

PETAL TONES



Newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of the Gesneriad Society

Volume 54 Number 7 & 8

July August 2023

National Capital Area Chapter Of the Gesneriad Society

August 12th: No meeting
September 9th : Zoom Meeting: Jim Roberts 'Ecuador Trip'
September 23rd: Green Spring Garden sale 9 - 3
October 14th: Meet a New Gesneriad
November 2 - 4 MAAVS show in Baltimore
December 9th Holiday Party at Johanna's, membership renewal & plant exchange

October program: **"Meet a New Gesneriad"** by
Barbara Stewart

Our next in-person meeting will be in October when we have another hands-on workshop.

One of the purposes of our society and chapter is to learn about gesneriads and their culture. With such a large and diverse family of plants, this will be an opportunity to teach and learn about a few more gesneriads.

The plan of this workshop is to share growing information about a gesneriad each of us is growing. Select a less common gesneriad or two you are growing or something new you picked up at the convention. Then share information about it, such as its natural habitat and growing habits, cultural requirements, show potential (maybe a photo of a show plant from the GS website or Gesneriad Reference Web), and what you have learned about growing it in your conditions.

As an added bonus, you may want to consider writing up a few tips to publish in a future issue of PT.

Also, feel free to bring extra cuttings or seedlings to share with others on the raffle table. I bought a lot of different seeds from the seed fund at the convention and hope to have babies to share, so everyone can pick up some new gesneriads.



Nadya's pink *Streptocarpus* hybrid 71-2

President' Message:

Another great gesneriad convention has come and gone. Local members worked hard to make the Gesneriad Society's 2023 Richmond Convention a success.

Although a lot of work was involved, it was a lot of fun too. I personally spent all my awards money in the sales room (one of the pros and cons of being on the plant sales committee). I went for as many rare and unusual plants as I could get and put a dent in the society seed funds, both hybrids and species. I hope to have lots to share at our next in-person meeting in October.

Our chapter is also participating in the Green Spring Gardens Fall Family Festival on Saturday September 23rd. In addition to selling plants, this is a good opportunity to promote the chapter and the society.

Even if you don't have plants to sell, it would help to have people who can talk to the public about gesneriads and our chapter. The more, the merrier. Our club is only successful when members are involved.

Barbara



Kitty at convention with her *Primulinas*. Runner up to Sweeps in Horticulture.



Kitty's *Sinningia* 'Party Dress' The Best Thad Scagg's hybrid photo: Ron Myhr



Barb Borleske: "This plant was one of my entries in the Convention's flower show and it won two major awards. I am especially proud of this hybrid, *Primulina* 'Minnie Pearl', because it is a seedling from a cross I made. I took this photo at the end of the convention and a couple of flowers had fallen off."



Barb's and her ribbons for Sweepstake in Art and Best Container Planting of Gesneriad Material.

Gesneriad Convention



Barb Stewart's Natural Garden design



Kitty's *Sinningia* 'Li'l Georgie' photo Ron Myhr



Barb Borleske's *Primulina* collection

Gesneriad Convention 2023



Some Top Winners!



Sinningia eumorpha x *S. braggae* F1

Sinningia 'Esther' x *S. bullata*

Sinningia speciosa Wild Type Peloric

Sinningia speciosa Wild Type Red-flowered Cultivar

Sinningia concinna Seropedica

David Zaitlin: *Sinningia* collection, Best in Show (photo Ron Myhr)



Karyn Cichocki's *Pearcea* sp. (Ecuador) (photo Ron Myhr)



David Zaitlin's *Sinningia speciosa* 'Avenida neimever' (photo Ron Myhr)

Gesneriad Convention

Most convention photos by Paul Susi



Barb Borleske's *Primulina* 'Chastity'



Barb Stewart's *Episcia* 'Unpredictable Valley' Best Episcia



Bill's artistic design



Close up of Barb S. winning terrarium.

Gesneriad Convention



Barb Borleske's Best Petrocosmea: *Petrocosmea chrysotricha*



Barb Borleske's *Primulina 'Xuan's Party Dress'*



Kitty Hedgepeth's *Primulina medica*

2023 Gesneriad Society Convention Results:

- Runner-Up to Best in Horticulture – awarded to Eileen McGrath for her Multi-Genera Collection
- Sweepstakes in Artistic – awarded to Barbara Stewart with 3 blue ribbons and 1 red ribbon
- Sweepstakes Runner-Up in Artistic – awarded to Mel Grice with 3 blue ribbons
- Best in Artistic – awarded to Judy Zinni for her design “Love Charm”
- Runner-Up to Best Artistic – awarded to Ginny Heater for her challenge class design “Love Letters”
- Best in Arts – awarded to Brandon Erikson for his Sinningia Seedling CrossStitch Throw Pillow
- Runner-Up to Best in Arts – awarded to Dale Martens for her close-up color print of *Seemannia purpurascens* pistil and yellow nectary

