

# PETAL TONES



Newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of the Gesneriad Society

Volume 52 Number 3

March 2021



Jim's *Sinningia* 'Double Dilly'  
"Nice dark leaves and extra petals"

Message from the President: Minh Bui

### President's Message:

Spring is upon us and many of us are looking forward to working in the garden again. Something else to look forward to is our show later this year. The Show committee is working hard to secure the venue and ironing out the logistics. Start growing out your plants now if you haven't already! Hopefully everyone can contribute at least one plant for the show. Please continue submitting photos of your plants to Petal Tones and online in the Facebook groups. I always enjoy seeing everyone's plants in social media, as it's currently the easiest and safest way to stay connected. Looking forward to this week's meeting!

Cheers, Minh



### NCAC March meeting

Saturday, March 13, 2021

9:45am : Show Meeting

All members encouraged to attend with the show committee members

10:30 AM Eastern Standard Time

March 13<sup>th</sup> : Webinar hosted by Julie Mavity-Hudson  
"Growing and Showing *Achimenes*" Check out her blog:  
<http://juliemavityhudson.net/Achimenes/Achimenes.html#>

### Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88481061460?pwd=b2Q3dlB1dy8rTIZkZGEzTINsdHZNdz09>

Meeting ID: 884 8106 1460

Passcode: 258199

### Up and Coming Programs:

April 10th: "Judging Gesneriads" by Karyn Cichocki



Join us for Julie's *Achimenes* webinar. She grows a very large number of *Achimenes* varieties in Tennessee and is surely the expert. Some member photos of *Achimenes* grown in 2020.

# Show and Sale Information



Peggy and Donna visited Homestead Gardens in Davidsonville, MD to see what space they can offer us for the show in September. Our host and Ass't Manager, Pam is eager to offer us space in their facility. We decided the space can be utilized with some thought and work. The plant merchandise seen in the photo will not be located here for our show. In September their merchandise changes. We can use their tables or use folding tables. Their wooden tables are very strong but are too low for our show plants. There seems to be no obstacle that Pam thinks cannot be managed to make our show a success, including temperature and lighting. She is very interested in supporting us in reaching our goals and has many creative ideas about how to set up the show. She is eager to help us advertized and even make posters for us. More angles of the area are below. Join us for the meeting about the show that will be at 9:45am before our 10:30am meeting this Saturday, March 13<sup>th</sup> as scheduled. All member feedback is greatly requested!



## Wishfully Seeking to Grow

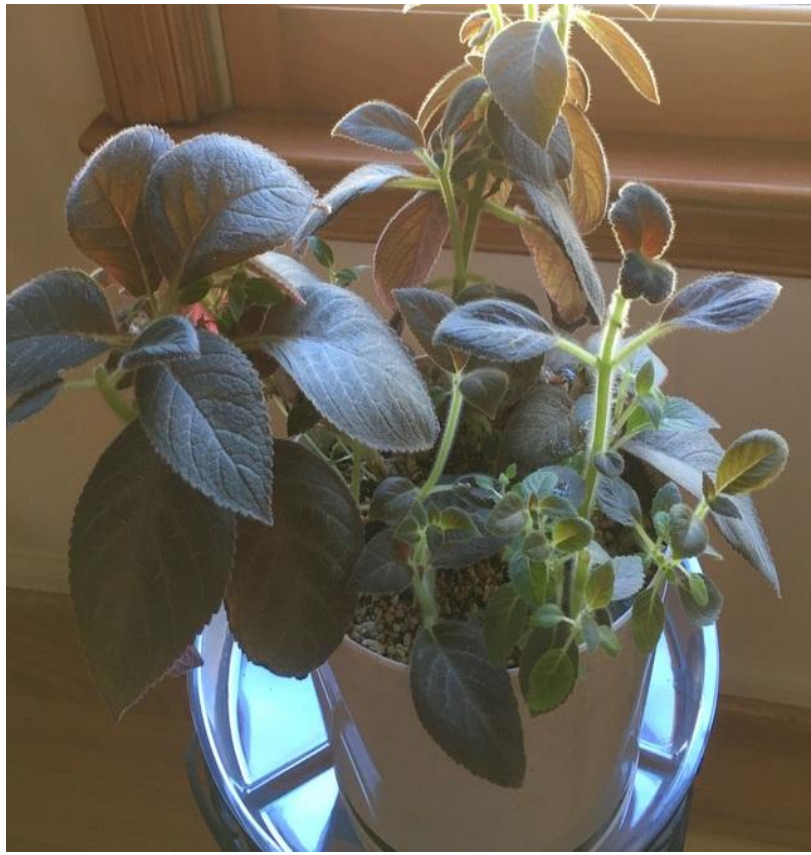
- Donna Beverin..... *Liebigia speciosa*, *Primulina leprosa*, *Primulina petrocosmoids*
- Janet Carlton.....*Streptocarpus* 'Harlequin Damsel' leaf, cutting, plant
- Barry Woolf..... *Sinningia* 'Gabriel's Horn'
- Johanna Zinn..... *Pearcea sprucei* and *Nautilocalyx x pictus* 'Jade'
- Nadya Warther-Gibson ..... *Streptocarpus* :fresh pollen from a fantasy type and/or green edged (DEM hybrids)
- Barb Koski ..... *Drymonia variegata*
- Kitty Hedgepeth..... *Streptocarpus* 'DS Rediska'



