



Petal Tones

The newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of
The Gesneriad Society

Volume 42 Number 1

January 2011

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy New Year! We've made it through another interesting year. The Chapter is growing, not only with membership numbers, but with active members who attend meetings. I remember when I joined the Chapter 5 years ago our holiday party had 10 of us sitting around a table. Now we average 20-25 a meeting. Keep spreading the word; invite friends and neighbors who admire the Gesneriads you have growing on your windowsills or under lights in your house. This really is a wonderful plant family that gets along with just about everyone.

What did everyone think of our new meeting space for December? I thought the space was great. Lots more room than the classroom downstairs in the Administration Building, and much better lit than the auditorium. I hope that when the Admin Building is finished with its renovations we have a space as nice as this temporary one.

We have a very full year ahead of us; Convention in Philadelphia in July and our own show in September. Both require a lot of planning, coordination and TIME. We'll have a lot more to discuss on both events at our February meeting. Oh, yes. Just in case you missed the Holiday Party and haven't noticed the meeting schedule yet, we won't be having a meeting in January. The Orchid Judges normally meet on the first Saturday, leaving the second Saturday for us. However, the first Saturday is New Year's Day so they moved up to our date and we've been bumped. With only one available meeting room at the Arboretum for the time being, this may not be the only time we get bumped. We'll just have to work through it.

By the time of the February meeting we should have our show location locked down and we'll start assigning the Chair Positions for the show. It's not too early to start thinking about how you'd like to help. There will be a list of Chair Positions elsewhere in *Petal Tones*. Look it over and if you have any questions about the Chair's responsibilities drop me a quick note. None of the jobs should be overwhelming for anyone, and I'm

Meeting Schedule:

Locations to be determined due to Renovations at the Arboretum.

January 8, 2011 – Canceled due to the fact an Orchid Society Leadership group is meeting at the Arboretum this Saturday. **Meeting is moved to February 12th.**

February 12th: National Arboretum (the trailer) **“Growing Plants From Seeds Workshop”** (more info in next issue!)

March 12, 2011 – Growing Saintpaulia for show.

The only Gesneriad to have it's own society and its own specific rules for growing and showing. Learn from an expert (to be determined) the secrets to growing large perfect standard violets as well as miniatures and trailing types. Rules for judging violets in a Gesneriad show defer to the general rules as determined by AVSA except that the plants are judged competitively and not on their own merit (only one Blue Ribbon per Class).

Meeting dates for 2011 :

February 12th, March 12th, April 9th, May 14th,
June 11th picnic
July 5 - July 9 in Philadelphia, PA - The Gesneriad Society's convention, hosted by the Liberty Bell Chapter
September 17: show & sale (location tba)
October 15 (note this is the THIRD Saturday of the month)
December 10: holiday party

sure that for the first time in a number of years no one will have to Chair two different positions.

Finally, I really want to thank our new editors for taking *Petal Tones* off my back. I'll probably end up writing more than ever to put into *Petal Tones*, but having to format and layout and edit and all that other “editorial” stuff is no longer mine.

A great big thanks to Ken Moore and Donna Beverin!!

BRAZIL SEED CLUB

The new list from Brazil Plants was just sent out to interested members of the Chapter. If you are interested in growing new and exciting species out of Brazil please get in touch with Brian Connor. He'll make sure that you get a copy of the list. <http://www.brazilplants.com>

Here are the rules: You have to be a paid member of the National Capital Chapter of the Gesneriad Society. Each request should be limited to 3-4 seed selections so that everyone has an opportunity. That's it. Brian has a list of the current available seed which he'll forward to you upon request. Brian is able to order 24 packets of seed 3 times a year. Once he gets the seed from Mauro Peixoto, he'll either bring it to a meeting or mail it to you. If two people order the same seed, he'll split the packet in half. If more than two order he'll order two packets.

Mauro uses the funds we pay him to get supplies for his greenhouse and pay for repairs and help. We help in his conservation efforts by allowing him to collect and maintain many rare and new gesneriads, and also get those same rare plants into cultivation where they are less likely to be lost forever.

DESPERATELY SEEKING

Gesneria 'Yellow Bird' Jim Roberts
Sinningia 'Snowflake' Jim Roberts
Sinningia 'Star Eyes' Jim Roberts
Sinningia 'Bright Eyes' Jim Roberts
Episcia 'Unpredictable Valley' Barb Stewart
Begonia bogneri Jim Roberts
Nautilocalyx pallidus Jim Roberts
Strep. cuttings/plants Jim Roberts
Begonia smithiantha Donna Beverin
xAchimena 'Dutch Treat' Donna Beverin
Petrocosmea baby plants (have HT-2/Rosettifolia) Donna Beverin

If you are looking for a plant and can't find it, list it here. *Petal Tones* has a wide distribution and chances are good that someone will be able to get you what you want.



Sinningia curtiflora : tuber hardy to 30 degrees
Picture of one of the Mauro seedlings given at last meeting.

NCAC Treasurer's Report : December 11, 2010

The current NCAC treasury checkbook balance is \$2,436.94 up from the October balance of \$2,387.94. The increase can be attributed to the raffle and memberships at the October meeting, minus the bank service charge of \$3. An additional \$20 from the funds collected at the October meeting were used to buy a share in the project of Jon Lindstrom at University of Arkansas for tissue culturing *Sinningia* 'Prudence Risley' for the Convention next summer. I wanted to let you know that the raffle at the December meeting raised \$91, and that so far 13 members have paid their 2011 dues. If you want to mail me your dues payment, my address is on last page of *Petal Tones*. Dues: \$10 year due in January
Respectfully submitted,
Larry Skog, Treasurer

Official Name Changes as of Dec. 9, 2010:

<u>New name</u>	<u>Old name</u>
<i>Sinningia.bullata</i>	<i>S. sp.</i> "Florianopolis"
<i>S. canastrensis</i>	<i>S. sp.</i> "Canastra"
<i>S. gerdtiana</i>	<i>S. sp.</i> "Gertiana"
<i>S. globulosa</i>	<i>S. sp.</i> "Globulosa"
<i>S. helioana</i>	<i>S. sp.</i> "Santa Teresa"
<i>S. muscicola</i>	<i>S. sp.</i> "Rio das Pedras"
<i>S. polyantha</i>	<i>S. sp.</i> "Waechter"

Save the Azaleas

Harold Belcher announced that the administration of the National Arboretum is indeed planning to raze azaleas on the south side of Mt. Hamilton and paint the stumps with herbicide. The boxwoods, tree peonies and other perennials are also scheduled for elimination. Much more information is available at <http://savetheazaleas.org>

Experimental plants from Jim Steuerlein:

S. 'Pink Tiger' x *S. bullata*



Pale Peach.....Joyce



Orange.....Donna

Naturalistic Terrarium for Ecuadorian Gesneriads

By Josh Heath

Today's terrarium hobby has evolved dramatically in the last few decades, ranging from small tabletop jars to large public displays. A well constructed terrarium provides a stable warm and moist habitat for a multitude of various tropical plants, particularly sensitive gesneriads. One of the great benefits of a large terrarium is not only the ability to grow larger plants, but also to recreate a slice of the plant's natural habitat. For the last twelve years or so I have been designing terrariums in this way, focusing on different habitats and recreating them using the most accurate materials and plant species available. For this article, I have designed a terrarium to recreate a rocky slope in the rainforest of Ecuador. It will include gesneriads and other plants that naturally grow in that habitat and range.

One of the easiest ways to design a larger terrarium is to start with a glass or acrylic fish aquarium; and many already come with a glass top and a fluorescent light fixture that should be adequate for most gesneriads. If you plan on growing plants that demand higher light levels a multitude of different aquarium lights can be used. I tend to look for a fixture that provides at least 2 to 3 watts of fluorescent or power compact light per gallon of tank volume. For this display I used a 40 gallon tank (18x18x20) and one 100w power compact fluorescent.

Since this will be a rainforest display it will require a high level of moisture. I decided on drilling a hole in the bottom of the tank and using a piece of raised plastic eggcrate and landscaping cloth to keep the soil off the bottom. This will allow excess water to drain, preventing the soil from becoming soggy and stagnant. A small reservoir containing a submersible pump sits below the main terrarium; water will drain out from the bottom of the tank and be re-circulated back up to the top. The water will then drip down the back of the tank and over the rocks. Alternatively, an automatic misting system designed for keeping reptiles works just as well, or you can always spray the tank down several times a day with a hand mister.

The next step is to fit any decorations such as rocks or wood into the tank. Rocks provide texture and interest to the terrarium and many gesneriads grow directly on rock surfaces in nature. I chose to cover the entire background with artificial rock cast

from epoxy resin to recreate the side of a rocky gorge or ravine, habitats that many of our gesneriads come from. In the rainforest, virtually every square inch of vertical and horizontal space is used by plants.

A simple way to recreate this is to glue lightweight or thin rocks such as shale or pumice to the back panel of the terrarium using silicone. Logs, braches, and roots can also be used. Don't forget to create pockets on the background where plants can grow. To add support for larger pieces, I like to use a product called Beckett's Pond Foam available at the Home Depot. This is an expanding spray foam that is made to support rocks during pond construction. The foam dries in a dark gray color and can be sprayed between and under rocks and wood to lock them in place. Once dry it can be carved or sanded to help it blend in.

With all the decorations in place, the substrate or soil can now be added to the terrarium. Since the terrarium stays warm and humid, using the right type of soil mix is critical to prevent breakdown. I prefer to make my own mix fast draining mix that seems to last a long time. The basic mix is approximately 1/3 peat moss or African violet soil, 1/3 turface or laterite clay, and 1/3 chopped sphagnum moss; with a handful of fine orchid bark thrown in for good measure. Other ingredients can include sand, tree fern fiber, charcoal, or small amounts of leaf litter. Don't worry about exact ratios; just go with what feels like a nice open mix. For planting epiphytes, simply stuff long fiber sphagnum and some soil mix into the pockets on the back rock wall and branches.

Once the soil is in place, it's time to start planting. Since my goal was to create an epiphyte covered rock wall, I made a list of a few Ecuadorian gesneriads that naturally occupy that habitat. I tend to plant a mix of gesneriads and other plants that share a similar habitat together, this helps create a natural looking display. Try to tuck them into pockets of soil at various levels on the background, keeping in mind the potential growth and size of the plant. Companion plants can be added to provide interest and contrast. A striking specimen plant such as *Drymonia chiribogana* could be used as a centerpiece, or perhaps a large *Kohleria*. A few plants of *Columnea orientandina* and *Drymonia pendula* were tucked into the top of the rock wall where they can cascade outward. I placed a few individual *Seemaniania sylvatica* on the ledges and lower parts of the rock wall to provide color with their bright red flowers. To make it more realistic, I filled out the spaces between

the gesneriads with *Selaginella pallescens* and creeping plants such as *Ficus sp. 'Panama'*, *Peperomia prostrata*, and *Marcgravia sp*; which will provide a nice contrast in color and texture as well as provide support for the gesneriads. Non-gesneriad epiphytic companions include *Anthurium bakeri*, the bromeliad *Guzmania lingulata minor*, *Pleurothallis* orchids, and the climbing aroid *Monstera siltepecana*.



Figure 1: Tiny gesneriads such as micro *Sinningias* are tucked into rocky crevices. The green creeping plant is *Ficus sp. 'Panama'*.

On the ground layer a wide range of plants can be used, and many popular gesneriads are adapted to life on the forest floor. Some of the best varieties include *Corytoplectus*, *Episcia*, *Nauticalyx*, *Pearceas* including *P. hypocyrtiflora* and *P. abunda*, *Diastema racemiferum*, and *Paradrymonia campostyla*. For larger displays, bigger plants like the *Kohleria amabilis*, and *Gesnerias* can provide a bold centerpiece. Non-gesneriad companions in this terrarium include *Anthurium polyschistum*, *A. radicans*, *Bertolonia maculata*, and *Syngonium*.



Figure 1: Bird's eye view looking down into the terrarium. On the bottom right is *Paradrymonia campostyla* peeking out from the foliage, with *Anthurium radicans* to it's immediate left.

The final touch in designing a naturalistic gesneriad habitat is to provide some ground cover to help show off the plant's colors and form. One method is to spread pieces of living tropical moss around the plants creating a background of green. Smaller groundcovers like the fern relative *Selaginella* work well too. A more natural approach is to cover most of the bare soil in the terrarium with a thin layer of leaf litter. A selection of dried fallen leaves forms a natural dark background that displays the gesneriads contrasting form and colors. Leaves from oak, beech, and magnolia are all safe and last a long time. Just rinse them under hot or boiling water first to kill off any potential pests.



Figure 2: *Seemaniania sylvatica* on the right, with *Kohleria amabilis* directly above.

Growing Episcias By Barb Stewart



Figure 3: This display is designed to recreate the incredible plant diversity found in the high-elevation rainforest of Ecuador. Ferns, orchids, gesneriads, and many other plants occupy every square inch of available growing space on the rocks.

With the terrarium complete, a good watering is all that should be needed to settle in the plants. If the tank has a glass top, the humidity should remain high for long periods without misting. I like to mist the terrarium with warm water and a very dilute solution of orchid fertilizer every so often to wash off the plants, carefully avoiding sensitive gesneriad's leaves. Normally, the only maintenance will be watering, fertilizing and pruning. Just keep an eye on the water build up under to soil and either siphon or drain it off before it accumulates. In a short time, the new terrarium will become an established ecosystem that requires minimal maintenance and provides many years of growing enjoyment.

In my African violet club, I assist the horticulture chairman each month by giving a “gesneriad tip”. I have expanded on this by highlighting a particular gesneriad each month and giving some basic background and culture information. As a gesneriad judge, this helps me learn more about different gesneriads, as I usually do a little research to prepare for my talk. I also try to bring some starter plants to donate so people who are inspired can try growing them (and I can get some more room on my shelves). I try to have copies of a handout that gives basic information as well.

I started out this year with Episcias, since they are easy to grow and we have a number of novice growers in our club. I also had a lot of starter plants that needed homes after I broke down several large plants during the summer.

Episcias are New World gesneriads whose range is from Mexico to Brazil. They are fibrous-rooted plants which often grow naturally as ground covers. There are eight known species, but many different hybrids, most of which have come from *Episcia reptans* and *Episcia cupreata*. Both of these species have been used for medicinal purposes, to reduce fever and treat insect bites. Generally they prefer warm temperatures and high humidity. Most are grown for ornamental foliage, but many are easy to bloom and come in a variety of colors.

Episcias are usually exhibited in shallow pots with multiple plants in a pot. As a challenge, they can be grown single crowned with or without stolons. Removing stolons encourages larger leaves, and may also encourage blossoms on reluctant bloomers. A well grown exhibit should have good form and balance to it, and be in good cultural condition. If grown for ornamental foliage, it should have distinctive color, variegation, or iridescence, and no buds or blossoms with color. If grown in a terrarium, the container should be clean with no scratches or mineral deposits. If the top is opened slightly on the container, condensation will be reduced for better viewing by the judges.

Since I grow my plants on trays with matting, there is usually sufficient humidity for my Episcias. However, the pink varieties usually fare better in a covered container. I have had better luck with miniature varieties in containers as well. Episcias prefer temperatures above 65 degrees F, and may not

survive temperatures below 55. I once had a power outage as a result of a snow storm, and my house temperature was around 40 degrees for several days. Most of my plants survived because I had my plant stands covered with plastic. My *Episcias* did not survive, however, except for the small stolons, so it was not a total loss. Even with comfortable house temperatures, they can be temperamental in winter. I once broke down several large plants in December, and the cuttings did poorly, so I now try to do this in warmer weather. I also find that my *Episcas* fare better in the winter if kept on the top shelves.

Episcias provide constant color on my plant stands when everything else is disbudded or out of bloom. They grow quickly and make beautiful show plants, but for a fun challenge try growing them in a different way as single crowned plants or trained/sculptured in some way.



Episcia lilacina 'Blue Nile'



Episcia 'Unpredictable Valley'



Episcia 'Thad's Cheetah'



Episcia 'Pink Dreams'



Episcia 'Tropical Topaz'



Episcia 'Kee Wee'



Episcia groundcover in Mauro's greenhouse

Please write an article or share an article for our future *Petal Tones*. Send in a picture or two of what you have in bloom. These will be shared in a column called: Bloomin' Now ! You can share any challenges you worked through in raising your plant, share some history of how you grew it or give credit to the person who gave you the seedling or starter.

Also anyone who has the Jim Steuerlein "Experimental Plant" blooming or growing well please share with the group. Send in a pic! A basic digital picture will be fine!

"Mr. Gesneriad"

Next month, February 2011 a new column will be appearing called "Ask Mr. Gesneriad". Please submit your questions and they shall be answered by our gesneriad experts.

Send information to Ken or Donna at editor@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org or petaltones@gmail.com or Donnabeverin@gmail.com

National Capital Area Chapter (NCAC) A Chapter of the Gesneriad Society, Inc.

"The purpose of the chapter shall be to afford a convenient and beneficial association of persons interested in gesneriads; to stimulate a widespread interest in the identification, correct nomenclature, culture, and propagation of gesneriads; and to encourage the origination and introduction of new cultivars."

(NCAC bylaws, revised April 1981.)

NCAC meets several times a year on the second Saturday of the month in the Administration Building of the U.S. National Arboretum. For details, please refer to the latest issue of *Petal Tones*, the website, or contact one of the people below. All are welcome and new attendees are invited to a free item from the raffle table.

The Gesneriad Society website:

www.gesneriadsociety.org

NCAC website:

www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

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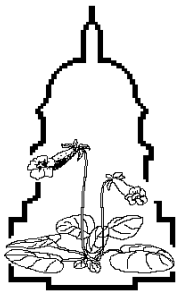
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Volume 42 Number 2

February 2011

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Streptocarpus 'Summer Parfait,' first place in Class 31B at NCAC-hosted 2009 convention in Silver Spring. Photo by Kyoko Imai

This will be a short message. I'm at the Pittsburgh airport trying to get from a business trip to L.A. BWI was closed last night so we were all diverted to here. How I hate travel in the winter. Carrying clothes (and coats) for two very different climates, trying to be prepared for everything. Never seems to work out quite right.