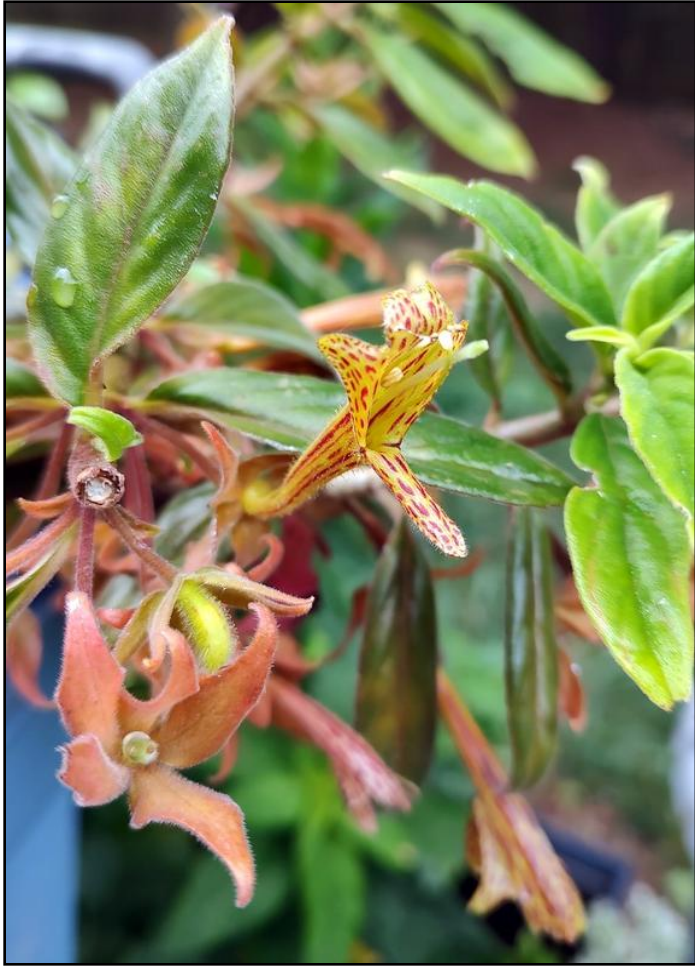
2023 Gesneriad Society Convention Results:

- Sweepstakes in Horticulture – awarded to Dave Zaitlin with 5 blue ribbons and 4 red ribbons
- Sweepstakes Runner-Up in Horticulture – awarded to Barb Borleske and Kitty Hedgepeth, with 5 blue ribbons each
- Best in Horticulture – awarded to Dave Zaitlin for his *Sinningia* Collection

- Best in Educational/Commercial – awarded to Gary Hunter for his commercial display “Miniature Achimenes and Kohlerias
- Multi-Division Sweepstakes – awarded to Mel Grice with 3 blue ribbons

The Local Convention Co-Chairs, Sharon Long, Bill Schmidt, and Barbara Stewart, along with many other volunteers in the area welcomed the 129 convention registrants.