# Bloomin' Now



Barb's *Sinningia eumorpha* with light purple tint.



Janet's *Kohleria* 'Silver Feather' has beautiful foliage



Barb's *Achimenes* 'Red Elf'



Bill's *Streptocarpus* 'Versace'

# David Dick's "Growing African Violets for Show" February's Program

Dave shared his love of African Violets started by accident when he met Mrs. Hatfield at age 13. She had lots of violets and shared her love of this plant with him. She lived to the ripe old age of 101. He is still growing violets and is selling them as well.

Dave explained to us that 8 months is plenty of time to grow a nice show plant to exhibit during our September Show/Sale we are planning. It may not be 36 inches across but that is OK!

There are many ways to grow African Violets, now reclassified as *Streptocarpus* section *Saintpaulia*. (see article page 7).

It is advisable to devote a space for your plants you are planning to cultivate to show and concentrate on them. You can start with a plant that does not look 'pretty' now. Start with a young plant that has some symmetry. Pick 10 or 12 for the show, so maybe you will get 3 or 4 that 'make 'it to the show. David demonstrated with Aca's Raspberry Rapture on how to remove the yellowing, older outer leaves, leaving a nice healthy crown, trying not to remove more than 2 rows of leaves at one time. Be sure you have a plant with a good, healthy crown in the center. Remove leaves at neck completely removing all petiole stubble and gently scrape the neck to remove scar tissue and this is where the roots will start.

1. Remove all blossoms and buds.
2. When working with a standard violet, you may need a bigger pot. Go up one size at a time, from a 3 ounce plastic pot to 3 inches, and from 3" to 4". Violets like to be pot bound. That being said; fast, large growers, like Tiger or Picasso could go from 3 ounces to 4 inch pot.
3. Put small layer of course Perlite on the bottom of new pot.
4. Remove bottom of root ball, using fingers, or knife and put the plant in the pot and check to see if you took off enough root so the bare neck will be under the soil. If it is then add fresh soil to the top of the pot surrounding the exposed neck, where the new roots will form. Minis and Semi minis only need 4 months to perk up for a show with the goal of growing to not larger than 6-8 inches diameter. A semi-mini would be 8 inches or smaller and a Mini would be 6 inches or smaller. The Gesneriad Society and the AVSA show rules are the same. Use the same procedure to start up a potential show plant as you would a Standard. Micro Minis dry out very quickly and need terrarium conditions.

**Soil Mix:** David uses Promix BX or SunGro's Sunshine mix, but any good quality soilless mix is acceptable. He adds  $\frac{1}{4}$  more perlite to the mix to keep the soil light, as well as adding some to the bottom of the pots.