L.A. was gorgeous. 75 degrees and sunny. I hope Atlanta is nice too when I head out tonight for the Gesneriad Society's Board of Directors Retreat. And now that I've mentioned our parent society, I have to talk up Convention a bit. Hopefully many of you are planning to attend. It's going to be in Philadelphia this year and will likely be as big or bigger than our own Convention in Silver Springs a couple of years ago. And if you are planning to attend, you should already have your potential show plants put aside for extra grooming and shaping. It would be really great for NCAC to walk away with some of the top prizes. We have the talent to do so. For those of you new to the

Meeting Schedule:

Meetings will be located in the trailer at the National Arboretum unless noted.

February 12, 2011 - Growing Plants From Seeds workshop. Also, bring gesneriads to donate to Druid Hill Conservatory. (More info in this issue.)

March 12, 2011 - Growing *Saintpaulia* for show.

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group, look back at the Chapter's blog for photos of the winning plants we had at our Convention.

We also have to start working on our September show. The show location, at Behnke Nurseries in Beltsville, should be challenging and exciting. We've had our shows at the Arboretum for so many years that we really know exactly what to do when we walk in on Friday for setup. It won't be quite so easy at Behnke's. But the lighting will be wonderful for showing our plants, and the judges will enjoy the plant environment.

We have to pick Chairs at this meeting, so if you're interested in helping, be ready to volunteer. If you can't make it to the meeting but want to Chair one of the spots, get in touch with me (show chair positions are listed at the end of the newsletter). I'm willing to volunteer as Show Chair if no one else wants to fight for that position. Brian Connor is Vice Show Chair for the Philly Convention, so I doubt he wants responsibility for both shows. Think of a theme for our Show. We need that in order to send publicity

to the Gesneriad Society soon. The theme could be something relating to movies, songs, books, authors, historical events, holidays, or just about anything else we can come up with. The theme is used almost exclusively for the desithe classes but could carry over into the color ribbons we use between sections or the color print we have on section cards. Bring an idea and we'll vote on it.

We also want to discuss the table favors for the Philly Convention. Lots of great ideas have been brought forward. Bring pricing and pictures of your ideas to the meeting.

And finally, as I conclude my rambling "short" message, remember to send your dues payment to Larry Skog. His address can be found on the last page of Petal Tones. Our Chapter is really turning into something special. Membership continues to increase. Volunteerism is up. Thanks so much for all your help!

—Jim Roberts, President

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MEMBERSHIP DUES

Dues are due! Please contact Larry or bring your dues to the February meeting to maintain your membership status.

DESPERATELY SEEKING

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Sinningia 'Bright Eyes'..... Jim Roberts
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Streptocarpus cuttings/plants.....Jim Roberts
Begonia smithiantha.....Donna Beverin
xAchimenantha 'Dutch Treat'...../.....Donna Beverin
Petrocosmea baby plants (have HT-2/Rosettifolia).....Donna Beverin

Last Request For Hong Kong From Jim Roberts

As I try to prepare myself for my trip to Hong Kong and China at the end of March, I find that I need to make one more request of the group. Luke Leong in Hong Kong sent me a wish list of plants that he would like to grow. Leaves, cuttings, or rhizomes are all acceptable. After the meeting when I know exactly what I'll be bringing him, he will apply for his import permit.

If you have any of these plants that you could share at the meeting in February, I would be most appreciative. If you don't have them for the February meeting. I supposed I could mail them on later, but I'd rather get everything done at once. So, here's Luke's Wish List:

Kohleria grandiflora
Kohleria 'Longwood'
Kohleria rugata
Kohleria 'Sciadotydaea Hybrid'
Kohleria 'Royal Gem'
Kohleria 'Caliph'
Kohleria amabilis
Kohleria 'Cinnamon Toast'
Kohleria 'Keystone Morning'
Kohleria 'Gunsmoke'
Kohleria 'Rebecka'
xGlokohleria 'Goblin'
Saintpaulia 'Silverglade Apples'
Saintpaulia 'Kermit'
Saintpaulia 'Enchanted Pink'
Saintpaulia 'Tea's Blueberry Butterfly'
Saintpaulia 'Pink Pistachio'
Saintpaulia 'Morgan's Barossa'

If you are looking for a plant and can't find it, list it here.

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AMAZING GESNERIAD SEEDS

By Brian Connor

Don't let the tiny, dustlike seeds of gesneriads intimidate you. Sowing seeds is fun, easy and a great way to expand your plant collection with exotic gesneriads from far away places that are unavailable in any other form.

There are many successful ways to cultivate seedlings. Here are a few guidelines:

- Use any clean container. I like solo cups for their small size and convenience.
- Use any well-draining soil mix. **Warning:** I do recommend sterilizing any soil mix used for starting seeds, although such extremes are not necessary for potting plants.

3 Methods To Sterilize Soil (don't tell your roommate)

1. Microwave moistened soil in a bowl for 15 minutes.
2. Bake soil at 250 °F for 30 minutes (yes in the oven!).
3. Pour boiling water over soil.

In any case, do let it cool before using!

- Add a top layer of 1/4" pre-moistened Milled Sphagnum Moss. This helps prevent damping-off fungus. The moss can be difficult to wet thoroughly, so I often use boiling water.
- Make certain that the soil mix and moss are saturated with water. It should be very moist.
- Sow *some* of your seeds on the surface (never sow all seeds at once and never bury gesneriad seeds).
- Try not to sow the seeds too densely. Use a creased piece of paper and lightly tap the seeds so that they are evenly distributed over the solo cup.
- Enclose the container for high humidity. Place in a bright, well lit, warm area. Fluorescent

Brian's Seed Experiment

A friend gave me some old Gesneriad Journals and the Jan/Feb 1990 edition had an article referencing some novel ways to start gesneriad seeds based on some experiments by Darrell Trout.

A couple of weeks before Christmas, I could not resist trying one "experimental" method of starting seeds using agar plates. It was supposedly faster and more sensitive than conventional methods. I had access to some agar at work. So, I made 1% agar plates (10 g/L) with 1 g/L Orchid fertilizer dissolved in the agar. I had no autoclave at my disposal, so I boiled the agar and then cooled it to about 50 °C (122 °F) to add the fertilizer solution. I sowed seeds of *Streptocarpus porphyrostachys*, *Streptocarpus modestus*, *Streptocarpus silvaticus*, *Streptocarpus lilliputana*, *Henckelia sp.* 0604, *Henckelia hispida*, *Henckelia albomarginata*, *Ridleyandra quercifolia*, *Ridleyandra morganii*, and *Sphaerorrhiza sp.* 'Raizama' on agar plates, as well as on soil/milled sphagnum moss.

None of the *Ridleyandra* or *Henckelia* are doing anything, anywhere [sigh]. They will have to be held a good long time I am certain.

The *Sphaerorrhiza* sprouted within 2.5 weeks on the agar and then so did some of the Strepts. However, then a fungal colony emerged on the plate with the *Sphaerorrhiza* and may have damaged the seedlings.

Three of the 4 Strept species sprouted on the agar first; one has not sprouted at all. After sprouting on the agar, the seedlings must be transplanted to a soil/moss mix.

So I am not sure it was worth the trouble and I will have to check the fate of the *Sphaerorrhiza* seedlings. However, I only had a few *S. silvaticus* seeds and one lone seedling sprouted—only on the agar so far.

I will try to have a demo agar plate at the February meeting.

lights are perfect!

- Now you wait! Some seeds will sprout in the first 2 weeks. Most will take 2-8 weeks. Rarely, some species will really lag behind and take 3-6 months. All of the conditions for seed viability and speed to germination are not well understood.
- Excess seeds can be stored at room temp for short periods of time. They can be refrigerated for extended periods if kept dry.

U.S. NATIONAL ARBORETUM DECISION TO DE-ACCESSION SELECTED COLLECTIONS

By Harold Belcher

Last November, the U.S. National Arboretum (USNA) announced that a decision had been made to de-accession its Glenn Dale Hillside of its Azalea Collection on Mt. Hamilton, as well as its National Boxwood Collection and its Perennial Collection, both of which are on the Bladensburg Road side of the USNA. This decision was based on the loss of a long-standing financial support for the USNA Asian Valley Collection from a private donor. Losing this financial support will require the USNA Gardens Unit to cut two gardener positions, which were funded by that private donor for its Asian Valley collection, in 2012. As a result of the loss of funding and the necessity of cutting two gardener positions, the USNA believes that it has insufficient personnel to maintain all of its gardens and collections and must now evaluate the best use of the Gardens Unit's financial and personnel resources.

The Arboretum has begun this process so that it can be completed before the loss of the two privately funded positions in the Asian Valley Collection in 2012. The Gardens Unit staff, under the direction of Mr. Scott Aker, analyzed the USNA collections for de-accessioning by considering the scientific value



Photo by Don Hyatt of the Glenn Dale Hillside at the USNA (germplasm) of each collection, its educational and interpretive value, its aesthetic value and appeal to visitors, and the current level of stakeholder involvement/support for the collection. The collections selected for de-accessioning will be removed. Important germplasm within those collections will be preserved by taking cuttings, or in

some cases, transplanting elsewhere on the USNA grounds. The Gardens Unit staff will document identified plants in the selected collections for propagation and, when practicable, shipment to other gardens, nurseries, and collections. The remaining plants will be removed, destroyed, and low-maintenance native trees or meadow plants will be planted to restore the areas.

The Arboretum had long-term plans to remove nearly all of the undocumented azaleas (those plants that cannot be positively identified) on the Glenn



Photo by Don Hyatt of the Glenn Dale Hillside at the USNA Dale Hillside (about 20-25%, or about 2,000 mature plants, of the total azalea collection) so that they may be replaced with known Glenn Dale azalea introductions massed in large groups for visual impact. Unfortunately, the azaleas to be de-accessioned are the oldest and most majestic plants. The decision to de-accession the collection will expedite those plans. They will now shift to a fast-track removal of azaleas of unknown pedigree so the area is less of a maintenance burden. Most removals are expected to take place in the summer of 2011. The USNA rationale for de-accessioning the Glenn Dale Azalea Collection is that it is for the most part undocumented plant material for which they cannot justify the expense of long-term maintenance. This plan is to cut down the undocumented azaleas on the Glenn Dale Hillside and apply herbicide so that they cannot return. The plants that are removed will be replaced by new identified rooted cuttings from their propagation program. However, replacing 60 year-old azaleas with rooted cuttings will leave a barren eyesore, highly subject to erosion, and will also provide favorable growing space for new invasive species in one of the most visible and frequently visited locations in the Arboretum.

The plants in National Boxwood Collection and its associated Perennial Collection will be completely and accurately inventoried. Selected plants on the inventory will be used for cuttings, propagation, and distribution of the resulting plants, or to form the basis for new plantings elsewhere in the Arboretum. Removal of plants would not take place until autumn or winter of 2011-2012. The National Boxwood Collection forms a beautiful green barrier from the

heavy traffic on Bladensburg Road and contributes greatly to the tranquil ambiance of the USNA. The plan would entail the removal of every plant in this collection, leaving unobstructed views of the highway and allowing the sounds of the highway to intrude. Removing this collection and planting low-

maintenance trees, which will take years to mature, will do little to maintain the Arboretum's ambiance and attract visitors.

The Perennial Collection represents plants that most gardeners are familiar with and have in their gardens. It provides visitors with a stunning display from the tree peonies in early spring, daffodils and herbaceous peonies, and daylilies somewhat later. The collection provides visitors with obvious and subtle differences in flowers, fragrances, and colors. It should not be removed and replaced by a meadow.

The interim USNA Director responsible for this decision, in a letter to the President, National Capital Area Garden Clubs Inc., dated November 15, 2010, stated that "permanent sustained funding to support the minimum number of staff needed to develop and maintain their collections, but especially the boxwood and perennial collections and the azalea hillside, is the only viable way they can be saved. Should such funding become available, the replacement of undocumented azaleas on the Glenn Dale Hillside with Glenn Dale cultivars could be accomplished gradually, in a way that maintains the



Photo by Don Hyatt of the Glenn Dale Hillside at the USNA

spring show while newly planted azaleas become established, and the de-accession of the National Boxwood Collection and Perennial Collections will not be necessary" and, "In the short-term, the arboretum will continue to examine other possible funding mechanisms." In that letter, the Interim USNA Director also stated that although "some might argue for the simple abandonment of garden spaces when staff positions are lost, this is not a responsible approach.

Abandonment is environmentally harmful because of the potential for invasive species to become entrenched. It is nearly impossible to recover such collections after just a few years of abandonment without considerable expense." It should be noted that the USNA Azalea Collection was abandoned in the past and after years of neglect has been brought to its current state of restored beauty and health by the devoted efforts of the

Curator and a staff of volunteers over the past 20 years. During that time, the Curator and her staff of volunteers have been able to positively identify numerous previously undocumented azaleas on the Glenn Dale Hillside. These efforts, if allowed to continue, will provide documentation for many more of the undocumented plants in the collection and preserve these beautiful plants.

It is very difficult to understand how the future loss of those private funds can justify such a drastic decision. Several questions come to mind concerning the USNA decision to de-accession its collections.

If the availability of funding is the only issue, why take such drastic, irrevocable action that once done cannot be reversed should funding become available?

How does the loss of funding for two positions in the Asian Valley Collection, which by the terms of that funding required those positions be used only to supplement the regular work and not to supplant government funds, or the two other full-time federal gardeners who regularly maintain that garden, justify the de-accessioning of three completely unrelated

collections? With regard to the azalea collection, it is currently maintained by one full time position (the Curator) and a volunteer staff.

Were the stakeholders, such as the Azalea Society of America, American Daffodil Society, American Hemerocallis Society, American Peony Society, American Rhododendron Society, American Boxwood Society, Friends of the National Arboretum, and National Capitol Area Garden Clubs Inc., who have a long established relationship with and an interest in the Arboretum and its collections, contacted to obtain their input prior to this decision being made? It should be noted that these stakeholders have provided significant financial and volunteer support to the USNA over many years. In the past, the Arboretum's Advisory Board, consisting of its stakeholders, would be consulted prior to taking action that would substantially alter its collections. The Arboretum needs to restore its Advisory Board so that future decisions will have input from its stakeholders.

If the criteria for evaluating potential collections for de-accessing were "its aesthetic value, appeal to visitors, and the current level of stakeholder involvement/support for the collection," why were the Glenn Dale Hillside azaleas on Mt. Hamilton selected? The Azalea Collection, especially the Glenn Dale Hillside azaleas on Mt. Hamilton, which are one of the prime floral attractions in our Nation's Capital, serve as the premier draw for the general public to visit the Arboretum in the spring, attracting thousands of visitors each year. The lovely mature azaleas, many of which are over 60 years old, occupy perhaps three to six acres of the 446-acre Arboretum. Those azaleas are not overgrown or in decline and there is no space issue. The USNA's Glenn Dale azaleas are among the oldest and most spectacular specimens in the country. The Glenn Dale Hillside azaleas have considerable historical value as well and are of particular importance to the USNA. They were developed by its first Director, Benjamin Y. Morrison, and represent the top 454 selections of the 75,000 seedlings he raised during the development of Glenn Dale Azaleas. Dr. Morrison's colossal breeding project has had no equal. It produced the first large-flowered azaleas created for the climactic conditions of the Mid-Atlantic region, particularly the Washington metropolitan area. They have proven hardy in the Mid-Atlantic region, and many of them are found in Mid-Atlantic gardens. It was the magic

of the spring azalea displays on the Glenn Dale Hillside of Mt. Hamilton that first prompted the Arboretum to open its doors to the public in 1954. They are indeed a national treasure that should be preserved.

Those of us who would like to see the decision to de-accession the Glenn Dale Hillside of the Azalea Collection on Mt. Hamilton, the National Boxwood Collection, and the Perennial Collection at the Arboretum reversed, or at least reconsidered, are encouraged to express their concerns to Dr. Colien Hefferan, Director of the USNA. Dr. Hefferan's contact information is:

Dr. Colien Hefferan
Director
U.S. National Arboretum
3501 New York Avenue NE
Washington, DC 20002
Phone: (202) 245-4539
Fax: (202) 245-4574
E-mail: Colein.Hefferan@ars.usda.gov

Additional Contacts are:
Thomas Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
Jamie L. Whitten Building
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250
E-mail: agsec@usda.gov

Information about congressional representatives may be found through these links:
www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm

writerep.house.gov/writerep/welcome.shtml

Please note that if you wish to write your Congressional representatives, they will receive your letter sooner if it is sent to their home district rather than their office in Washington, DC.

More information is available from Friends of the National Arboretum at www.fona.org or (202) 544-8733 and online at www.savetheazaleas.org. If you would like to view the USNA collections, please visit usna.usda.gov.

On a lighter note, there is an interesting video about the Arboretum's plans to de-accession a part of its Azalea Collection on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=QAMNSBPmmFg and a very interesting and informative video about the Arboretum's Azalea Collection at www.youtube.com/watch?v=HS7L2Uhmsvg.

If you have trouble with any of the links, simply copy them and past them into your browser.

DON'T FORGET—MARCH IS DRUID HILL MONTH!

By Aarti Shah

As many of you know, the Druid Hill Conservatory, adjacent to the Baltimore Zoo, is interested in increasing the number of gesneriads in their displays and has asked the National Capitol Area Chapter if we could help them increase their holdings by donating plants. The details haven't been finalized yet, but we are hoping that when these plants are displayed a label will note that they were donated by our chapter.