Bloomin' Now



Dave Anderson's *Columnnea scheidiana*



Bill's *Sinningia* 'Carolyn' and *Sinningia tubiflora*



Dave's *Sinningia* 'Cindy Ella' x self



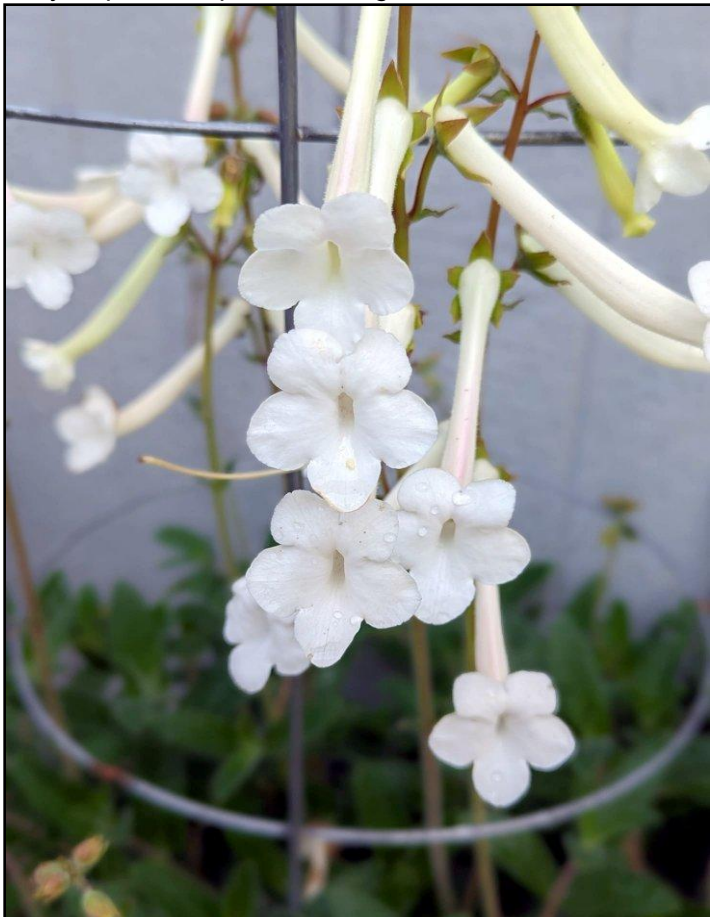
Dave's *Sinningia* 'Grable' x self



Kitty's specimen pot of *Sinningia tubiflora*



Bill's *Henkelia moonii*



Kitty's *Sinningia tubiflora* blooms close up



Peggy's *Sinningia* 'Deep Purple Dreaming'

Bloomin' Now



Bill Schmidt's amazing *Sinningia tubiflora* growing outdoors in Richmond, VA. "This plant has been growing in the garden for two years. It actually is spreading."



Donna's *Sinningia* 'Apricot Bouquet', growing outdoors in a terracotta pot on deck in full sun.

Donna's *Sinningia* 'Carolyn' (top right). There was controversy on Facebook about the "real" Carolyn. As far as I know all mine are "real" from the original tuber I bought at the NCAC show when judges, Paulo Castello da Costa & Hung Nguyen brought them from CA.

Yes, one of my many pots of *Sinningia tubiflora* (bottom right) is blooming. After making an unsightly cut in the flower tube in the lower back of the bloom stalk, a bee has robbed the nectar. Fragrance is heavenly!



Bloomin' Now



Nadya's *Streptocarpus candidus* in bloom



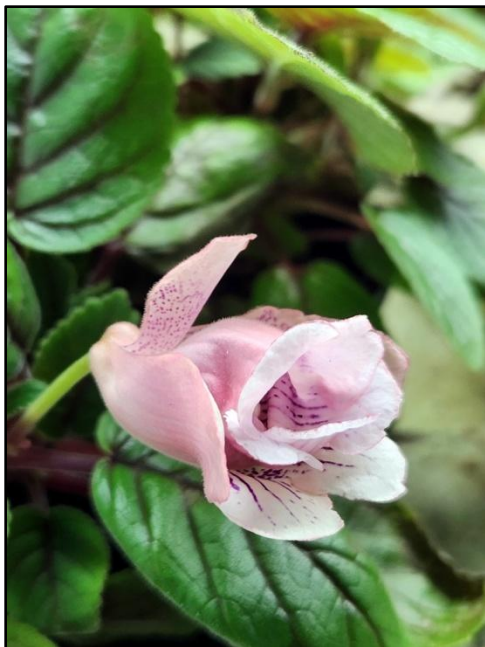
Close up of *S. candidus*



Nadya's *Streptocarpus* yellow & white flowered hybrid



Nadya's hybrid named *Streptocarpus* 'Big Boopa'



Peggy's *Sinningia* 'Party Dress' starting to bloom



Peggy's *Streptocarpus* hybrid from Nadya

NCAC's June Zoom Meeting with Dr. Grant Godden

Synopsis from Donna Beverin's notes

For Dr. Grant Godden, a biologist...he grows *Sinningias* as a hobby. In 2017 while working on his post doctorate in Michigan he would take walks near the Chippewa River and collect mosses and small ferns to grow in terrariums. Being a botanist he was interested in having some plant material in his terrariums that would bloom. He found *Sinningia pusilla* and after collecting more *Sinningias* for a year and a half, he was growing all the micro minis available at the time.



He lives in Florida and it was difficult to find the minis so decided to grow them and expand his collection to sell, which he does on Ebay.

Wilhelm Sinning (1792-1871) discovered *Sinningias* which grow from tubers. *Sinningia helleri* is the "type species" for *Sinningia*, in that it was the first species described under that name, in 1825. Often confused with *Gloxinias* which grow from rhizomes, *Sinningias* are monophyletic, not a single lineage. Paliavana & Vanhouttea, these genera are, in fact, non-tuberous *Sinningia* and are in the lineage and if the family was renamed it would be called Paliavana.