**Light:** Dave uses LED or fluorescent bulbs and keeps them 13 – 17 inches from the lights to the top of the shelf. He runs his lights 9-10 hours per day. He has found the Russian varieties take less light using about 7 hours a day. They seem to be very light sensitive. Monitor the crown of the plant and if it begins to bunch up, lower the light intensity by timing or space between the shelf and the plant.

**Fertilizer:** Although not standard practice for other veteran AV growers he has found Miracle Grow fertilizer/plant food spikes save him time from fertilizing manually. The do not make an accumulation of fertilizer salts on mats. Each one last 2 months and for a 3 inch pot he uses  $\frac{1}{2}$  spike, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a spike for the 3 ounce plastic cups. A spongy residue will be left in the soil, but this is not a concern. Take the time to note the date when you added the spike and repotted onto the label.

**Watering:** Dave has well water that is fine for his plants but you may have issues you will have to discover for your particular situation. Reverse Osmosis is always a good solution but will take some work. Wick and Matting are two of many capillary watering techniques that are common among growers. David found that wick watering kept his plants too wet, so he uses the matting technique with a 1/8 inch felt-like product called PellonTP970 Thermolam Plus Sew In, White 45" x 10yd bolt. When the fertilizer salts, algae or dirt build up on the matting as the water in the trays evaporate it creates a toxic environment for the plants so he disposes of the old matting and puts in new mats. He discards the old matting instead of cleaning it. Be sure to check your mats to be sure they are wet but not where plants are standing in water.

David holding S. 'Tiger'



## African Violet Program cont'

For those who do wick, if you have a plant you do not want to repot you can add a wick to the soil by using an upholstery needle that you can thread and probe it up through the pot. He does not use wicks in his plants on his mats.

### Growing:

Check on your plants every 3 – 4 days.

You do not want your plants to bloom yet. Check for suckers and remove them. Remove buds. You can let one bud stalk grow out to learn how it takes to optimally bloom. Count the days it takes for the stalk to bloom; however, all plants are slightly different. Add 2 weeks to that estimation, as a single stem will be quicker than total blooming. The hardest, most challenging part is timing the blooms! Singles bloom quicker than doubles.

Let it grow...leave them alone! Do not brush or wash the foliage.

After 2 months check and repot if necessary and add a fertilizer stick either way.

Before show: Brush leaves, check symmetry, remove leaves as needed, pull off spent blooms, follow rules of show for the pots display options.

### A few musings and answers to our questions:

- Disbudding: Example, Harbor Blue takes 60 days for buds to bloom. Add an extra 2 week before show to stop disbudding. Harbor Blue is a dependable plant to raise to show.
- The less chemicals used the better the plants will be.
- Yes, use braces to hold up violet leaves, also called leaf support rings. Disposable plates can use used cutting hole in center.
- Does not use Bloom Booster type fertilizers, except to get a mini to bloom on time with only one feeding and increasing light.
- Foliage feeding can be done on occasion. To a quart of warm, distilled water add 1/6 of a teaspoon of Jacks 20/20/20 and mist outside of leaves only. Mary Burns did foliar feeding on her show plants.
- About 3 weeks from the show check on blooms. Kick up light time to stimulate blooming for about 7-15 days to .5-1 hr/day, just for the stimulatory effect, then return back to your regular light schedule. If buds are opening too soon, you can control it up to a point. Cut back on light time. Move plants to cooler shelf to upper 60s. If buds are slow increase light time, increase heat to 80s to push blooms.
- September could be a hot day for a show. Do you have any advice for showing in heat?  
The more turgid the blossom, the better it will hold up. Pinks and whites don't do as well with heat. Green ones tend to be turgid, very durable. Cool the car before you load it. Don't leave plants in sun.
- The big box stores sell Optimara Violets and these are a good place to start your collection. Optimara Rhapsody can make fine show plants for the beginner. They are heavy bloomers and symmetrical.
- David loves the Buckeye hybrids
- David has made 8 hybrids, which is strictly a hobby because lack of time and room to grow.
- Use fans to help prevent powdery mildew
- David sells on Ebay under the name Blue Mountain Violets. He will start selling in a few weeks, so you won't find anything for sale yet.(as of 3/9/2021)



Suzanne Lorbeck Myers

S. Aca's Raspberry Rapture from AVSA FB page



Bill's *Saintpaulia* 'Jungle Princess'

## So How do I label my African Violet Plant?

Ed: the short answer is for any hybrid: *Saintpaulia* 'Hybrid name'

Dr. Jeff Smith is a botanist at Ball State University. He is an acknowledged expert in all things African Violet, with many popular and professional publications.