For those of us who have never visited it, the Druid Hill Conservatory (officially named the Howard Peters Rawlings Conservatory and Botanic Gardens of Baltimore) is a lovely Victorian-era conservatory located inside of Baltimore. Built in 1888, it has a Palm House, an Orchid Room, and three greenhouses mimicking desert, tropical, and Mediterranean habitats. In addition, it has a 1.5 acre garden containing 35 flowerbeds. The Conservatory has about 20,000 visitors each year.

Needless to say, this is a great opportunity to educate the public about gesneriads and maybe even to spread the word about our chapter! The March meeting has been designated Druid Hill Conservatory Day, meaning that each member attending the March meeting should try to bring in something to give to Druid Hill. In terms of what to bring, Druid Hill has not put limitations on the type of plants they will accept—both hybrids and species are acceptable, as are both Old World and New World plants. Plants with bright blooms or striking foliage might be particularly well suited to display. Druid Hill is most interested in full-grown and mature specimens that are ready for exhibits. However, starter plants that they can cultivate are acceptable too, so it's not too late to start a cutting or plant a rhizome for the March

meeting today!

Please don't forget to bring your plants to the March meeting! Some members have kindly agreed to drive the donations over to Druid Hill after the meeting.

(While you're at it, please consider starting a



Photo of Druid Hill Conservatory by Barry Woolf

cutting or rhizome of a New World species for the National Aquarium in Baltimore. More details will be forthcoming in the next Petal Tones, but the Aquarium has also expressed interest in donations of New World Species, and April is National Aquarium Month.)

Thank you!



ASK MR. GESNERIAD

How do I get more plants of a Petrocosmea with very tiny leaves?

There are a few plants out there with leaves so small that typical leaf propagation could be a problem. Inserting the tiny stem into the soil mix would likely lead more to damage and rot than it would to getting new plants. One method that I've used for these very small plants is to simply lay the leaf on the surface of a very finely milled and very wet sphagnum moss. Enclose the container with the leaf in a tightly closed bag. Within a very short period of time, roots should extend down into the sphagnum and new leaves will start to grow. Of course dealing with the newly formed minuscule plants presents another set of problems, but at least you'll have new plants. This method also works with

the micro-miniature *Sinningia*, such as *S. pusilla* and *S. concinna*.

I have a pot full of small seedlings. How long should I wait before I transplant them?

Once the seedlings are big enough to see, they're big enough to move. Veteran grower and hybridizer Dale Martens has experimented with this and found that even just moving them slightly in their original container encourages

root growth and subsequently more vigorous top growth. They don't need to be moved into their own pots right away, but moving them frequently helps them develop. In fibrous rooted plants, be careful when moving

them that you don't break off the root system, but you don't need to baby them either. They're actually pretty tough. On some you will see the tiny tubers and they are pretty tough also! You can move them, giving them space in the same container, especially if they are very close together, as sometimes it is challenging to spread out those tiny seeds when sowing.



Ramonda myconi seedlings

Do Sinningia tubers stop going dormant once they reach a certain size? I have a large S. bullata tuber that has gone dormant. I was told that this one doesn't go dormant.

Dormancy in the genus *Sinningia* is more dependent on the species than on the size of the tuber. *S. bullata* is a species that tends to stay in a constant growth cycle. New stems emerge from the tuber before the old ones die back.

And this species never seems to willingly die back; the stems just keep getting longer and taller and new flowers just keep coming. However, the tuber is there and can perform the same function that it does with other species. When conditions aren't right, the plant rests until it feels it's safe to grow. Sometimes the trigger is simply a matter of providing water and light. However, some plants may decide to rest for very long periods. I have had *Sinningia* tubers sleep

for over two years before coming back out of dormancy. Unlike *S. bullata*, some *Sinningia* always go dormant after flowering. This characteristic is a protective feature built into their genetics to help them survive periods of drought or even freezing temperatures in their native Brazil. Either way, treat all dormant tubers the same; very little water until they show some specks of green growing material and then treat them like normal growing plants. However, if you want to extend the dormant period, continue to withhold water. Some growers do this with all of their *Sinningia* and only allow them to grow during the hot summer months, outdoors in a pot in the full sun.

If you have a question for Mr. Gesneriad, e-mail askmrgesneriad@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org. No questions are too basic or difficult. Ask away. Your name won't be revealed, so you needn't worry about that.

BLOOMIN' NOW

Johanna's *Sinningia aggregata* was grown from a raffle table cutting. It is potted in 4 parts Pro-mix and 1 part perlite on a light stand in her basement.



Johanna's *Chirita* 'Destiny' hangs from a bar near the top of her plant room and gets bright light and some morning sun.



Sinningia aggregata

Blooming in Harold's yard is *Camellia susanqua* 'Yuletide.' It's not a gesneriad, but he says "I thought it might make our members feel better knowing that despite cold weather there are plants that are blooming and adding some life and color to the landscape. It's a very versatile shrub that is easy to care for. Blooms with red flowers and bright yellow stamens that can last for 2 or more months. The

normal bloom time for 'Yuletide' is usually around October to December, however, I planted it last October so I think it's getting acclimatized to the yard. The colder than normal December may also have had something to do with the delayed blooming. It makes a good hedge and container plant. This plant can be treated as a specimen in your yard or in a container on your patio. Like all sasanqua camellias, it will thrive in full sun as well as shade. With its simple yet elegant red flowers and golden centers, this sasanqua variety is among the most popular camellias. When not in flower, its upright habit helps it create a fine evergreen background for a variety of conditions. 'Yuletide' also makes good bird cover on cold blustery days and nights. You can plant 'Yuletide' around the house to cover foundations and to fill window-free walls, or use it along fence lines and to add vivid winter color to outdoor living spaces, porches and patios. It will grow 6' to 7' tall and wide at maturity and can be used as an informal hedge, partition or privacy screen. As the name



Kyoko's *Chirita* 'Dreamtime' is a John Boggan hybrid of *C. sp.* 'New York' and *C. flavimaculata*. It puts out flower spikes of about 2 ft tall bearing clusters of flowers. Although all of the flowers do not open simultaneously, there may be some 20 open at a time per spike. One of the Petal Tones editors was lucky enough to visit this huge plant and received a cutting to root for himself!



Chirita 'Dreamtime' flowers and form (above left)

Barb's *Nautilocalyx* 'Gothenburg' is grown in a large terrarium and blooms all the time. Although she really enjoys the plant, "it is all over the place. I could use some advice on how to control it and make it into a show plant."



Nautilocalyx 'Gothenburg'



Camellia sasanqua 'Yuletide'

suggests, its branches and flowers can be used in holiday decorations in containers or as cut flowers throughout the house.

Sometimes referred to as Christmas Camellias, the sasanqua varieties of Camellia are native to the evergreen, coastal forests of southern Japan. It was introduced by Dutch traders into Europe in 1869. 'Yuletide' is a chance seedling of Kanjiro and originated at Nuccio's Nurseries in Altadena, CA. The Japanese use the leaves of sasanqua to make tea, and the seeds are pressed into tea seed oil for use as a lubricant and in cooking and cosmetics."



Petrocosmea floribunda

Barb's *Petrocosmea floribunda* is growing on a shelf where the light has been malfunctioning for some time, but the plant still managed to bloom! It grows with the aid of a wicking tub to help it survive Barb's "feast/famine" routine.



Barb's *Streptocarpus 'Sylvia'*

**NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA CHAPTER
SHOW & PLANT SALE, SEPTEMBER 17-18**

We need to find volunteers for all of the following positions during our February meeting. If you would like to volunteer for any of the positions now or have questions about any of the positions that can't wait until the February meeting, please get in touch with Jim Roberts (jim-roberts@hughes.net). Most of the Chair positions will have a small team of volunteers working with them, but it will be the Chair's responsibility to round up that team and make sure the entire job gets done.

- Show Chair....Requires a Gesneriad Society Judge (or Former Judge)
- Show Schedule....Requires a Gesneriad Society Judge (or Former Judge)
- Judge's Chair.Requires a Gesneriad Society Judge (or Former Judge)
- Awards ChairCan be anyone
- Staging Chair.....Can be anyone
- Placement Chair.....Can be anyone
- Publicity Chair.....Can be anyone
- Speaker's Chair.....Can be anyone
- Artistic Reservations Chair.....Can be anyone
- Hospitality Chair.....Can be anyone
- Plant Sales Chair.....Can be anyone

**UPCOMING MID-ATLANTIC GESNERIAD
EVENTS**

AVSA National Convention (May 15-22)

Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Violets
Crowne Plaza Hotel Philadelphia/Cherry Hill, Cherry Hill, NJ.
2349 West Marlton Pike
Cherry Hill, New Jersey 08002
1-877-898-1090

Website: avsa.org/NationalConvention.html

There is a special one-day registration for \$35.00 and other options (must be AVSA member to register). Early Bird discount by March 31 and cancellation with refund by April 14.

Plant Sales is open on:

- May 19 Thursday, **1:00 pm to 5:00 pm** to Convention Registrants Only
- May 20 Friday, **9:00 am to 5:00 pm** to Public
- May 21 Saturday, **9:00 am to 4:00 pm** to Public

Show room is open on:

- May 19 Thursday, **9:30 pm to 11:30 pm** to Convention Registrants Only
- May 20 Friday, **9:00 am to 5:00 pm** to Public
- May 21 Saturday, **9:00 am to 4:00 pm** to Public

(There is a \$5.00 admission charge to Show for non-members and members who are not registered for the convention. The admission charge for non-members may be applied to membership fees if they decide to join AVSA)

Presentations on Thursday, Friday, Saturday include: "Basic Skills for African Violet Growers" by Linda Abplanalp, "The Wonderful World of *Petrocosmeas*" by Tim Tuttle, "Handcrafting African Violet Miniatures" by Peggy Mooney, "Identifying and Preventing Viral Threats to African Violets" by Panel including Paul Sorano, "African Violets in Print: Taking the Mystery Out of Writing and Publication" by Mary Schaeffer, "Eden in Miniature: Tips and Techniques for Dish Gardens and terrarium Designers" by Olive Ma Robinson, "Modern and Abstract African Violet Design Techniques" by BJ Ohme, "Advanced Judging Skills - Making Your Show Educational: A Classroom in the Showroom" by Panel, Panel Chair, John Carter, "Building and Maintaining Affiliate Club Membership" by Panel, and "Plants I Have Loved" by Dr. Bill Price.

Gesneriad Society Convention (July 5-9)

Philadelphia LOVES Gesneriads
Loews Philadelphia Hotel (in fabulous downtown Philly!)
1200 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107
215-627-1200
1-888-575-6397 (toll free reserve)

Website: gesneriadsociety.org/Conv2011

Early registrations must be made online by midnight or postmarked by April 15, 2011, to take advantage of the 10% discount on meals, activities, trips and purchases. Full refund if cancellation before June 20. Between June 20 and July 5, refund is partial if cancellation.

Plant Sales is open on:

July 7 Thursday, **9:00 pm to 9:30 pm** to Early Registrants Only

July 7 Thursday, **9:30 pm to 11:30 pm** to Convention registrants

July 8 Friday, **9:00 am to 5:00 pm** to Public

July 9 Saturday, **9:00 am to 12:00 pm** to Public

July 9 Saturday, **2:00 pm to 3:00 pm** to Public

Show room is open on:

July 8 Friday, **2:00 pm to 5:00 pm** to Public

July 8 Friday **9:15 pm to 10:30 pm** to Public

July 9 Saturday, **9:00 am to 3:00 pm** to Public

Presentations on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday include: Gesneriad Hybridizers Association Meeting (open to all) Program: "Gesneriad Hybrids from the University of Arkansas" by Jon Lindstrom (University of Arkansas), Conservation Update Meeting (Pre-registration and Gesneriad Society membership required), "The Phylogenetics of the Genus *Petrocosmea*" by Michael Kotarski, "Ask the Experts: A Grower's Forum" moderated by Paul Kroll, "*Gloxinia* and *Seemannia* (and Who Knows What Else)" by John Boggan, and "Genetic Diversity in *Sinningia speciosa*: History and Origins of the Florist Gloxinia" by David Zaitlin.

MAAVS (Nov 11-12)

Violets In Birdland
Crowne Plaza Hotel
Baltimore North-Hunt Valley
2004 Greenspring Drive
Timonium, MD 21093
410-252-7373
1-877-227-6963

Website: maavs.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=82&Itemid=85

National Capital Area Chapter (NCAC)

A Chapter of the Gesneriad Society, Inc.

"The purpose of the chapter shall be to afford a convenient and beneficial association of persons interested in gesneriads; to stimulate a widespread interest in the identification, correct nomenclature, culture, and propagation of gesneriads; and to encourage the origination and introduction of new cultivars."

(NCAC bylaws, revised April 1981.)

NCAC meets several times a year on the second Saturday of the month in the Administration Building of the U.S. National Arboretum. For details, please refer to the latest issue of *Petal Tones*, the website, or contact one of the people below. All are welcome and new attendees are invited to a free item from the raffle table.

The Gesneriad Society website:
www.gesneriadsociety.org

NCAC website:

www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

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Committees:

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Membership: Kyoko Imai

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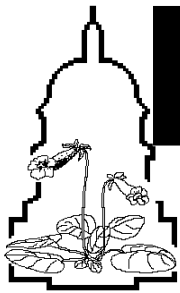
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Petal Tones

The newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of
The Gesneriad Society

Volume 42 Number 3

March 2011



**February 2011 Show & Tell:
Johanna's beautiful *Episcia***

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Well, here I am an hour away from landing in Hong Kong and can't see the ground below me with all the clouds. I can't wait for this trip to end and my plant adventures to begin. As luck would have it, my copy of the book "[Gesneriaceae of South China](#)" arrived on Wednesday, a bit too late for me to really get a taste of what I might end up seeing here. But I did take a good half hour turning the pages and looking in amazement at the assortment of plant material we've never seen (or even heard of) in the U.S. Fifteen and a half hours sitting in a small airplane seat is way too much for anyone to have to endure. Give me back my legs!!

Luke Leong will be waiting for me at the gate when I clear customs. Luke grows *Saintpaulia* and hybridizes *Kohleria*. He describes his growing area as very limited, but he still manages to do quite nicely. I'll bring back photos and WILL find a way to get his hybrids back home with me.

On Thursday I catch a plane right after our meeting ends and head to Kunming, which is the capital city of Yunnan Province and sits in close proximity to the famous stone forests. The weather is near perfect here for Gesneriads and people - never down to freezing with a summer maximum in the mid 80's; kind of like Seattle without the rain. Again, there will be plenty of photos taken of plants in their natural habitat. Yang, my contact there, has hired a guide to bring us to the Gesneriads. And yes, Joyce, I've been told that we'll be seeing lots of *Begonias* growing along with the *Petrocosmea* and *Chirita*. Our April meeting will be a photography workshop, which Ki will be telling us more about. For those of you who haven't been to a Gesneriad show, there are five classes devoted to 'Gesneriad Photography'. These classes are: color photo of an entire Gesneriad plant, color photo of part of a Gesneriad, monochrome photo, digital photo, and a photo of a

NCAC meetings held at the National Arboretum trailer.

Members start arriving around 10:30am to set up refreshments and coffee. Show and Tell plants welcome! Bring cuttings, plants, pots, & items to share for raffle. Meeting starts 11am.

March 12, 2011 – Growing *Saintpaulia* for show.

The only Gesneriad to have it's own society and its own specific rules for growing and showing. Learn from an expert (to be determined) the secrets to growing large perfect standard violets as well as miniatures and trailing types. Rules for judging violets in a Gesneriad show defer to the general rules as determined by AVSA except that the plants are judged competitively and not on their own merit (only one Blue Ribbon per Class). Please bring plant for Druid Hill.

April 9, 2011 – Photographing Your Plants for Gesneriad

Shows by Kyoko: read more information in this issue following the President's message

Meeting dates for 2011 :

April 9th, May 14th, June 11th picnic, July 5 - July 9 in Philadelphia, PA - The Gesneriad Society's convention, hosted by the Liberty Bell Chapter
September 17: NCAC show & sale at Behnke's
October 15 (note this is the THIRD Saturday of the month)
December 10: holiday party

plant growing in its natural environment. Hopefully I'll come home with lots of those!

Remember to bring something for Druid Hill this month. Getting pretty plants in public places does more for getting new membership than any other thing the Chapter can do. Druid Hill has asked and we shall deliver. The photos I took at the Atlanta Botanical Gardens demonstrate how effective these plants can be in "natural plantings." I don't expect Druid Hill to match Atlanta, but there's no reason why they can't have a really nice display.

Wish me luck in my adventures, and pray with me that the food doesn't destroy my digestive system and get in the way of good times. I return to the US on the 8th and will see you all on the 12th.

Good Growing! Jim



April Meeting Plan: Photographing Gesneriads

-Kyoko

Our April meeting will be about photographing gesneriads. There will be two themes to our session:

- improving our photography
- shooting for submission to our shows.

Hope to have plenty of time for Q&A and actual shooting. (The latter is not a sure bet, however.)

A good chunk of the meeting will be interactive, so there is homework! Two assignments:

(1) Shoot some plants between now and April 9. Especially if you haven't used your camera in a while, pick it up again and shoot something every week. If you don't have Gesneriads in bloom, shoot some out-of-bloom Gesneriads or some other plants.

Jot down what went well, what was challenging, questions about technique, etc.

(2) Bring some photos to the meeting. Look through your plant photos and select a few to discuss or show. They don't have to be your best work - in fact, it might be even better to bring the photographs that could use some help so we can talk about how they might be improved. If you can, print them at a size appropriate for entering into a Show - larger than 4" x 6" will be easier for us to see, but 8 x 10" is as large as you need to go. You can email them to me if you prefer - we will try to get them up on the projector - but I encourage you to print because viewing photographs in print vs. on screen (and especially via projector) is very different. Also, if

you're shy, you can sneak your photo in anonymously - just attach your comments/questions.