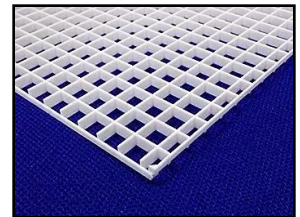
Dr. Godden grows small versions of the larger *Sinningias* (standards) from crown cuttings. He showed pictures of his *S. An's Nys* grown from a crown cutting and it is a small plant with a large flower.

Some fragrant *Sinningias* are *bragae*, *guttata*, *eumorpha*, *braziliensis*, *tubiflora* & *conspicua*.

Someone asked if his picture of *Sinningia* 'Li'l Georgie' is one plant or several tubers in one pot. Dr. Godden explained most minis will grow tubers to the size of a quarter when full grown and in good growing conditions will display many, many flowers.

•Tips for growing: Only use distilled water which will prevent algae growth. Use 2 – 2.5 inch pots.

- Clear pots helped him grow best ever plants
- 1-4 ply acrylic yarn in a light color for wicking
- Perma-nest trays with plastic egg crate and humidity domes
- Presoaked perlite in bottom 1/6 – 1/3 (1 Tablespoon) of pots
- Equal parts of African Violet mix or Pro-mix plus perlite
- Label with very small labels (large labels can deform the leaves)
- Sterilize soil in oven at 200-205 F will kill fungus gnats that will eat the roots of your plants
- Consistent but not persistent watering of fertilizer at 1/8 teaspoon/gallon water (no high bloom fertilizer)
- Orchid fertilizer at 20 10 20 is good
- Purge each pot with distilled water once a month (salts will pull the water from leaves to the roots leading to leaf burn).
- Using open tray wicking and 2 Tablespoons Hydrogen Peroxide to the water in each tray.
- *Sinningias* need bright light. User timers for 12 hours on a day which is the tropical day length where these plants grow in the wild.
- Barrina full spectrum (four feet) grow lights(find varieties on Amazon)
- Lights 12 – 16 inches from top of plants
- Temperature of 72 – 76 using an AC in plant room. Heat from lights makes room too hot.
- Good air flow
- Use a thermo hygrometer, many varieties



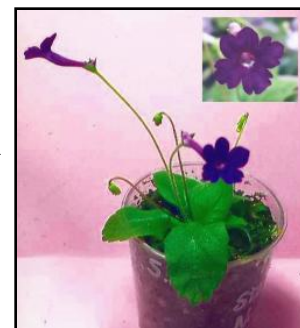
- Propagation: Crown cuttings, faster and keep plants small when blooming. At least 2 leaves with 1 node under the soil. Takes 2 weeks to root in a vent covered container. Open vents after 2 weeks and then acclimate to room air temperature. Use rooting hormone.
- Leaf propagations are not very successful and take a long time, up to a year to get a blooming plant
- Tuber division possible with 'eyes' on both sides of the cut.

• Is tuber dormancy mandatory? No, in fact letting it bloom all the way out will force dormancy. By cutting the top off the base it stimulates new leaves to grow from the tuber.

• Labels: cuts regular size labels in quarter to make small labels that will fit under leaves and not deform the outer leaves as they grow.

Hybridization:

- Anthers open first, like an envelop when pollen is available
- Stigma still deep inside flower
- When stigma is ready you will see it unfurl with little hairs
- Transfer pollen and you will see within 1 hour flower will drop off and stigma will tip upward and you know a successful pollination has occurred
- Slip small tiny plastic bag over the stigma keeping it open a little bit for circulation of air. Label the little baggie with name of cross
- Sterilize your soil. Dr. Godden uses a giant old fashioned turkey roasting pan with a lid. 200 F degrees with no perlite in mix yet. Add some water and it will steam. Gets rid of algae growth and fungus gnats
- Storage of dormant tuber: In small 4 ounce condiment plastic containers with lids
- Coarse vermiculite spritzed with distilled water slightly damp so not to rot the tuber or if too dry desiccate the tuber.
- Keep on windowsill or under lights. Many containers can be in a shoe box size clear plastic container. These can stay in a state of suspended animation for a year or more
- Recommend using a jewelers loop with a light to spot signs of mites. Cyclamen mites can infest the tubers and burrow into them. With the loop you can also spot disease including fungal growth.
- Dr. Godden is growing Mini *Sinningia* 'Ila's Starry Night' which was thought to be lost →
- Alex Mayer is the hybridizer of the SimSim series.
- YouTube video: Growing Sinningia and Other Plants Indoors and Under Lights" Grant Godden PhD
<https://youtu.be/GfPU8SSO-7M>



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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. 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/>