The species and subspecies of plants collectively known as African violets belong to one of the smaller groups in the Old World Gesneriaceae. Wild populations are found chiefly in the area known as the Eastern Arc Mountains of Tanzania and Kenya. The plants grow on moss-covered boulders, on cliffs or on rock outcrops shaded by large trees. While the natural growing area is well within tropical Africa and not far from the equator, most species grow at middle altitudes with cooler temperatures, and some at higher altitudes with seasonally chilly weather. The natural growing locations of these plants are extremely small in area. Many African violets face extinction due to habitat destruction from farming and logging of the canopy trees. The majority of the species and subspecies are listed as vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered.

African violets have long been known to be closely related to other African Gesneriad genera, especially to subgenus *Streptocarpella* within the genus *Streptocarpus*. Recent studies have confirmed the closeness of the relationship and botanists have “sunk” the former genus name of *Saintpaulia* within this group. Therefore, all the species and cultivars we have known as *Saintpaulia* are now properly *Streptocarpus* and will generally be referred to as such within the GRW.

**The exception is for African violet hybrids, the focus of intense commercial and hobbyist activity for many decades. Referring to these cultivars as *Streptocarpus* is potentially confusing, as several of the same names used for cultivars in the *Saintpaulia* group have also been used for cultivars in *Streptocarpus* subgenera *Streptocarpus* and *Streptocarpella*. In addition, the term “*Saintpaulia*” has been widely used for many years in both hobbyist and commercial contexts. The GRW will therefore refer to the hybrids within *Streptocarpus* subgenus *Streptocarpella* section *Saintpaulia* as simply *Saintpaulia*, unitalicized as it is no longer a proper genus name. Readers should understand, though, that these hybrids are within the genus *Streptocarpus*.**

A full discussion of African violets can be found in the article “[Saintpaulia: The African Violet](#)” by Jeff Smith. The article describes in detail the recent taxonomic changes of these plants. Something to watch for is that many of the former “species” have been reduced to “subspecies” (abbreviated as ssp.) and plants descended asexually from one individual are often identified as “clones” (abbreviated as cl.).

African Violets mutate readily and hybridization programs over the last 80 years have exploited these mutations to produce thousands of brightly colored cultivars in a variety of sizes and forms. Because most African violets thrive in the same temperature and lighting conditions found in homes, they are one of the most important houseplants in the horticultural industry.

<https://gesneriads.info/articles/saintpaulia/saintpaulia/>

So for hybrids, which most of us grow, the answer is *Saintpaulia* .....

Good growing.



This article can be found on the Gesneriad Society’s website : <https://gesneriads.info/gesneriad-genera/saintpaulia/>