I have a head start on the homework: a few prints are being made and I am shooting more. Most of my *Sinningia* are only just sending out new growth and all of my plants were disbudded recently, so mostly I've been shooting tubers, seeds and other plants.

What have I learned so far about my shooting habits? That I'm a sloppy and lazy photographer. I tend to go with the motto: "The best photograph is the one I took, not the one I would have taken if only I had x."

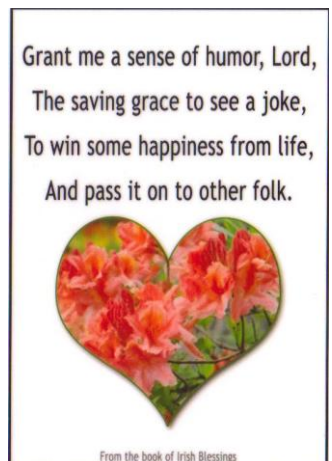
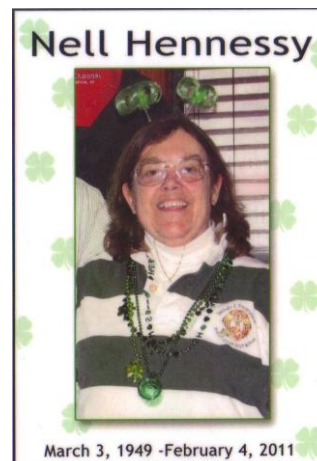
But when it comes to shooting houseplants, what is this "x" that would have given me a better photograph? It's usually "patience" - if only I'd spent a bit more time, I could have done any number of things better. Photography improvement is an *incremental* business - here's a short list of things that can affect the resulting photo - maybe you can think about them while you do your homework ☺

- the subject (the plant, including grooming)
- scene setup - background, "props"
- composition and framing
- lighting
- shutter-pushing technique
- tripod or equivalent
- camera settings
- appropriate lens (especially if shooting very small things)
- post-processing of digital files
- printing/display

We will have a better shot at making the April meeting useful to you if you come with examples and questions: I hope you will participate. If you have any questions in the meantime, feel free to send me an email and I'll do my best to answer them.

-Kyoko

IN MEMORY:



Update: US National Arboretum
Harold Belcher

This article is a follow-up to the article entitled “US National Arboretum Decision to De-accession Selected Collections” that was published in the February issue of *Petal Tones*.



Photo of the National Boxwood Collection courtesy of the USNA web site

When the U.S. National Arboretum (USNA) announced its intention to de-accession the Glenn Dale Hillside of its Azalea Collection on Mt. Hamilton and its National Boxwood Collection and its Perennial Collection both of which are on the Bladensburg road side of the Arboretum there was a tremendous outpouring of support to retain those collections. The plant societies that had been involved in the support and maintenance of those collections over the years, other plant societies and local garden clubs that have an interest in, and an established relationship with, the USNA and the Friends of the National Arboretum (FONA) reached out to their members, elected representatives, senior management at the Department of Agriculture and the Agricultural Research Service, and members of the business and local community to enlist their support for maintaining the affected collections and to secure funding for those collections into the future.

As a direct result of the efforts of those dedicated groups and individuals, FONA has been able to secure a private donation which will be used exclusively to fund the maintenance of those collections and the USNA has suspended its plans to de-accession the three collections.

On February 14, 2011, FONA announced that it had received a \$1 million donation that it will use to establish an endowment to help preserve the Azalea and Boxwood collections at the USNA. The \$1 million donation, the largest single donation in

FONA’s history, was made anonymously by friends in honor of prominent attorney Brendan Sullivan Jr., and Lila Sullivan, longtime residents of the Washington area. “This generous donation, offered in the hour of the Arboretum’s greatest need, reflects not only the donor’s passion for this national treasure, but also confidence that the Arboretum leadership will make sound decisions relating to the collections in the future” said Kathy Horan, Executive Director of FONA. In that announcement, FONA’s Board of Directors Chairman, Jeanne Connelly, added “FONA recognizes that these are difficult economic times and all government agencies, including the Department of Agriculture, will face significant budget cuts in the coming years. That is why it is important for private partners to step in to protect one of the nation’s most valuable treasures and one of Washington, D.C.’s most important green spaces.”

Later the same day, in a prepared statement, the USNA Director, Dr Colien Hefferan, wrote “The U.S. National Arboretum is suspending actions to remove the Glenn Dale Azaleas from our extensive collection of Azaleas, as well as the National Boxwood and Perennial Collections subject to further discussions with stakeholders about the process and criteria for decisions about our collections. Although the resource challenges facing the Arboretum which initially led to these decisions are still very real and in need of a solution, we want to reassess our current resource use and opportunities to expand private support before we reduce or eliminate collections the public so values.”



Photo of the USNA Perennial Collection Courtesy of the USNA web site

Dr. Hefferan also wrote “We have heard and appreciate the public outpouring of comments about de-accessioning the Glenn Dale Azaleas and the Boxwood and perennial collections. Managing resources through difficult times is challenging, but

with the advice and guidance of our many stakeholders and colleagues we hope to develop an effective and well-understood policy for implementing decisions about our collections, as well as innovative approaches to developing new resources to sustain and support the Arboretum.”

The Arboretum has established a new comments box on their web site at <http://usna.usda.gov/> to solicit guidance from the public and stakeholders about the process and criteria that the USNA uses regarding decisions about their collections, and for their ideas for resource development to maintain the collections and programs at the Arboretum. The comments box is under the “Arboretum Information” tab. Dr. Hefferan wrote “Please share your ideas and recommendations regarding these issues by responding to the questions we have posted in our new comment box on this web site. We are eager to add your ideas to our decision-making processes. Over the next month, we also will be seeking more structured guidance from both horticultural and arboretum professionals, and from stakeholder groups. I hope that both the process of gathering this guidance and the ideas gleaned, help us to formulate and implement a collections policy at the USNA which is both enduring and well understood by the public.” In view of recent events, the stakeholder’s meeting should be quite lively.

Jeanne Connelly applauded the Arboretum’s announcement saying “We are delighted that Dr. Hefferan has listened to the Arboretum’s constituents and are heartened by the willingness of the Arboretum’s new leadership to engage the public in an open discussion about decisions relating to its collections.”

This spring, FONA will launch a major fundraising campaign to raise an additional \$1 million needed to maintain these treasured collections into the future. Hopefully, other private partners, such as plant societies and their members, stakeholders, local garden clubs and individuals, will step forward to help FONA to reach its goal. Over the years, FONA has provided substantial funding and support to the Arboretum for the maintenance of its collections. Plant societies, their members, other stakeholders as well as individuals have volunteered to work in the Arboretum’s collections thereby reducing some of the need for Federal funding.



Photo of the Glenn Dale Hillside on Mt. Hamilton Courtesy of the USNA web site

Due to deteriorating economic conditions the likelihood of additional Federal funding for the Arboretum and its collections is decreasing. Please consider making a donation to FONA, or volunteering to work in one of its collections or in an administrative capacity. If you choose to make a monetary donation to FONA, consider earmarking it for the endowment for the preservation of the Arboretum’s Glenn Dale Azalea Collection on Mt. Hamilton and its National Boxwood Collection and its Perennial Collection. Further information is available from FONA at www.fona.org or (202) 544-8733, and www.savetheazaleas.org . If you would like to view the USNA Collections, please visit <http://usna.usda.gov/> .

Treasurer’s Report:

I wanted to let you know that the raffle at the February meeting brought in \$129, which is the largest amount so far from a raffle. Also, so far I have received \$105 in memory of Nell to be sent to the student convention travel fund of The Gesneriad Society plus an amount from the Chapter. I will continue to receive funds in memory of Nell through the April meeting. Several members have renewed, as well as new members have joined. However, there are still about 10 who have not yet renewed for 2011.

Larry Skog, NCAC Treasurer

BLOOMIN' NOW



Streptocarpus 'Alissa'



Sinningia 'Amizade'

Barb Stewart grows her *Sinningias* in a large aquarium under 3 tubes. Her *Streptocarpus* and *Chirita* are grown on her light stands. Barb grows most of her *Streptocarpus* and *Chiritas* in clay pots on trays with matting, which they seem to like. It helps them cope with an irregular watering routine.



Chirita linearifolia

Barry Woolf has some beautiful *Streptocarpus* & a *Sinningia* blooming.



Streptocarpus: 'Neil's Strawberry' & 'Pink Surprise'



Sinningia cardinalis

Kitty Hedgepeth's *Saintpaulia* 'Yukako' a Chimera



Jim Roberts found some really nice commercially grown *Chirita* 'Aiko' at a local greenhouse



Harold Belcher's outdoor Jasmine is blooming now!



Atlanta Botanical Gardens Gesneriads: Jim Roberts



Columnea flexiflora



Columnea linearis



Corytoplectus cutucuensis



Aeschynanthus species *Drymonia*



Paradrymonia autumnoflora



Kohleria or *Pearcea*



Pearcea hypocyrtiflora



Columnea species



Columnea species



Columnea angustifolia

DESPERATELY SEEKING

Columnnea schiediana.....Ki
Streptocarpus 'Harlequin Blue' Brian Connor
Streptocarpus 'Rose Halo' Brian Connor
Streptocarpus 'Orange Sherbet' Brian Connor
Streptocarpus 'Heartlands Tanzanite' ... Brian Connor
Streptocarpus 'Designer Gene' Brian Connor
Kohleria 'Gnista' Brian Connor
Kohleria 'Solkatt' Brian Connor
Kohleria 'Tobbe' Brian Connor
Kohleria 'Maja Graddnos' Brian Connor
Kohleria 'Blizzard's Bing Cherries' Brian Connor
Saintpaulia species, Any Bev N
Begonia smithiantha Donna Beverin
Achimenesantha 'Dutch Treat' Donna Beverin

Please send a list of a plant you would love to grow via email. It will be posted here in the newsletter. A generous member will share! Petal Tones has a wide distribution and chances are good that someone will be able to get you what you want.



Mr. Gesneriad is welcoming your questions about growing Gesneriads!

National Capital Area Chapter (NCAC) A Chapter of the Gesneriad Society, Inc.

"The purpose of the chapter shall be to afford a convenient and beneficial association of persons interested in Gesneriads; to stimulate a widespread interest in the identification, correct nomenclature, culture, and propagation of Gesneriads; and to encourage the origination and introduction of new cultivars."

(NCAC bylaws, revised April 1981.)

NCAC meets several times a year on the second Saturday of the month in the Administration Building of the U.S. National Arboretum. For details, please refer to the latest issue of *Petal Tones*, the website, or contact one of the people below. All are welcome and new attendees are invited to a free item from the raffle table.

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NCAC website: www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

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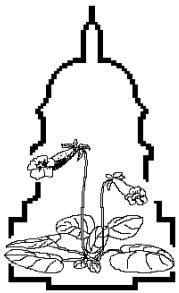
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Petal Tones

The newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of
The Gesneriad Society

Volume 42 Number 4

April 2011

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Sinningia 'Prudence Risley'

Convention is coming. Have you registered yet? Remember, the

earlier you register, the closer to the head of the line you'll be when Plant Sales open up. Two of the plants that should be in great abundance in the sales room are *Sinningia* 'Prudence Risley' and *Sinningia* 'Minnesota Nice.' If you remember, Gary Hunter, Plant Sales Chair for the Convention, decided that these two were so nice that he contracted with Jon Linstrom at the University of Arkansas to propagate loads of them using tissue culture techniques. National Capital Area Chapter bought into this program and purchased a share last year. Pictures of both are included. Jon gave me a small starter of each from his plants and they've been sitting on a light stand by the back door. They don't receive much light; the trees



Sinningia 'Minnesota Nice'

Meeting Schedule:

Meetings will be located in the trailer at the National Arboretum unless noted.

April 9, 2011 – Photographing Your Gesneriads with Barry Woolf, Jim Roberts, and Kyoko Imai. Also, bring gesneriads to donate to the National Aquarium. (More info in this issue.)

May 14, 2011 – A Trip to China. Jim Roberts will share about his trip to China and the gesneriads he met along the way.

June 11, 2011 – Picnic. Location to be determined.

July 5-9, 2011 – Gesneriad Society Convention in Philadelphia, PA, hosted by the Liberty Bell Chapter. For more details and to register, click on gesneriadsociety.org/Conv2011.

surrounding the house pretty much take care of that. But even so, both are flowering now, and I can see why Gary liked them both so much.

S. 'Prudence Risley' obviously wants more light. The stems are stretching a bit. But even so, it has six open flowers on it right now. The oldest of them was open when I returned from China on March 8, so it's



been there for over two weeks. *S.* 'Minnesota Nice' is a different plant entirely. It has *Sinningia guttata* in its background, and this is seen in both the leaves and the

heavily spotted flowers. It's growing in the same window as *S.* 'Prudence Risley' but is not stretching at all. It might have more flowers if it had more light, but the size of the plant and the beauty of the flowers

would make this a good choice for anyone growing on a window sill.

Not counting a truly spectacular assortment of plants in the Sales room, the Show itself in Philadelphia should also be huge. It's going to rival the DC Convention in Silver Springs back in 2009, and I want all of us to work on making the show even bigger than the record-setting Convention that we hosted. We can do this by bringing plants for the show, bringing plants for the sales room, and of course, maxing out our credit cards in the sales room.

To that end, I am glad to announce that the Chapter will be bringing back a program that we stopped a couple of years ago. "Little Show" is just that. It's a judged show that will be held at EVERY meeting. We stopped when I was the only judge in the Chapter. However, we now have at least three active judges in the Chapter and two others who have judge's training but have let their judging status lapse. I've heard that there are a number of new members who are interested in learning more about how plants are judged in a show and want to know how to grow their plants so that they can enter in either the Convention Show or our Chapter Show in September.

Last month we learned how to grow *Saintpaulia* for show. This month we're going to learn how to take show-worthy photographs. And every month we're going to learn how to shape up our collection for our own enjoyment (a happy, healthy plant makes you feel better too) and for the enjoyment of the public when they see that plant in a show. Good Growing!

—Jim Roberts, President

BRAZIL SEED CLUB

If you are interested in growing new and exciting species out of Brazil, please get in touch with Brian Connor. He'll make sure that you get a copy of the list from Brazil Plants. www.brazilplants.com

Here are the rules: You have to be a paid member of the National Capital Area Chapter of the Gesneriad Society. Each request should be limited to 3-4 seed selections so that everyone has an opportunity. That's it. Brian has a list of the current available seed which he'll forward to you upon request. Brian is able to order 24 packets of seed three times a year. Once he gets the seed from Mauro Peixoto, he'll either bring it to a meeting or mail it to you. If two people order the

same seed, he'll split the packet in half. If more than two order he'll order two packets.

Mauro uses the funds we pay him to get supplies for his greenhouse and pay for repairs and help. We help in his conservation efforts by allowing him to collect and maintain many rare and new gesneriads, and also get those same rare plants into cultivation where they are less likely to be lost forever.

DESPERATELY SEEKING

<i>Columnnea schiediana</i>	Kyoko
<i>Streptocarpus</i> 'Harlequin Blue'.....	Brian Connor
<i>Streptocarpus</i> 'Rose Halo'.....	Brian Connor
<i>Streptocarpus</i> 'Orange Sherbet'.....	Brian Connor
<i>Streptocarpus</i> 'Heartlands Tanzanite'.....	Brian Connor
<i>Streptocarpus</i> 'Designer Gene'.....	Brian Connor
<i>Kohleria</i> 'Gnista'.....	Brian Connor
<i>Kohleria</i> 'Solkatt'.....	Brian Connor
<i>Kohleria</i> 'Tobbe'.....	Brian Connor
<i>Kohleria</i> 'Maja Graddnos'.....	Brian Connor
<i>Kohleria</i> 'Blizzard's Bing Cherries'.....	Brian Connor
<i>Saintpaulia</i> , any.....	Bev N
<i>Begonia smithiantha</i>	Donna Beverin
<i>xAchimenantha</i> 'Dutch Treat'.....	Donna Beverin
<i>Saintpaulia</i> 'Blueberry Butterfly'.....	Jim
<i>Saintpaulia</i> 'Allegro Watermelon Ruffles'.....	Jim
<i>Saintpaulia</i> 'Morgan's Barossa'.....	Jim
<i>Columnnea gallicauda</i>	Lee Linett
<i>Rhynchoglossum notonianum</i>	Lee Linett
<i>Sinningia hirsuta</i>	Lee Linett
<i>Sinningia</i> 'Tinkerbells'.....	Lee Linett
<i>Smithiantha</i> 'Santa Clara'.....	Lee Linett
<i>Vanhoutea lanata</i>	Lee Linett
<i>Saintpaulia</i> 'Pygmy'.....	Lee Linett

If you are looking for a plant and can't find it, send an e-mail to petaltones@gmail.com and we'll list it! If you receive a plant, please let us know to remove it.

Petal Tones has a wide distribution, and chances are good that someone will be able to get you what you want.

PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

At the April meeting, we're going to learn the difference between a snapshot and a photograph. Snapshots are something that you take spur of the

moment. They can be a picture of your family at the beach, a pretty flower on one of your garden or indoor plants, or any other “unstaged” image on film or in digital format. A photograph is a staged picture. A family in their good clothes staged in front of a landscape background with lighting coming from the side and above to highlight features and reduce unpleasant shadows. A photograph of a plant is staged so that everything is in sharp focus, there are no unpleasant background distractions, and everything is positioned so that the eye looks at the most striking feature in the picture (could be the flower or plant shape or even some minor detail on one of the leaves) without someone else having to point it out.

A snapshot takes 5 seconds to shoot (assuming you know where your camera is when the urge strikes). A photograph can take an hour or more until the results you see on the camera satisfy you.

