinate within two weeks but some may take longer. I keep my seed containers for a long time. I have had seedlings emerge months after planting. Some seeds grow tubers and you can see the baby tubers below. Once the babies are large enough to handle you can move them around or transplant them with a tooth pick or small tool. Continue keeping them in a high humidity area using plastic lid or clear covering until they are a manageable size. Then slowly remove the humidity dome and acclimate to room temperature under your plant lights.



Why Won't My Seeds Sprout?

Barb Stewart Published in a previous issue of Petal Tones.

Some gesneriad seeds can't wait to sprout, but others are more challenging. What are the possible reasons some of my seeds don't germinate?

Probably the three most common reasons are related to light, temperature, and moisture. Seeds need the right amount of each in order to germinate. I use a deli container with a layer of perlite in the bottom, my regular potting mix (Pro-mix with added perlite) and a thin layer of "NoDampOff" (fine milled sphagnum moss) on top. I moisten the potting soil then lightly spray the "NoDampOff" **before** sowing the seeds on top. Do not bury the seeds. They need light to germinate, so spraying after sowing could cause the tiny seeds to get buried in the moss.



- Moisture is the biggest challenge. The soil needs to stay damp, but green algae growing on the soil indicates too much moisture or too much fertilizer in the soil. Do not fertilize the seed container and try to use potting mixes without fertilizer added, as this will encourage the growth of green algae which can overcome the seedlings or even 'hide' the tiny germinating seedlings.
- In addition to light, seeds need oxygen, and too much water can drown or rot them. After sowing my seeds, I leave the container open overnight, as I have probably moistened my soil too much. It is difficult to judge after the soil is in the container. A better option would probably be to moisten a batch of soil ahead of time.
- Temperature can be an issue depending on the time of year and regional climate. Seeds won't germinate if the temperature is too cold or too hot. On the other hand, some seeds need a "chilling period" and benefit from spending some time in the refrigerator before being planted. Alpine Gesneriads may benefit from a chilling period, but Donna said she germinated *Ramonda* seeds without any chilling period. Some seeds just need to be planted in the right season, most likely spring or summer.
- Some seeds just need more time. This could be due to the nature of the plant, or because the seeds are old. Seeds that are too old will not sprout at all, and the date when the seeds were harvested is rarely known. Don't plant all your seeds from a packet at one time. That way you will have a back up and many times the second batch will germinate if by chance any of your conditions were not right the first time around. Store your saved seeds in the refrigerator in plastic bags.
- Purchase your seed from reliable dealers such as the Gesneriad Society's seed fund and Brazil Plants. Occasionally reliable vendors can be found on websites like Ebay and Etsy, but be careful as there are some hacks selling weed seeds. If the pictures and information is not accurate, or if the vendor is not recommended by a plant loving friend, BEWARE!
- Some seeds may just be waiting for the right time of year or the right conditions (temperature and amount of light). Occasionally some seeds have a naturally low germination rate, so will not produce many seedlings when they do sprout.
- Be sure to check your seed containers often for signs of germination. Gesneriads are so tiny that sometimes they are hard to see when they are first born, This is especially true if you are good at spreading the seed around as you sow, and they are not sown in a clump. Donna said she planted the tiny, dust like seeds of *Begonia hoehneana* several times and the third time, using a hand lens, could see tiny babies. She has begun transplanting the tiny seedlings, as suggested by Dale Martens, even before true leaves appear, as moving seedlings encourages faster growth.
- Another problem could be pests or pathogens. A white mold on the soil surface indicates "damping off" which is a fungus that kills the seeds and seedlings. The "NoDampOff" is supposed to prevent this. Some people believe in sterilizing soil, and a good quality fresh potting mix is generally recommended. It can be challenging to find one on the market without fertilizer.
- There are so many gesneriads, it is hard to know what to expect when you grow from seed. I find that the fastest sprouting seeds are usually *sinningia*, *streptocarpus*, and *smithiantha*. In addition to the right conditions, you also need patience. However, there is nothing like the excitement of seeing tiny green seedlings sprouting all over the soil surface when you peek into your seed container!

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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. 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.

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Membership includes a subscription to the society journal, Gesneriads. You can subscribe on line also.

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



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

Hotel in the Near West End of town