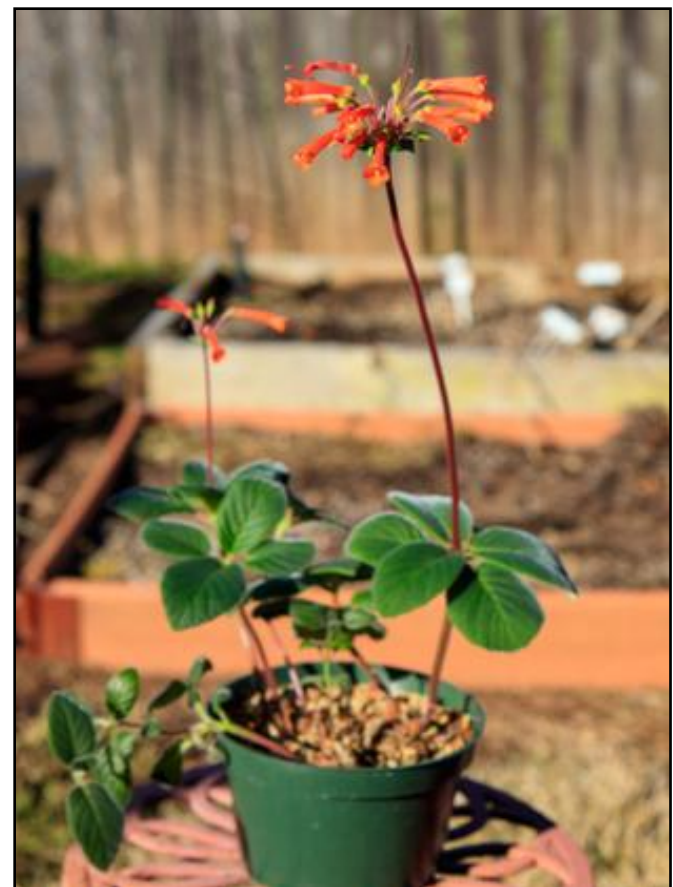
# Bloomin' Now



Donna's *Kohleria* 'Ni's Nasca'



Donna's *Streptocarpus* 'DS Caramel'



Alcie Maxwell's *Sinningia insularis*



Alcie's *Smithiantha cinnabarina*

# Tidbits

*Tribounia grandiflora*  
A new gesneriad

[https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Tribounia-grandiflora-DJ-Middleton-A-habit-B-flowers-C-side-view-of-corolla\\_fig2\\_264552412](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Tribounia-grandiflora-DJ-Middleton-A-habit-B-flowers-C-side-view-of-corolla_fig2_264552412)

<https://gesneriads.info/library/tribounia-a-new-genus-of-gesneriaceae-from-thailand/>

It's an annual, so it will die after setting seeds (self-pollinated). The seed pods remain on the plant for a long time.

**Hung Nguyen**  
(San Francisco Bay Chapter)



Peter Shalit:

“For over a century *Sinningia concinna* has been known only from a plant that arose in a shipment of orchids to Europe from Brazil.

Recently a colony of sinningias were found in Brazil that have been identified as *S. concinna*. This new collection has been named *S. concinna* 'Seropedica' after the location where the plants were found.

I obtained seeds of this new collection last spring and have grown a couple dozen plants. They are blooming now and seem fairly uniform, the main difference being the size of the flower.

Currently the classic form of *S. concinna* is also blooming in my light garden. Comparing the classic version of this species with the new collection, the foliage is similar, but the blossoms have a number of differences.”

Donna is growing *S. concinna* 'Seropedica' with good germination but no flowers yet.





At the end of November, 2020, Janet's *Streptocarpus* 3S-*Fernweh* spontaneously self-pollinated. Now, on Valentine's Day, the pod is almost 11 weeks old and seems ripe enough for harvesting. It will be dried thoroughly before the seeds are stored in the fridge until ready to plant.



Donna's Sinningias: "I forget what cuttings I made in this prop box, but they are a batch of the most healthy plants that are growing right now! Since this picture I have given each plant their own pot. I shall have a mystery to solve but have to wait for blooms. I was Probably in a hurry and did not want to throw out any cuttings. I had S. Sim Sim Salaviem leaves in this box to propagate but they did not succeed."



Leve Hajdu shared this picture of his two Primulinas on Gesneriphiles! The small *Primulina petrocosomeoides* setting on the leaf of *Primulina* 'Sweet Dreams'



# More Tidbits



Donna's *Sinningia* 'Spanish Skirts' stages of blooms



Last year Alcie Maxwell, our Louisiana NCAC member sent 6 sinningia plants to share with our members: three S. Spanish Skirts and three S. Owlsees Red Hot young plants. I gave them away at our September plant swap. These pictures show the progress of S. Spanish Skirts. Alcie made the cross and Margery Anderson-Clive grew the seeds and selected this plant as a keeper and named it. We surely are the beneficiaries of his efforts! Last picture is 3 cuttings Donna has propped to share!