This month Kyoko Imai, Barry Woolf, and Jim Roberts will show some of their techniques and equipment for taking good plant photographs. You can take good photographs with a minimum amount of extra equipment or expense. The biggest musts are a tripod and some source of light other than the flash on top of the camera. We will also go over the judging standards used in a Gesneriad Show. To do the judging part of the workshop, it would be helpful if members could bring in a photograph using the following general rules and then the specific rules for the different classes of photographs.

There will be some discussion and hands-on time, so bring your camera and plant you want to shoot.

General Guidelines:

The photograph must be no larger than 8” x 10”, and the final presentation must be no more than 12” x 14” (if matted and framed). An easel must be provided to hold the photograph up for viewing.

Four Classes:

- 1) A color photograph of an entire plant
- 2) A color photograph of a part of a plant
- 3) A monochrome photograph of a whole plant or any part of a plant
- 4) A plant photographed in nature

I hope we see some entries. When judging the photos we will not use your name, so please bring in something!

LITTLE SHOW PROGRAM

Each month we will hold a “Little Show” at the meeting. Show plants must be at the meeting room and on the table by 10:45. This will give the judges some time to look at them before the program starts at 11:00. Plants will be judged during the time of the raffle, and the results will be announced before the business meeting starts. Jim Roberts is a Master Judge in the Gesneriad Society and will call upon other judges and former judges to help judge the plants. Please, no more than one entry per person! If you have more than one super-looking plant, use the other one for Show & Tell.

Plants in flower will be judged the same way they would be judged in our Chapter Show or at Convention, using the same score sheets and criteria. If there are several plants that would be entered in the same class in a Show, then these plants will be judged against each other. In a Gesneriad Show, there can only be one blue ribbon in a class; the judging is competitive. So if there are two miniature *Sinningia* in the Little Show, they will be judged against each other, and one can get the blue. If we have a miniature *Sinningia* and a large *Sinningia*, both will be eligible for blue ribbons since they would not be in competition with each other in a large show.

The judges at the meeting will be responsible for placing your plant in the correct class and using the correct score sheets. If you really want to challenge the judges, bring in terrariums, dish gardens, or even cut flower arrangements. The way these classes are judged will teach everyone else what to do and what not to do when entering a design class at the show.

SPEAKING OF PESTS...

By Kyoko Imai

Every few months, I think a discussion of pests is in order—especially because sometimes this subject is a hush-hush affair. What better season to remind ourselves to set aside some time in our busy gardening schedule to check for pests?

Why now? Well, it's spring—when we are gardening outside, visiting greenhouses and nurseries, and purchasing new plants. All of these activities increase the risk of introducing unwanted pests, which can hitchhike not just on plants but on clothing, hair, pets, wind, etc. And it's not just plants that grow in the spring—so do pest populations.

Let's do a quick run down of some life cycles—speaking generally, although the best information is specific to the particular species:

Aphids: In warm weather, many species of aphids can develop from newborn nymph to reproducing adult in 7 to 8 days. An adult female aphid can



Aphids come in many colors; some are more easily spotted than others.

produce up to 80 live offspring per week, without mating—and some 200 or more offspring during her lifespan of some 30 days. Some species will mate and produce eggs in the

fall/winter, which will survive through a cold winter. Aphids in their winged stage can "fly" on the wind for long distances.

Mealybugs: Female mealybugs, depending on the species, will either lay eggs inside cottony egg masses or will give birth to live crawlers beneath their bodies. The eggs hatch after about 10 days. After hatching, the 'crawlers' move away in search for

suitable feeding sites in sheltered areas. The juveniles progress through five molts before reaching adulthood. In the case of the males, the last juvenile pupates into



Mealybugs—complete with ant contingent, which "farm" mealybugs for their "honeydew" (excrement)—spotted in a clean and well-maintained public conservatory.

a winged adult. Adult males do not feed—their sole purpose is to mate and produce offspring. Adult females usually will live about 30 days. The rate of population increase of mealybugs is not as dramatic as aphids and mites.

Mites: Unlike mealybugs and aphids, mites are arachnids. The significance of this from a pest control

perspective is that insecticides generally will not work on mites. There are many species of mites (not all are plant pests—some such as *Phytoseiulus persimilis* are predators of pests), and despite all the talk about mites preferring low humidity, one need only experience a mite outbreak on, say, morning glories during a hot and humid summer to realize that high humidity will not solve a mite problem. Also, mites are so small that they escape notice until the population is significant enough to cause damage. As an example of a life cycle: female broad mites lay 30 to 76 eggs on the leaf surface over an 8- to 13-day period and hatch in 2 or 3 days. Males live 5 to 9 days; females live



8 to 13 days. Probable mite damage on leaves of *Titanotrichum oldhamii* (left) and *Kohleria*.

A generation can be completed in some 10 days. Mites can catch wind currents and disperse to other plants. They can overwinter in several stages of development, such as adult females under rough bark scales or ground litter, or as eggs deposited near dormant buds.

I'm skipping thrips because Brian Connor did a nice article in the October 2009 issue of *Petal Tones*, and also skipping fungus gnats because they are fairly easy to deal with.

What are some lessons to take away from the above? How about a visual: Imagine a flower bud with one aphid. Fast-forward one week and now imagine 80 aphids on that bud. Or, imagine how many mites there might be before the damage is noticed. Also note how they are dispersed easily, and how they survive through adverse seasons. The bottom line is that pests can appear in pretty much any

growing environment, so the important thing is to monitor and control them.

We are lucky that there is a wealth of information online on gardening sites, extension program websites, and other sources, making it much easier for us to identify the problem and read up on options for treatment. If you have a greenhouse, you probably have a pest control procedure in place. Home growers

should pay careful attention to the labeling on pest control products and research the active ingredients. Don't assume that a product labeled for household use is safe for use on the dining table plant or on your office desk where you sit for hours a day. And even when using human-friendly products, remember that breathing in a spray of a liquid is probably not good for your lungs, even if the liquid is safe to drink. Be safe—wear protective masks, gloves and clothing. Also, think about the life cycle of the pest and repeat treatments regularly as needed.

As a final note, I'll just emphasize that the first line of defense is to isolate new plant material. It's definitely easier than having to treat an entire collection later!

GROWING SAINTPAULIA FOR SHOW

By Brian Connor

I hope everyone enjoyed Diane's program last month on growing African Violets for show.



Diane discussing *Saintpaulia* for show at the February meeting.

I rediscovered *Saintpaulia* at the Mid Atlantic African Violet Society (MAAVS) 2004 flower show in Annapolis. Seeing the beautiful plants surrounding me, I instantly decided to grow *Saintpaulia* and other gesneriads for show. I was going to take the Gesneriad Society and African Violet Society of America (AVSA) by storm! HA!

While it is a fairly simple, straightforward process to grow an African Violet for show, it's not always easy. I am probably my own worst enemy in the quest to grow show plants. If you are just starting out, try to grow no more than 5 plants for show. Observe the show plants closely, because suckers (extra crowns) jump out of nowhere!

African Violets have been hybridized extensively

in the last 80 years, so there is a large assortment of leaf and flower types to choose. There are chimeras and doubles and wasp flowers.

Foliage can be described as Boy leaves, Girl leaves, and Bustle Back.

They can be variegated on the leaf edges, crown, or mosaic

variegated. Refer

to the following website to get a true idea of *Saintpaulia* diversity (from Lake Area Violet Growers website): www.rosebudm.com/lavg/lavg-blossom_leaf_identification.htm



Girl foliage has a pale dent in the middle.

For convenience, I will define 4 basic categories of *Saintpaulia*: **Standards** (single rosettes, must be greater than 8", usually greater than 12"), **Semi-Minis and Minis** (6"-8" and less than 6" single rosettes, respectively), **Trailers** (multiple-crown plants), and **Species** (may grow as single rosettes or multiple crowns). Here are a few considerations when growing for show:

- Grow under two fluorescent lights if possible. Rosettes will be more symmetrical. If this is not possible, trailers, species, and some hybrids (e.g., *Optimara*) grow beautifully in a bright East window or equivalent natural light.
- You don't require fancy grow lights. Marie Burns and Diane Richardson do just fine with two cool white fluorescent bulbs. Use a timer and run the lights 8-10 hours a day. It is best to figure out a length of time that works well and stick with it consistently every day.
- Remember to shift plants 1/4 turn every day if grown in natural light. Even plants grown under fluorescent lights may need an occasional turn.
- About 8 weeks before show, increase the lights 1/2 hour each week until 12 hours. After show, decrease the lights 1/2 hour each week until back down to 8-10 hours.
- Use a self-watering system: wick watering, capillary matting, or Oyama pots. These systems provide consistent moisture and are easier on you. All work well with *Saintpaulia*.

- If using a self-watering system, keep the growing medium light by adding at least 50% perlite (some people add up to 2/3 perlite). In the wild, *Saintpaulia* does not grow in heavy topsoil.
- When using a self-watering system, dilute 1/4- to 1/8-strength fertilizer and add to the water reservoirs (I have a big jug I make weekly). Diane has several jugs already set up with fertilizer.
- Rotate two different fertilizers, a 20-20-20 and 12-36-14 (approximately) fertilizer. Ten to 4 weeks before show, use the 12-36-14 more frequently
- Standards, Semi-Minis, Minis must be grown as a single crown or your plant will be disqualified for show. Scrape or pluck off any suckers that develop.
- Trailers must have 3 crowns with flowers at minimum.
- Let the species do what they want more or less (let it trail if it will OR grow as a single rosette). Try to show species as they are grown in the wild (per Diane). They should look natural but clean with no dead or marred leaves or flowers.

- Grow in round pots rather than square and center the plant. This can affect the symmetry.
- Groom your AVs to produce a shapely, good-looking rosette. This means discarding tiny, immature, out of place leaves *from the base*. **NOTE:** As we saw, Diane does not hesitate to remove a leaf that serves no purpose.
- New *Saintpaulia* leaves come in sets of three. Every so often, critically eye the rosette. Continue to groom and remove the **lowest** leaves that still maintain symmetry. New growth will be stimulated and the new leaves will be larger and more symmetrical
- However, if you remove enough leaves from the base, there will be a “neck” (stem) showing. Bury the neck the next time you re-pot. *Very lightly*, with a fingernail, scrape the neck-stem that will be buried to stimulate root growth.
- If the neck is too deep, you may need to prune the root ball. Cut off no more than 1/4 of the root ball (OK, maybe up to 1/3, but no more than that!). Then reset the plant and add soil.
- Disbud or remove flowers stalks before show to stimulate a burst of bloom. Ideally start disbudding 6 months before the big event. For standard doubles, I stop disbudding about 8 weeks before show, semi-doubles about 7 weeks, and standard singles are not disbudded past 6 weeks. All minis and semi-minis get disbudded 6 weeks before show, then not after that.
- When disbudding, leave a nub of the stem, so that another flower stalk may form (don’t forget to remove the nubs right before the show).
- Choosing the right time to stop disbudding can be a bit of a gamble. It can vary some depending on temperature and environment. Some growers stop disbudding on a 10-8 week schedule instead of 8-6 weeks. Each grower must determine what works best for them. I believe Diane said she is using a 10-8 week schedule.
- Clean up your plants just before show. Groom and remove any spent flowers or old stems. No dirt or perlite should remain on the leaves.
- Wash the leaves with warm water (but not in



Saintpaulia awaiting grooming.

- Variegated AVs are most striking when grown in cooler temperatures (light and type of fertilizer can also play a role, but temperature seems most important).
- AVs like to be pot-bound. Do not re-pot until the plants are 3 times the diameter of the pot (for example, a 9 inch rosette in a 3 inch pot is ready for a 4 inch pot).

sunlight, do not soak the soil or the center)—your face gets dirty, so does theirs—final words of wisdom from Diane.

I hope this does not sound like too much work. It is actually a fun challenge to grow a few show plants. To sum up, be **consistent** and spend a couple of minutes a day on your potential blue ribbon winners. Self-watering systems and fluorescent lights, although not required, provide a way to standardize your growing conditions. Groom and disbud the violets as appropriate. Give the plants good culture, bright light, even moisture, feed regularly, and maybe you will be rewarded with enormous heads of flowers and beautiful rosettes in time for the show!

APRIL IS NATIONAL AQUARIUM MONTH!

By Aarti Shah

First of all, thank you to everyone who brought in plants for Druid Hill last month! We had a nice collection of plants—including some nice mature ones—for the conservatory. Hopefully we can see

some of them on display when we have our picnic there later this year!

The National Aquarium in Baltimore has also asked us for some plants, and April is National Aquarium Month. So, if everyone attending the meeting could bring one plant for the Aquarium, that would be great! The Aquarium has asked that we donate only New World gesneriads, preferably species. However, the New World gesneriads include some of the showiest and most prolific gesneriads, so this isn't as restrictive as it might seem. For example, *Achimenes*, *Kohleria*, *Sinningia*, *Nematanthus*, *Columnnea*, *Episcia*, *Gloxinia*, *Smithiantha*, *Phinea*, and *Codonanthe* are all New World plants, so this is the perfect opportunity to trim your unwieldy *Columnnea* and root the cuttings, or dig out some of the *Kohleria* rhizomes that (if you're like me) are so crowding your pot they're beginning to actually pop out of the soil.

Saintpaulia, *Aeschyanthus*, *Streptocarpus*, and *Petrocosmea* are all Old World plants, so please save and of those for the raffle table rather than for the aquarium.

SOME FEBRUARY DRUID HILL DONATIONS



Chirita

Nematanthus



Kohleria



Various Sinningia



ASK MR. GESNERIAD

How long can I store seeds, and how should I store them?

Gesneriad seed storage time depends a lot on the genus and species that you are trying to save. Some of the miniature *Sinningia*, such as *S. pusilla*, only remain viable for a very short time, no matter how they are stored. Others, such as some of the *Streptocarpus* species, will give good germination even when stored in very bad conditions over several years.

A lot of it depends on the genetic code in the plant itself. Plants that normally go through an extended dry period in their natural environment tend to have seeds that will remain viable for longer periods of time (such as when the rainy season gets to them a year after they've flowered and set seed). Others have no need for waiting in nature and tend to give the best germination right after they're collected. And then there are some that won't germinate if planted right away; they need that "dormant" period when their natural environment would not have allowed them to germinate.

Storing seeds is an easy thing to do. First, they should be kept cool. Refrigerator cool is ideal. And next they should be kept on the dry side. Moisture in your seed storage container could cause mold, mildew, or even germination of the seed. Some advocate putting a small packet of desiccant in the storage container along with the seeds. Most should give good germination numbers for at least a couple of years when stored this way.

Can Columnea and Nematanthus be propagated with leaf cuttings?

That depends a lot on how much of the leaf you have to start with. If the leaf petiole includes the tiny bud where the leaf attaches to the main stem of the plant, then yes, you can get a new plant from this cutting. However, in most cases this bud is not part of what you have to work with, and a new plant from the leaf is unlikely. The leaf may root for you, but without that bud, it will never develop a stem and send up a new shoot.

Many other gesneriads, both New and Old World, can be started with a leaf. However, almost all of the vining types such as *Aeschynanthus*, *Columnea*, *Nematanthus*, *Codonanthe*, and such require at least a small piece of the stem to form a new plant. This does not hold true to rhizomatous plants such as *Kohleria* or *Gloxinia*. They will form rhizomes, which will eventually sprout new plants. *Sinningia* and other tuberous plants will form tubers, but these tubers will often be what is called "blind tubers." They won't have an eye (think of potatoes) to develop into new stems and leaves. The exception to the *Sinningia* blind tuber rule are those few *Sinningia* which do not form stems but have the leaf emerge directly from the tuber. Plants with a rosette growth habit are the easiest and most consistent way to start new plants from leaves.

If you have a question for Mr. Gesneriad, e-mail askmrgesneriad@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org. No questions are too basic or difficult. Ask away. Your name won't be revealed, so you needn't worry about that.

BLOOMIN' NOW



Jim's
Phinaea
divaricata



Jim's *Gloxinia perennis*



Neale Stuart's *Columnea*



Neale Stuart's *Chirita*



Jim's *Eucadonia*



Neale Stuart's *Sinningia* 'Wood Nymph'



Jim's (left) and Neale Stuart's (above) *Sinningia conspicua*



Ken Moore's *Nautilocalyx pemphidius* in his pumpkin-shaped terrarium.



BLOG & CALENDAR

By Kyoko Imai

Some of our readers may recall that we experimented with blogging in 2009, when we hosted The Gesneriad Society's Convention. The blog went on hiatus for a while, but we recently started it up again: petaltones.blogspot.com. We hope you will take a look, and maybe add it to your RSS feed/e-mail subscriptions/web-browsing list. We welcome suggestions, material for posts, and comments—they can be sent to dcgesneriads@gmail.com.

Another web feature we've added this year is a Google calendar for "DC area" events. It started as a way for me to remind myself of the numerous gesneriad events within a day trip of DC this year, and I've since made it publicly accessible. You can find a link to it on the right sidebar of the blog, and it's also on our website on the events page. If you know of an event in the area that's missing, please send an e-mail to the same address, dcgesneriads@gmail.com.

NELL'S FAMOUS SESAME NOODLE RECIPE

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. cappellini or vermicelli
- 4-5 oz sesame oil
- 4-5 oz soy sauce
- 1 jar diced pimento
- 1 bunch scallions chopped

Directions:

- Break spaghetti into thirds and cook without salt.
- Combine (equal amounts of) sesame oil and soy sauce.
- After draining spaghetti toss with sesame oil/soy sauce mixture (add about 1/3 of the mixture at a time).
- Add diced pimentos and chopped scallions after spaghetti has cooled; toss with fork.

AFRICAN VIOLET SHOW & SALE

The Baltimore African Violet Club
The Shops at Kenilworth
800 Kenilworth Drive, Towson, MD

Friday, May 6: Sale 9am-5pm; Show 1pm-5pm

Saturday, May 7: Show & Sale 9am-5pm

The show will be on the upper level and the sale will be on the lower level of the mall.

We will have many beautiful show plants for your enjoyment. For sale will be hundreds of beautiful African violets and other exotic houseplants, leaves, cuttings, and many growing supplies including soil mix, plant rings, self-watering pots and more. Experienced growers will be there to answer any growing questions. Free admission.

For additional information, contact Shirley Huffman at 301-854-2021 or Bshuffman2@aol.com.

National Capital Area Chapter (NCAC)

A Chapter of the Gesneriad Society, Inc.

"The purpose of the chapter shall be to afford a convenient and beneficial association of persons interested in gesneriads; to stimulate a widespread interest in the identification, correct nomenclature, culture, and propagation of gesneriads; and to encourage the origination and introduction of new cultivars."

(NCAC bylaws, revised April 1981.)

NCAC meets several times a year on the second Saturday of the month in the Administration Building of the U.S. National Arboretum. For details, please refer to the latest issue of Petal Tones, the website, or contact one of the people below. All are welcome and new attendees are invited to a free item from the raffle table.

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www.gesneriadsociety.org

NCAC website:

www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

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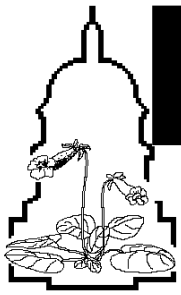
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Petal Tones

The newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of
The Gesneriad Society

Volume 42 Number 5

May 2011



Kohleria 'Peridot's Rolo'

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

There is so much going on right now, I find myself getting further and further behind on stuff that I really have to do with my plants. I put up three new plant stands and still haven't moved my plants around properly to put them into better conditions. I have plants bumping into lights and having their tips burned off. Others are hidden under the leaves of larger plants and stretching for light. Others are burning from too much light while dead bulbs on other shelves are keeping some plants in almost total darkness. Why does there have to be so much other fun stuff to do in the spring? Fun stuff like pulling all last year's oak leaves out of the shrubs, and cutting down last year's ornamental grass with the hedge clippers, and weeding out all the extra ostrich ferns and hosta which are crowding out the painted ferns and astilbe? And of course, planting all the new bulbs and rhizomes and seedlings that I shouldn't have bought but have to plant now that they're here.

Meeting Schedule:

Meetings will be located in the trailer at the National Arboretum unless noted.

May 14, 2011 – A Trip to China.

Jim Roberts will talk about his trip to China and the *Gesneriads* he met along the way. Jim is bringing for purchase: black trays (\$1.10 each), Perma Nest Trays (\$6.25 each) and Humidity Domes (\$6.75 each) to the May meeting.

June 11, 2011 – Picnic. Location to be determined.

July 5-9, 2011 – Gesneriad Society

Convention in Philadelphia, PA, hosted by the Liberty Bell Chapter. For more details and to register, click on gesneriadsociety.org/Conv2011.

I plan to attend the Baltimore AVS Show on Saturday, May 7th, as I've decided that I should have an AV or two in our show in September, and if I buy now I should be able to grow a show plant or two. I've also ordered like crazy on-line. Something is going to work for me; something will form a perfect rosette and be loaded with buds on the third Saturday in September. Someone once asked me how I manage to enter so many plants in shows. My answer: grow 10-20 times what you want to enter and hope that something will be show-ready when a show rolls around. So by growing 30-50 AV's I should have one Standard, one Semi-mini, one Mini and one Trailer that looks good enough to enter. Oh yeah, and a few species.

Some growers grow only what they want to enter in the show and groom and fuss and watch over those plants every single day. I'd rather be surprised the weekend before the show when I go through the

shelves and pick and choose which ones can be cleaned up to make a good presentation. I like variety and if limit myself to just those plants that I know I can be successful with I won't have that wonderful surprise of finding a plant at the back of a shelf that just happens to be covered in bud and hasn't been seen by judges in a show for ages. Judges like to see stuff that they're not used to seeing. If it's new or rare or old but rarely shown it will generally score higher than a similar plant that everyone seems to grow.

We've got a lot to do this month at the meeting. We have to make the final decision on the table favor: a votive candle holder, a shot glass, a coffee mug or a plant propagation kit. We've also got to choose a location for our picnic in June. Someone was going to investigate the availability of the picnic tables at the Arboretum. Last year at Greenbelt Park we needed 5 tables, including one for the raffle plants. Does the Arboretum have that much space? And does it have to be reserved? Greenbelt Park seems to be a bit far for those living in VA and on the other sides of DC. Are there other parks in DC or in VA that have open picnic areas where we can just show up and grab some tables? Is there a member with enough room at his/her home for a picnic meeting? Druid Hill Park, at the Conservatory, could put us up but that's even further than Greenbelt Park. We need to have the picnic at a location that will get us all there. This will be the last meeting before our show! I plan to have a couple small Show Committee meetings (or at least conference calls) in July and August, but the picnic meeting is the last meeting for the group as a whole.

Last reminder for May: Bring plants for the raffle table and for the Little Show. Bring to share and plan on bringing lots of plants home with you.

Good Growing!

Jim Roberts

Bloomin' Now



Barb's
Sinningia speciosa



Barb Stewart reports at the Richmond African Violet Society Show on April 15th : Nell Reese won the Best Gesneriad award for her *Columnea* 'Light Prince'

grown in African violet soil mix with extra vermiculite. The pot has an inch of large chunk perlite in the bottom. Nell grew this *Columnia* under lights, on for ten hours a day & fertilizing with Dyna-Gro 7-9-5.



This dish garden is Barb Stewart's entry which won Best in Design in the Richmond African Violet Society show held April 8-10. The show theme was Aesop's Fables. She also won sweepstakes in design.



Barb's *Kohleria* 'Lemon Drop'

Barb's *Smithiantha* 'An's Secret Code'



My Trip to China

by Jim Roberts

The first week in March was a big one for me. I had a business meeting in Hong Kong where I met up with *Kohleria* hybridizer Luke Leong. He and his wife showed me some of the sights of Hong Kong; as well as, his very extensive collection of *Kohleria*. Luke's work proves that you don't need a lot of room to hybridize some really fantastic hybrids, as you will see in my program at the May meeting.

On Thursday I took a flight to Kunming, the capital city of Yunnan Province. Yunnan is a perfect place to grow plants. It never gets down to freezing in the winter (lows in the upper 30's, so it's quite cool, but never freezing). It never gets hotter than the mid 80's in the summer. There is an extended dry season during the winter. There is almost no rain from

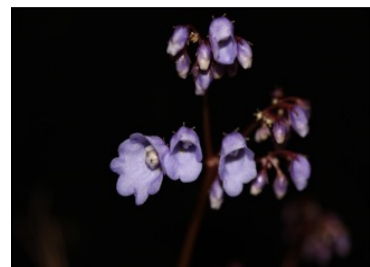
October through April.

Paraboea rufescens

From Kunming my internet friend, Yang and I took a 6 hour bus ride south to the heart

of gesneriad country. From here we made daily forays into the woods and mountains looking for gesneriads. Although I was hoping to see some of the *Chirita* native to this area, the dry weather and

lack of bloom made them impossible to find in the groundcover. We did, however see numerous colonies of *Petrocosmea*,



Paraboea, *Lysionotus*, and what I think were *Hemiboea* and *Anna*.
Paraboea dictyoneura

I brought back some plants but won't know about them until they flower. Seeing *Petrocosmea* growing on vertical rock faces without any moss or soil around them, really made me



understand their need for drying out over the winter months. Remember, no rain from October through April, and these plants really looked dry – but alive!



Paraboea dictyoneura

Southern China is rarely visited by Westerners. I didn't see any others the entire time I was there. No one, and I really mean NO

ONE, spoke any English, so I would have been completely helpless without my guide. The people there were very friendly and sharing, offering me meals and then killing the chicken while I was there. One of our daily guides offered to kill a pig for us if we would stay for dinner. We didn't so the pig got to live for another day.



Paraboea rufescens seedpods

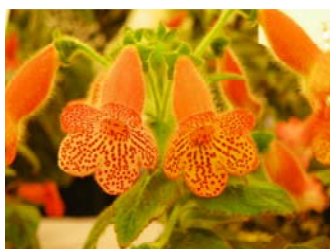
The landscape and scenery were like nothing we have here in the US: vast plains with mountains emerging from them. The mountains weren't in continuous rows, but scattered around with sometimes miles between them. Each had its own native plants, and the inhospitable terrain between them kept some individual species confined to a single area.

On May 14th, I shall take you along on my visit to China while showing you the people, places and plants that made my trip worth every bit of back pain that I'm still suffering through. It already has me thinking about a return trip when the *Chiritas* are in flower in the summer of 2013.

African Violets Salute the Oscars
 The Delaware African Violet and Gesneriad Society
 Show April 16, 2011



Sinningia 'Orange Raindrops'



Kohleria 'Manchu'



Episcia 'Suomi'



Sinningia 'Prudence Risley'



Sinningia 'Kaleidoscope'



Sinningia 'Georgia Peach'



Streptocarpus entries



Saintpaulia entries



Streptocarpus 'Something Special'



Saintpaulia 'Foster Trail'

BRAZIL SEED CLUB

If you are interested in growing new and exciting species out of Brazil, please get in touch with Brian Connor. He'll make sure that you get a copy of the list from Brazil Plants. www.brazilplants.com Here are the rules: You have to be a paid member of the National Capital Area Chapter of the Gesneriad Society. Each request should be limited to 3-4 seed selections so that everyone has an opportunity. That's it. Brian has a list of the current available seed which he'll forward to you upon request. Brian is able to order 24 packets of seed three times a year. Once he gets the seed from Mauro Peixoto, he'll either bring it to a meeting or mail it to you. If two people order the same seed, he'll split the packet in half. If more than two order he'll order two packets. Mauro uses the funds we pay him to get supplies for his greenhouse and pay for repairs and help. We help in his conservation efforts by allowing him to collect and maintain many rare and new *Gesneriads*, and also get those same rare plants into cultivation where they are less likely to be lost forever.



Recap: April's Program on Photography

At our April meeting, Kyoko Imai spoke about how taking better pictures of gesneriads involves improving many aspects of the process, including selecting and grooming the plant, setting up the scene, making sure there is plenty of good soft bright light, and composing and shooting with a final product in mind. She emphasized knowledge and practice, and she pointed out that there are a lot of resources available, including books, workshops, web forums, photography blogs, and online tutorials. These resources may not discuss plant photography specifically, but techniques and principles are interdisciplinary. For example, techniques used for food photography, product photography, and portraiture can be adapted to photographing plants in your private collection, and principles of composition in painting are also informative for photographers. Kyoko also brought in some prints to show how the exact same jpg file could result in very different prints depending upon the print vendor, and to show how flaws are more noticeable in prints than on a computer screen.

The main difference was how some printers brightened the print (adjusted the “exposure”) - although at first glance, the brighter prints might draw the eye more, the highlights were blown so that no detail was visible in the brightest areas. Another difference was white balance adjustment - for example, how overly blue or yellow the print was. If you would like a copy of Kyoko’s slides, please email dcesneriads@gmail.com.

Jim Roberts also discussed the various classes of photography entries in a Gesneriad Society show: color photographs of an entire plant, color photographs of a part of a plant, monochrome photographs of a whole or part of a plant, and a plant

photographed in nature. He also discussed examples of entries and how they might be judged.



Desperately Seeking

<i>Streptocarpus</i> 'Harlequin Blue'.....	Brian Connor
<i>Streptocarpus</i> 'Rose Halo'.....	Brian Connor
<i>Streptocarpus</i> 'Orange Sherbet'.....	Brian Connor
<i>Streptocarpus</i> 'Heartlands Tanzanite'.....	Brian Connor
<i>Streptocarpus</i> 'Designer Gene'.....	Brian Connor
<i>Kohleria</i> 'Gnista'.....	Brian Connor
<i>Kohleria</i> 'Solkatt'.....	Brian Connor
<i>Kohleria</i> 'Tobbe'.....	Brian Connor
<i>Kohleria</i> 'Maja Graddnos'.....	Brian Connor
<i>Saintpaulia</i> , any.....	Bev Nissenbaum
<i>Pearcea</i> sp. (any).....	Jim Roberts
<i>Streptocarpus kentaniensis</i>	Jim Roberts
<i>Columnea orientandina</i>	Jim Roberts
<i>Begonia smithiantha</i>	Donna Beverin
<i>xAchimenantha</i> 'Dutch Treat'.....	Donna Beverin
<i>Petrocosmea begoniifolia</i>	Donna Beverin
<i>Columnea gallicauda</i>	Lee Linett
<i>Rhynchoglossum notonianum</i>	Lee Linett
<i>Sinningia hirsuta</i>	Lee Linett
<i>Sinningia</i> 'Tinkerbells'.....	Lee Linett
<i>Smithiantha</i> 'Santa Clara'.....	Lee Linett
<i>Vanhoutea lanata</i>	Lee Linett
<i>Saintpaulia</i> 'Pygmy'.....	Lee Linett

Please send a list of a plant you would love to grow via email. It will be posted here in the newsletter. A generous member will share! Petal Tones has a wide distribution and chances are good that someone will be able to get you what you want.



Ask Mr. Gesneriad

Do *Nautilocalyx lynchii* and ‘Gothenburg’ prefer to be grown in terrariums or in normal household humidity? Can they

be pinched for fuller growth, or would that stop all growth or hinder flowering?

Both of these plants would respond well to pinching. They tend to get tall and leggy without it. They’re also both less demanding on humidity than some of the others. “Normal household humidity” is a pretty general term. However, if you are able to grow other *Gesneriads* in this “normal household humidity,” then these plants would do well also.

I have been a spectacular failure at wick watering—think rapidly growing compost heap. Is there a ratio for number of wicks to number of inches in pot size? Actually, I never use more than one wick per pot. With very large pots I use a much heavier yarn, but I don’t like to have moisture coming into the pot at more than one location. With very small pots I might use a very thin yarn. The key is to never let the wick

dry out. If it does it will probably not draw water up into the pot again. If I find a dry wick I take the entire pot and soak it in a tub of water to wet both the soil and the wick. This should start the capillary action again and keep the pot moist but not soggy.

Is *Columnea* 'Light Prince' sensitive to heat? Last year I had a large pot slowly fade away after I took it outside for the summer.

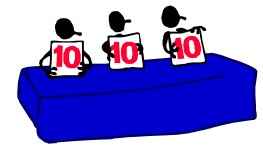
Columnea hirta 'Light Prince' does prefer cooler temperatures. Remember many of the *Columnea* come from cool cloud forests and aren't prepared for a Baltimore/ DC summer. If you put them outside, put them in pretty dense shade and make sure they get plenty of water.

Cuttings of *Lysionotus pauciflorus* took several months to develop roots. The rooted cuttings have not grown in the two months they have been in soil. Any suggestions?

Lysionotus pauciflorus is an Chinese plant which goes through a fairly long dormant period. It has large underground rhizomes from which new growth will appear in the spring. Once it has grown for the year, it will flower and then just sit there until the following year. Be patient.

What purpose does vermiculite serve in a soil mix? Should I add it to my Pro-Mix? Is the size of the vermiculite important?

Have you ever tried to wet dried out sphagnum moss? It's practically impossible. Vermiculite's only purpose in a mix is to help hold water, and if the mix is dry, to help the water wet the sphagnum moss. The original "soil-less" mix developed at Cornell University was composed of equal parts of milled sphagnum, perlite and vermiculite. The sphagnum moss provides organic matter and provides a slightly acidic pH, the perlite provides large air spaces so that the roots don't rot, and the vermiculite to keep the mixture moist. I find that standard Pro-Mix is too dense for most of my plants. I tend to add a lot of extra perlite and vermiculite to Pro-Mix (I part PM, 1 part perlite and 1 part vermiculite). I use the coarsest perlite and vermiculite I can find so that the mix does not pack too densely in the pot.



QUESTIONS FOR THE JUDGES

May plants in Classes 68 and 69 be under glass? No. **Tray gardens are supposed to be open to the air. However, if you have a good garden that you want to put under glass, turn it into a terrarium!**

At our 2010 show, one of the judges did not like the look of the sphagnum moss in which a terrarium grown *Sinningia* was planted. Are there more acceptable options? Sand? Stones? Dropping a potted plant into a terrarium?

Unfortunately there are no hard and fast rules here. Generally judges don't like the look of white perlite in a mix, but are okay with almost anything else. If the *Sinningia* was growing in sphagnum I would chalk it up to a bad judging decision. It's hard to put a top dressing on sphagnum. Many growers use small dark pebbles or even clay aggregate as a top dressing to hide perlite. Hopefully the judging team did not penalize too heavily for the opinion of one on the team.

Which plants show/score better with single crowns? **There are some plants which have such a nice growth habit when grown single-crowned that they are entered for the foliage alone in shows. Genera such as *Chirita* and *Petrocosmea* show much better as single crowns when in the "grown for ornamental characteristics" class. However, these very same plants are perfectly acceptable when grown with multiple crowns when in flower. Some *Petrocosmea* start generating crowns when they're ready to flower. I've even seen multi-crowned *Chirita* entered in the non-flowering classes because they looked nice with stolens or unusual trunk growths. There are no rules that any plants must be grown as single crown in any section of the show, except the hybrid *Saintpaulia*. AVSA rules state that African Violet hybrids must be grown with a single crown unless they are classified as trailers. Your best bet is to look at the plant. If all crowns are equal in size and present a nice balanced look, leave them alone. If however, there is a sucker sticking off to the side all by itself, remove it. Balance, balance, balance. If it looks right to you then you're probably okay.**

A Stroll Through Gesneriads on Broadway

by Jim Roberts

For those who have never entered a flower show before, the Show Schedule can be pretty intimidating. Where do I put MY entry? Can I enter my plant even though it doesn't have any flowers? What is a Tray Garden? I'm going to walk you through section by section of our *Gesneriads* on Broadway schedule. The Classification Chair, once we get a volunteer, will tell you where your plant belongs if you don't know.