# Member plants



Donna's *Chrysothemis pulchella* dark leaf, possibly Black Flamingo, has sprouted and is growing so fast!



2020 blooms of *Chrysothemis pulchella* 'Black Flamingo'

Donna: "My *Chrysothemis pulchella* 'Black Flamingo' has re-sprouted for the 2021 season and is growing strong under LED lights after awakening from its dormant state where it looked dead in the pot over winter! I have seen it online called "Sunset Bells" and "Copper Leaf". It is wicked and it does drink a lot of water with a light liquid fertilizer. Some of the flowers lose their luster but their calyx keeps their color for a long time. New flowers pop up showing off their orange calyx as their yellow buds grow and open. It is a joy to watch it grow, making new stems and flower stalks. My plant has calyx which are very orange and I have seen some varieties in pictures where it is very red. I bought this plant as a baby in September 2019 at the Delaware African Violet & Gesneriad Society's Show and Sale. In 2020 it grew to 17" x 15" so I have to say it is a good grower. Since the tuber was bending the pot it was in last year, I repotted it into a larger pot. Once it gets bigger I shall be refilling the wick's reservoir several times a week as it does not like to dry out, drinking a lot of water to which I add a dilute fertilizer solution. I have tried propagating from leaves last year without success but this year I have seeds and hopefully can grow some *Chrysothemis pulchella* x self and get plants to share and maybe get a light green variety." Supposedly the name is taken from mythology: Chryso Themis was a daughter of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon, of Green Mythology. *Chrysothemis pulchella* (beautiful) is the most widespread species, the most variable, and the one found most often in cultivation.

## Gesneriad Reference web:

"*Chrysothemis* is a genus of nine species native to the West Indies, Mexico (Chiapas), Guatemala to Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Surinam, French Guiana and Brazil (Amazonas State). It grows in shaded areas along roads and streams in wet forests. The genus is distinguished from other long-stemmed genera in the Paradyrmonia Alliance by the absence of adventitious roots, a terrestrial erect and free-standing habit, the presence of tubers and prominent, often colorful calyx lobes of red or yellow with yellow, orange, purplish or white corollas, sometimes with red markings. *Chrysothemis* has long been in cultivation, and forms of species such as *C. pulchella* and *C. friedrichsthaliana* are often seen growing outside in subtropical summer gardens, as well as indoor collections and are often exhibited in flower shows."

# Bloomin' Now



Janet : "This photo shows my seedling *Streptocarpus* 'Janet's Kissing Cousin' on the left and S. 'Harlequin Lace' on the right. Harlequin Lace is the pollen parent of Janet's Kissing Cousin. While similar, Janet's Kissing Cousin has deeper violet upper lobes and a distinct pinkish glow when lit from behind.



Donna's *Gloxinopsis racemosa* light leaf colored form: above & below. Previously named *Gloxinia racemosa*. It grows from seed and makes rhizomes. I just planted seeds from the "dark" leaf form. Both varieties from Brazil Plants."



Bill's stunning *Henckelia moonii* blooming again in 2021



*Gloxinopsis racemosa*

# Plants for Sale

Dave Anderson's plants for sale. \$5.00 each with \$9.00 Shipping.  
Contact Dave: Davidanderson1952@yahoo.com



*Diastema vexans*,

*Sinningia* 'Mother of Pearl', *Episica* 'Blue Nile', *Paradyrmonia campostyla*,

*Sinningia* 'Freckles',

*Sinningia* 'Maiden's Blush'



*Begonia eleagnifolia*, *Nematanthus* 'Cheerio', *Pteris cretica* (fern)



Donna's *Sinningia* 'High Voltage' bought from Dave last year. Re-blooming! Pure orange mini is a keeper!



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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 Treasurer, Dave Anderson 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.

Membership requests should be sent to:

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Membership includes a subscription to the society journal, Gesneriads. You can subscribe on line also.  
<http://www.gesneriadsociety.org/>

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