The show always starts off with the Horticultural Sections. Plants entered in Horticulture should be grown in a clean, standard pot. Technically the color of the pot isn't supposed to matter, but a bright pink pot for a plant sporting orange flowers is probably going to lose you a few points under Condition. It's relatively easy to repot a plant at the last minute.

Section A - New World Gesneriads in Flower - Tuberos. New World is anything from Mexico down through the southern tip of Argentina. Gesneriads growing in Hawaii are related to Asian types and are considered Old World. Class 1 is for *Sinningia speciosa* which seems appropriate since the society used to be called the Gloxinia and Gesneriad Society. *Sinningia speciosa* is what we commonly refer to as a Gloxinia (not to be confused with the genus *Gloxinia* which is a rhizomatous plant in Section B). Following this class of *Sinningia speciosa* are several other *Sinningia* species classes and hybrid classes. These are described as rosette and upright. Really there is no strong reason to split them up except that it makes it easier for the judges to compare them. We then have a special class for the *Sinningia* hybrids shared with us by Jim Steuerlein at the picnic last summer at John Boggan's house. Next come the miniature *Sinningia* – wouldn't be fair to compare a 2" diameter plant to one with flowers that are 4" across, now would it? Finally there are all those other "tuberous" genera such as *Chyrsothemis* and *Nautilocalyx*. Be warned, not all "tuberous" plants actually form tubers. There are many *Sinningia* and *Nautilocalyx* with fibrous root systems, but they are still placed in the Tuberous Section.

Section B - New World Gesneriads in Flower – Rhizomatous. Here things can get a little messy

since many of the Rhizomatous Gesneriads will hybridize with other Rhizomatous Gesneriads of a different genus. Hence we have *XAchimenantha* (*Achimenes X Smithiantha*), *XSmithicodonia* (*Smithiantha X Eucodonia*), *XGlokohleria* (*Gloxinia X Kohleria*), *XGloxseemannia* (*Gloxinia X Seemannia*), *XPhinastema* (*Phinaea X Diastema*) and many, many others. Unfortunately, these all get lumped into Class 14: Other rhizomatous gesneriads. Classification and the Show Chair have the option of breaking out smaller classes in this "catch-all" class. For example, if there are 4 or 5 different entries of *Diastema* and *Phinaea* and *Amalloyphyllon* (all small growers), Classification could make a Class 14A – Other rhizomatous gesneriads under 8" in diameter, and a Class 14B – Other rhizomatous gesneriads over 8" in diameter. The goal is to increase opportunities for ribbons and to make the judge's life a little easier."

Section C – New World Gesneriads in Flower – Fibrous-Rooted. Technically, all gesneriads have fibrous roots. The first two Sections also have special stem modifications called tubers and rhizomes, but they still have fibrous roots. However, here is where we will find many of the epiphytic plants. Plants such as *Codonanthe*, *Nematanthus*, *Columnea*, and *Nematanthus*. Here is also where you'll find some of the ground cover and high humidity plants. These plants don't have storage organs (tubers and rhizomes) and need constant high humidity and moisture to survive. Plants such as *Gesneria*, *Gasteranthus*, and *Episcia*. Okay, maybe lumping *Episcia* in there is stretching it, but they really do a lot better when enclosed.

Section D – Old World Gesneriads in Flower. Here you'll find that all the old world plants are fibrous rooted. Old world is everything that's not North or South America. There are gesneriads in Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia, New Zealand, and many of the Pacific Islands. These are all Old World.

Many of the plants in vogue now come from the Old World genera of *Chirita* and *Petrocosmea*. *Chirita* has already been divided up into species and hybrid classes. It's entirely possible that *Petrocosmea* will be doing the same as more and more hybrids are being developed. *Saintpaulia* could easily be half of our show if we so choose. The National show only allows one entry per class per exhibitor for

Saintpaulia. We don't make such a restriction. There are 5 different *Saintpaulia* classes. One for the species plants and then four more for the different growth habits and sizes as recognized by the African Violet Society of America. *Streptocarpus* is broken down into three classes. Those with stems (caulescent) such as *Streptocarpus holstii*, species without stems (acaulescent) such as *Streptocarpus johannis*, and hybrids without stems. Because there are so many sizes and hybrid varieties, the *Streptocarpus* classes are often broken down into sub-classes based on size or color.

Section E can be interesting. Here is where all the plants that we grow for their beauty even without flowers can be shown. Be warned, however, that beauty is in the eye of the beholder and a perfectly grown and shaped *Columnea* basket isn't going to fare well against a reasonably grown and shaped *Columnea* basket that also happens to be variegated. The schedule breaks the plants down into classes normally seen as ornamental such as *Chirita*, *Episcia* and *Petrocosmea* but leaves room for just about any other gesneriad. The rule is "no flowers or buds showing color." A well grown *Chrysothemis* with lots of bright orange calyxes is acceptable, as long as none of the flower buds inside the calyxes are showing color. If they are, pick them out, leaving just the empty calyx.

Section F - Next comes the part of the show that I always seek out. Section F is for new *Gesneriads*. New means anything introduced in the last five years. These are generally the plants that we're all going to want as soon as they become available. There are separate classes for hybrids and species, in and out of flower. What's interesting here is that the entry needs an educational card, telling about the parents if it's a hybrid or where it's from if it's a species. "Not in flower" doesn't necessarily mean it has to be decorative. A new hybrid that would normally be entered in flower (because the leaves aren't all that decorative) could be entered out of flower with a photo of the flower as part of the educational information. For example, an alpine plant that normally flowers in March will never be seen in flower in a show held in July (convention) or our September show. A photo along with a well-grown plant is a perfectly acceptable entry.

Section G is for rarely seen. What is rarely seen varies a lot from one section of the country to another. We rarely see *Sarmienta* or *Mitraria* here, but they're grown as garden plants in San Francisco and probably wouldn't be considered "rare" there. The education card counts a lot towards the total points the judges will award. Spend some time and research the plant.

Section H has turned into the "Best in Show" section of late. The last couple of Conventions had collections chosen as Best in Show, and our own show last March was taken by Andrew's *Petrocosmea* collection. Pay attention to your staging. The plants are supposed to be staged as a group and the staging counts towards your points. Use a basket, or tray or even just a piece of cloth to connect all the pots into a unified display. Remember the educational card, even if it's just to identify the plants according to where they are in the display. For the "Kinship" collection you need to provide both parents in the display. This would be interesting to show *Sinningia perisiana* and *Sinningia conspicua* along with the F2 challenge plant.

Section I has a lot of potential for interesting trained gesneriads. Bonsai, wreaths, standards; use your imagination. Just because *Aeschynanthus* is normally grown in a hanging basket doesn't mean you can't braid a few stems into a "trunk" and grow an *Aeschynanthus* tree.

Section J is for the novices in the group. We had a few novice entries last year that looked really, really good. We have more novices in the group this year. If you've never won a blue ribbon in a gesneriad show you can enter your plants here. If there are a lot of entries the Classes may be divided by Classification.

That covers the horticulture sections of the show. All plants in Horticulture have to have been grown by you for at least 3 months. In the interest of space, and my time, I'm going to describe the Artistic and Arts Divisions in the June issue of *Petal Tones*. You still have time to gather together your plants for horticulture. You have until mid June to buy, win, beg or steal show plants.



The Blog: Quarterly Report

By Kyoko Imai

<http://petaltones.blogspot.com>

April 24, 2011 marked three months since we revived the blog: it's time for a bit of review.

- [A little history first.] The blog was started in June 2009, just before The Gesneriad Society's Convention in Silver Spring. It served as an online companion to this newsletter: a place for posting timely information, links, and photographs. During that trial run - which lasted until the end of October - the content was mostly related to the 2009 Convention, much of it consisting of photographs of show entries.
- As of April 24, 2011, there were a total of 176 posts on the blog, of which 50 were posted this year.
- Over the life of the blog (which is still very young), it has been viewed far more times than our website (which, I admit, needs a makeover). It also has been more effective for online publicity for events.
- The viewership is fairly global, although the majority has been from United States. The logs show visitors from: Argentina, Australia, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, Netherlands, Philippines, Poland, Romania, the Russian Federation, Singapore, South Africa, Sweden, Taiwan, Thailand, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
- The most viewed post is our saddest post, written in memory of Nell Hennessy.
- The #1 search term that brings people to our blog is "chirita patina." I am delighted by this bit of data because our little post is not a "pretty picture" post; rather, it is informative in nature. Made possible by Peter Shalit's presentation at the 2009 Convention, it points out that Patina's leaves have red hairs, unlike its sibling 'Deco.' (Additional kudos to Peter for a great hybrid.)
The posts I enjoy most are - not surprisingly - the ones written by other people. ☺ I'm looking forward to more interesting posts in the future, and hoping that we'll have a good long run this time around.
Kyoko
P.S. Comments, suggestions, post material to:
DCgesneriads@gmail.com

National Capital Area Chapter (NCAC) **A Chapter of the Gesneriad Society, Inc.**

"The purpose of the chapter shall be to afford a convenient and beneficial association of persons interested in Gesneriads; to stimulate a widespread interest in the identification, correct nomenclature, culture, and propagation of Gesneriads; and to encourage the origination and introduction of new cultivars."

(NCAC bylaws, revised April 1981.)

NCAC meets on the second Saturday of the month in the Administration Building of the U.S. National Arboretum. For details, please refer to the latest issue of *Petal Tones*, the website, or contact one of the people below. All are welcome and new attendees are invited to a free item from the raffle table.

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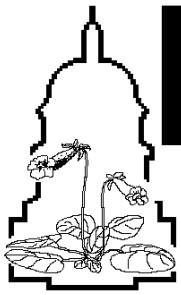
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Joyce's Sinningia 'Touch of Spice' seedling is not a slipper type bloom and is very red not pinkish like Donna's and has dots in the throat. The flowers look upward with 7 connected petals. The buds are a medium green before starting to open. It is a compact grower with flowers held very high above the foliage. They are both beautiful ! Both tubers came from the gentleman who came to a meeting and brought a box full of these seedling tubers. Apologies to John and Larry for the laymen's descriptions.

Donna's Sinningia 'Touch of Spice' seedling has a slipper type bloom and is not red like Joyce's, more of a dark pink with dots in the throat. The flowers look downwards with 6 connected petals. The buds are a dark color, like maroon or brown before starting to open. It also is leggy even though grown close to the bulbs. Has a slight fragrance on occasion.

Jim will bring more black trays (\$1.10 each), Perma Nest Trays (\$6.25 each) and Humidity Dome (\$6.75 each) to the May meeting.



Petal Tones

The newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of
The Gesneriad Society

Volume 42 Number 6

June 2011



Bill Price's *Conandron ramondioides* blooming in June
Photo by Karyn Cichocki

President's Message

So much to do, so little time. If only there were 5 more days to every weekend! This is the first weekend I haven't had something to do away from the house in over a month. There are so many plant related events going on at this time of year that it's getting really hard to pay attention to the collection at home. Not that I regret going to any of the events. The Baltimore African Violet Show was very nice, with some really excellent Gesneriads in with some magnificent African Violets.

Then of course, the National Convention of the AVSA. WOW! What a display. Some really well grown Gesneriads – rivaling anything that you'll see at the Gesneriad Convention. Bill Price brought a white flowered *Conandron ramondioides* which didn't have any open buds. Not much of an entry just for foliage so he entered it for display only. I hope that there are some buds left come July 7!

Speaking of July 7, I hope you have all registered by now. It should be a great Convention, rivaling the one that we put on in Silver Springs 2 years ago. It's never

Meeting Schedule:

Meetings will be located in the trailer at the National Arboretum unless noted.

June 11, 2011 – Picnic. Greenbelt Park in Greenbelt, MD See directions last page

July 5-9, 2011 – Gesneriad Society Convention in Philadelphia, PA, hosted by the Liberty Bell Chapter. For more details and to register, click on gesneriadsociety.org/Conv2011.

September 17 & 18, 2011- NCAC Flower Show at Behnke's Nursery
11300 Baltimore Avenue, Beltsville, MD

too late to get your registration in. You can even register on-line. And I'm going to pushing harder than ever for local Chapter members to attend the Gesneriad Society Convention every year. I've just been appointed to replace Paul Susi as Convention Chair. That's in addition to being elected to the Board of Directors this July. More fun stuff to help me fill my weekends. I'm writing this on Monday, May 30. This coming Saturday is the "Social" event at Behnke's Nursery in Beltsville. I hope a few of you were able to attend. It's a great idea; getting all the local plant societies together to promote themselves and to expose their members to other opportunities and clubs in the area. Then of course, comes our picnic. Once again we'll be meeting in Greenbelt Park. No program, so I'll be able to mingle a little with everyone. Most meetings I'm running in so many circles that I don't have time to say more than just a quick Hello. We'll still have our raffle, so bring lots of good stuff. The picnic will still be over 3 months out from our show in September so you can still pick up something to grow on for show. Achimenes are prime candidates. They're coming up out of dormancy now and should be in full flower come September. See you all soon! Jim

Bloomin' Now

Kitty's Hedgepeth's Blooming Steps



Streptocarpus 'Roulette Cherry'



Streptocarpus 'Bristol's Party Girl'



Streptocarpus 'Emily'



S. 'Bristol's Blackbird'



S. 'Tropical Moment'

Bloomin' Now

Jim's Bloomers



Smithiantha aurantiaca



XGloxseemannia
'She's Dancing'



Close up : *XGloxseemannia* 'She's Dancing'

“Do You Know Suzie, Like I Know Suzie”

An Unknown Strep, Self Identified

Bev N.

I bought a young, flowering, unknown strep in the Spring of 2010 at the Baltimore AV Society show. I called it Tropical Shirley, after its' beautiful pinky, orangey, coral flower color, and the nice lady who grew it for years, but



didn't tag it by name. It grew and grew, and by late winter of 2011 it was bursting with flowers show quality. I searched the web for possible look-a-likes with the hopes of getting some kind of identifying name. I searched using all sorts of color combos, such as salmon with yellow throat.

Eventually, I settled upon *Streptocarpus* 'Suzie'. Emailing photos of my plant to Shirley and Brian (of our chapter), I asked if they could identify it as *S.* 'Suzie'. A complicating factor of note: there are also registered Streps "Susie" and "Susie Sunshine" that look



similar."Well, no, but Shirley recalled that she may have gotten it initially from Carol Hamelik. (former



President of our



chapter). I still have yet to check with Carol. It has produced lots of seed pods on its own (see photo). I am growing seedlings (my first strep seedlings, see photo at 12 days), and hope to have some little plants to give away by our September show. No genetic analysis done here, but what do you think?

Ask Mr. Gesneriad

What species of *Streptocarpus* are scented? There are a number of hybrids with a scent. Where does this scent come from?



Answer: There are six species of *Streptocarpus* with a scent. *S. candidus*, *S. fanniniae* and *S. wilmsii* all have a honey scent. *S. vandeleurii*, *S. eylesii* and *S. wittei* have the honey scent also, but it is mixed with a creosote odor. It's not supposed to be unpleasant, but all scents are in the nose of the beholder. What one finds nice can really offend someone else.

Chapter Desperately Seeking

Streptocarpus 'Harlequin Blue'.....Brian Connor
Streptocarpus 'Rose Halo'.....Brian Connor
Streptocarpus 'Orange Sherbet'.....Brian Connor
Streptocarpus 'Heartlands Tanzanite'.....Brian Connor
Streptocarpus 'Designer Gene'.....Brian Connor
Kohleria 'Gnista'.....Brian Connor
Kohleria 'Solkatt'.....Brian Connor
Kohleria 'Tobbe'.....Brian Connor
Kohleria 'Maja Graddnos'.....Brian Connor
Saintpaulia, any species besides *Rupicola*.....Bev N.
Pearcea sp. (any).....Jim Roberts
Streptocarpus kentaniensis.....Jim Roberts
Columnnea orientandina.....Jim Roberts
Begonia smithiantha.....Donna Beverin
xAchimenantha 'Dutch Treat'.....Donna Beverin
Columnnea gallicauda.....Lee Linett
Rhynchoglossum notonianum.....Lee Linett
Sinningia hirsuta.....Lee Linett
Sinningia 'Tinkerbells'.....Lee Linett
Smithiantha 'Santa Clara'.....Lee Linett
Vanhoutea lanata.....Lee Linett
Saintpaulia 'Pygmy'.....Lee Linett
Please send a list of a plant you would love to grow via email. It will be posted here in the newsletter. A generous member will share! Petal Tones has a wide distribution and chances are good that someone will be able to get you what you want. Please share your results with the editors!



Thanks to Nell for giving Donna *Petrosimonea begoniifolia* leaves to propagate! She has loved it ever since seeing Tim Tuttle's talk at the 2009 convention!

HELP WANTED !

If you're planning to attend this year's TGS Convention in Philadelphia the week of July 4th, please consider volunteering to help out for an hour or half hour at one of the functions where help always is welcomed:

Registration;

Plant Sales; Flower Show Room; and Auction Viewing Room. If you think back to our convention two years ago, you'll know that there's someone who dearly would love to get a drink of water. You can help ! !

In advance. I'd like to thank the NCAC members who did volunteer to help and if you can spare some time, I welcome yours. Contact Lee Linett: slinky238@gmail.com

Looks like we have plenty of judges BUT clerks are needed for the Gesneriad Society Convention Flower Show on Friday morning, July 8, 2011!

If you are going to be at Convention in Philadelphia, please consider volunteering to clerk for the flower show Friday morning (July 8, 2011..... In Silver Spring we finished at about 11:30 AM with most of the judging, except Special Awards). It is a great educational experience and not too hard on you because they have 2 clerks per Judges panel (at least they did in Silver Spring!).

It may even enhance your enjoyment of the show [no lie!] to participate in this way.

So if you would like to volunteer to clerk, please contact the Judges Chair, Doris Brownlie.

The email for Doris is: jtbrownlie@idirect.com

AVSA Convention 2011

by Brian Connor

With over 800 entries, the 2011 African Violet Society of America (AVSA) Convention in Cherry Hill, NJ was the largest flower show that I have ever



attended. There were a number of outstanding presentations offered during the week. My favorites were "Plants I have Loved" by Bill Price

and "Identifying and Preventing Viral Threats to African Violets [and other gesneriads]." I think everyone was feeling a little concerned by the



Sinningia 'Gabriel's Horn'



end of this panel discussion. I realized that I may be too laid back in my approach to isolating plants. The panel suggested isolation for 6 months instead of 3. They were also in favor of

isolating more than just new acquisitions.



Any plant that performs poorly or lacks vigor for *no apparent cultural reason* should be isolated or discarded.

We heard a harrowing story from a local grower named Sandy Skalski, who lost her collection to Impatiens Necrotic Spot Virus (INSV) at the beginning of 2010. It all started with a few plants behaving strangely. She did not see the classic bulls eye markings on foliage that suggest viral infection until *after* the diagnosis was confirmed. Sandy was forced to discard a collection of plants lovingly accumulated over 20 years and had to start fresh. She did save a couple of plants separated from the main collection, including the trailer, 'Cirelda'. And what plant won Best AV in Show? Sandy's *Saintpaulia* 'Cirelda' of course!



(AVSA stock photo)

In addition she won Second Best in Show and best miniature *Saintpaulia* with 'Petite Blarney.'



And she won horticultural sweepstakes with 65 blue ribbons! It was a great comeback and a nice affirmation for Sandy, proving you can survive horticultural disaster. I'll bet she disbuds all of those show plants before they go back on her shelves.

Marie Burns of Baltimore (and a NCAC member) won best semi-miniature with 'Optimara Little Hopi II' and several of the African Violet collections. She also won Best Gesneriad with a stunning *Streptocarpus* 'Fire N Ice' that must have had 60-70 flowers.



Streptocarpus 'Fire n Ice'

Barbara Jones from the host club won best species with *Saintpaulia 5b clone difficilis Mather no.2* (also 3rd Best *Saintpaulia* in show). I was happy to see so many well grown species.

The gesneriads were wonderful. Paul Kroll entered an *Amalophylon species* and a *Kohleria hondensis*. There were a number of excellent *Sinningia*, *Chirita* and *Petrocosmea*. And guess what else (Ki and Ken in particular)? Someone showed a *Chirita* 'Dreamtime' that had two flower scapes/peduncles in bloom. It was very cool.

Horticulture is my favorite, but the Design Classes were also well represented. It was the numerous terrariums and container gardens that I enjoyed the most in the Design Division.

The plant sales had all of my favorite vendors and yes, I dropped some money.

So now that my Horticulture and Sales appetite is whetted, I can hardly wait for the Gesneriad Society Convention, July 5-9, in a few weeks!

Gesneriads on Broadway – Tour

Continued

Jim Roberts

Last month we went through all of the horticulture sections of the show schedule. This month we're going to fly through Divisions II Artistic, Division III The Arts and Division IV Commercial and Educational

Division II isn't for everyone. Unless you have a talent for flower arranging, it's hard to understand some of the Class titles and requirements. You really have to see how it's done in a couple of shows before most of us feel like trying our hand at them. But this is the Division that gives our show its name: Gesneriads on Broadway.

Section K is for arrangements of cut and / or growing plants. That means you can cut the leaves, stems or flowers off your gesneriads and arrange them, or use an entire plant as part of the arrangement with various "line material" to give the arrangement its artistic qualities. Read the class description closely. Make sure that you stay within the size limitations for each class (the arrangement should "fill" the niche area without touching the sides or back). You can use a backdrop of cloth or paper on the back wall to enhance the arrangement.

Class 52 "Cats" is an arrangement with foliage only. Lots of gesneriads have very decorative foliage. Your job is to put some together in an artistic way.

Class 53 "A Chorus Line" is done in a very unusual niche size. Only 8" tall but 18" wide. Movement doesn't mean that the arrangement should move. But the materials should make your eyes move as they follow the lines of the material.

Class 54 "The Music Man" Again, don't take this literally. Your arrangement doesn't have to make noise. Loud can be garish or just contain a lot of stuff.

Class 55 "Hairspray" This one has a lot of room for interpretation. Not all of us were around in the 50's, but we've all seen the movie and the rhinestone covered eyeglasses and beehive hairdo's.

Class 56 “The Pirates of Penzance” The water here doesn’t have to be real water. Many arrangers use a mirror or glass beads to simulate a water surround.

Section L is for cut gesneriads only. You can’t use whole plants in this section.

Class 57 “Gypsy” 5 Components means just that. Maybe a container (1), a branch (2), two leaves (3&4) and a flower (5).

Class 58 “ Sunday in the Park with George” A play based upon a painting. Make your own painting using plant material in a shadow box frame.

Class 59 “Spiderman” So far this one has had a difficult start on Broadway. But every show has one arrangement that hangs. This is our show’s hanging arrangement.

Class 60 “South Pacific” Every show has its underwater arrangement too. The 16” base defines the maximum size of the container. No height restrictions.

Section M. I always find this one to be the most difficult. The arrangement is made up of growing plants and line material. So you’ll have to find plants with a nice shape, or plants which can be shaped nicely with a pair of scissors.

Class 61 “Annie” How would you show “sunny and optimistic?”

Class 62 “Applause” There are lots of gesneriads out there with bumpy leaves. The trick will be to find plants with leaves in just the right spots.

Class 63 “The King and I” Old World Gesneriads only. A Chirita and Petrocosmea dancing? Think of how to put that together so it works!

Section N is for plantings of gesneriads in a group. The whole arrangement should look as natural as possible. Judges don’t like seeing soil, so cover the surface with plants, moss, stones, or whatever you can to keep the look natural.

Class 64 Straight sided terrarium up to 18” in any direction. It doesn’t have to be that big. Any straight sided terrarium UP TO 18” is eligible.

Class 65 Curved sided terrarium (like a bubble bowl or glass cylinder). Again, 18” is the maximum, not the required size.

Class 66 Tray or dish garden up to 12”. The dish should be as inconspicuous as possible. Low sides and of a color that doesn’t draw the eye to it. Design a garden in miniature, complete with rocks, trees, a water feature or whatever else you would like in your dream garden.

Class 67 is for larger gardens, up to 24” in any dimension.

Class 68 is called a Natural Garden. Use a piece of driftwood, a rock or any other natural material to put together a planting like you might find in nature. Up to 12” in any direction.

Class 69 is a larger natural garden, up to 24”

Class 70 is something done in this Chapter but not usually seen in shows. Put a plant in a container not usually used for plants.

Class 71 is where you can use that bright pink ceramic pot your kids gave you one Mother’s Day or Father’s Day. Not something you’d enter elsewhere in the show, but okay here.

Section O is for all you newbies. If you’ve never entered anything in the artistic section of a gesneriad show, or even if you have but have not won a blue ribbon.

Class 72 Simply pick any of the classes from Sections K, L or M and make an entry. Just be sure to identify which Class the entry is for.

Division III The Arts. This is the Division you’ll love if you don’t have any live plants to enter in the show.

Classes 73-77 were all covered in our Photography program back in April. Make sure the photo is in good focus and properly represents the plant material. Follow size restrictions and make sure you have an easel.

Section Q is where you can display your other artistic talents

Class 78 is for a painting or drawing that you've done of a gesneriad.

Class 79 is for a textile representation of a gesneriad: quilting, needlepoint, appliqué, etc.

Class 80 is for all other arts and crafts. A tiled table-top that depicts a gesneriad. Refrigerator magnets. A plant made entirely of clay – baked and assembled. The possibilities are endless.

Division IV Commercial and Educational

Class 81 is for a display of 10 or more gesneriads by a commercial grower. The plants need to be staged as a group and individually identified.

Class 82 is for fewer than 10 gesneriads by a commercial grower.

Classes 83 – 86 are for educational exhibits. Everyone should have something for Class 86, even if it's only a photo of what the flowers on your plant looked like when it was in bloom. The other classes are self-explanatory. The display should educate the public. Pick any topic. Set up a big display or simply a plant with seed pods. The education comes from the information on the papers or cards with the display.

You've been through the entire show. Start pulling aside plants that you want to grow for the show and give them some special treatment NOW. Extra shaping, grooming and maybe a little more fertilizer to green up the leaves. It's never too early (or late) to get show plants together!

ANNUAL PICNIC June 11, 2011

The past two years we've held our annual picnic at Greenbelt Park in Greenbelt, MD. The park has some nice shaded picnic tables with barbeque pits that are available on a first come basis. That's what we're going to do again this year. The first ones there will claim two or three tables in the Sweetgum Picnic area. We generally start to show up at around 10:30, ahead of the crowd, so we haven't had any problems getting some tables locked down. We'll grill some burgers and dogs and have a nice potluck selection of salads, sides and desserts. Bring your own meat for the grill, along with buns or whatever, and a side dish

or dessert to share with a few people (no need to bring enough for 20- we'll all have plenty to eat!). The Chapter will supply plates, cups, knives, forks, spoons, iced drinks (soda, water, tea) and condiments.

Our picnic is a social gathering without a business meeting. There will be a plant raffle. Feel free to bring garden plants as well as gesneriads to the plant raffle since most of the group are gardeners of many interesting plant material. This is a great opportunity to mingle and ask questions, especially for the new members, but also for the officers of the Chapter who often do not enjoy the opportunity to chat while running a normal meeting. The picnic will be held even if there is light rain forecast for the day. Contact Jim Roberts on the morning of the picnic if you're in doubt about the weather. Jim's phone number is 41 0-227-2324.

Directions to Greenbelt Park:

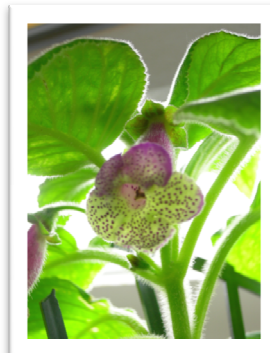
Address: 6565 Greenbelt Road Greenbelt, Maryland 20770. Off I-95, Take Exit 23 Route 201 Kenilworth Avenue South (toward Bladensburg). Take a left on Greenbelt Road . (Greenbelt Road is an overpass over Route 201 that is also known as Route 193.) The park is a quarter mile on the right hand side of Greenbelt Road across from Fridays restaurant and Marriott Courtyard.

From Washington, D.C., Take (Route 295) Baltimore-Washington Parkway. Take Greenbelt Road west (It's the exit right after I-95) Veer right onto Route 193 Greenbelt Road West. The Greenway shopping center is on the left. Proceed on Route 193 Greenbelt Road west. The park is on the left hand side at the 3rd traffic light across from Friday's restaurant, Capitol Cadillac, and Marriott Courtyard.

If lost, please call one of the following:

Ranger Station: M-S 8am-4pm 301-344-3944

U.S. Park Police Station 301-344-4250.



In May Petal Tones Newsletter, this photo was misnamed *Kohleria* 'Lemon Drop'. The correct name is: *Kohleria* 'Lemon Demon'

NCAC Treasurer's Report
Meeting on 14 May 2011

The current NCAC treasury checkbook balance is \$2,867.41 down from the March balance of \$2,996.91. Received at the March meeting were additional donations in memory of Nell Hennessy, as well as \$70 from the raffle. A total of \$380 was donated by chapter members in honor of Nell. To that amount was added an additional \$100 from the chapter treasury as voted on at the March meeting. I sent off a check for \$480 to Paul Susi, TGS Development Chairman, for the Gesneriad Society's Student and Speakers Convention Fund to assist students of Gesneriaceae to attend the annual convention. With the check I included a list of donors who may be listed in the Gesneriad Society annual report. The donations are tax-deductible. There was also the monthly bank service charge of \$3.

Respectfully submitted,
Larry Skog,
NCAC Treasurer
11 June 2011

National Capital Area Chapter (NCAC)
A Chapter of the Gesneriad Society, Inc.

"The purpose of the chapter shall be to afford a convenient and beneficial association of persons interested in Gesneriads; to stimulate a widespread interest in the identification, correct nomenclature, culture, and propagation of Gesneriads; and to encourage the origination and introduction of new cultivars."

(NCAC bylaws, revised April 1981.)

NCAC meets on the second Saturday of the month in the Administration Building of the U.S. National Arboretum. For details, please refer to the latest issue of *Petal Tones*, the website, or contact one of the people below. All are welcome and new attendees are invited to a free item from the raffle table.

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NCAC website: www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

NCAC Blog: <http://petaltones.blogspot.com/>

Website & Blog: Kyoko Imai
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web@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

Addendum: Education Page
A few of Jim's photos



Jim's Paraboea



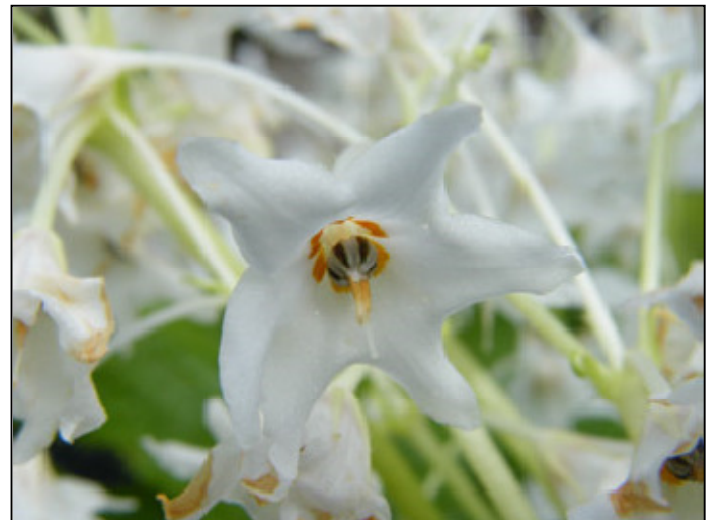
Pearcea hypocrytaflora
Baltimore AV Show grown by Andrew Norris



Bill Price's *Conandron ramonfidiodes* 'alba'
Photo by Karyn Cichocki

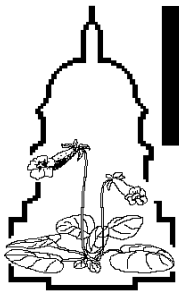


Pentadenia orientdandina
Baltimore AV show grown by Andrew Norris



Bill Price's *Conandron ramonfidiodes* 'alba' (close up)
Photo by Karyn Cichocki

Update: "For those that attended the AVSA Convention in Cherry Hill, NJ several weeks ago, you saw the beautiful *Conandron* plant that Bill Price had in the show for exhibit only. Unfortunately, not one of the probably hundred buds opened. I'm plant sitting Bill's plant, we both had hoped that it would make it to the GS Convention, but it is just about bloomed out." Karyn Cichocki from Gesneriphiles



Petal Tones

The newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of
The Gesneriad Society

Volume 42 Number 7

August 2011



Nematanthus corticola : photo by Jim Roberts
Best in Show grown by Charlene Marietti

President's Message

Have you all put aside some plants for the show? Ki's suggestion a few weeks ago to pick a few entries and give them a special location was great! I just wish I had the time to give plants the extra care they need. I have some really neat plants with lots of bloom but the only way that they could make it to a show would be with a series of trick mirrors and maybe some magician's smoke to hide the bare, crooked stems and missing leaves. I just don't seem to be able to find the time to work with them.

On the brighter side, my collection has grown so big that even if I can only salvage a plant or two on each shelf I could end up with 50 entries (Yeah, right – that'll happen!). At least I know I'll have flowers for my arrangements this time. When I first joined the group 5 years ago I had to ask other members to bring in flowers for me.

Meeting Schedule:

Meetings will be located in the trailer at the National Arboretum unless noted.

September 10, 2011 : National Arboretum
10am "Grooming for the Show"

September 17 & 18, 2011: NCAC Flower Show at Behnke's Nursery
11300 Baltimore Avenue, Beltsville, MD

October 11, 2011: Joint meeting with The Begonia Society. Guest speaker is John Boggan "Testing the Limits with Hardy(ish) Gesneriads and Begonias".

Tonight I had two choices. Write a few things for Petal Tones or water the plants. I should water but I looked earlier today and I didn't see anything limp or hear any cries for water, so I'll do it tomorrow night. It's so hard to find the time. I leave for Orange County, CA on Tuesday and won't be back until Saturday night, so holding off on watering makes sense. They'll be on their own until Sunday.

The weather this summer has been too darn hot for gesneriads if you don't have air conditioning. I hope it breaks before September. On the other hand, the "hardy" Sinningia have been flowering their heads off for two months now. The hummingbirds have been visiting daily and there are loads of seed pods. There could be some interesting plants there since they're all being pollinated with other "hardy" Sinningias. Currently there are S. Arkansas Belle, S. Scarlett O'Hara, S. Bananas Foster, S. Carolyn and S. Butter and Cream all in flower and all with seed pods. Let me know if you'd like to try some. Anything could happen. The parentage is pink, white, yellow and red.

President's Message cont'

By the way, we are scheduled for a meeting at the Arboretum on September 10. This will be our last chance to tie up all the show loose ends and make some last minute panic-driven decisions. We should probably also have a program at this meeting. So I'm proposing that we hold a program on last-minute grooming tips; cleaning leaves, double-potting, inconspicuous staking and so forth. I get the feeling that this is going to be a short issue so I'm going to keep my message short. I'll put on my Show Chair hat and write up something for that next. See you all in September. Jim

Bloomin' Now



Mystery Strep... Barb Stewart is wondering if any one may be able to ID this plant



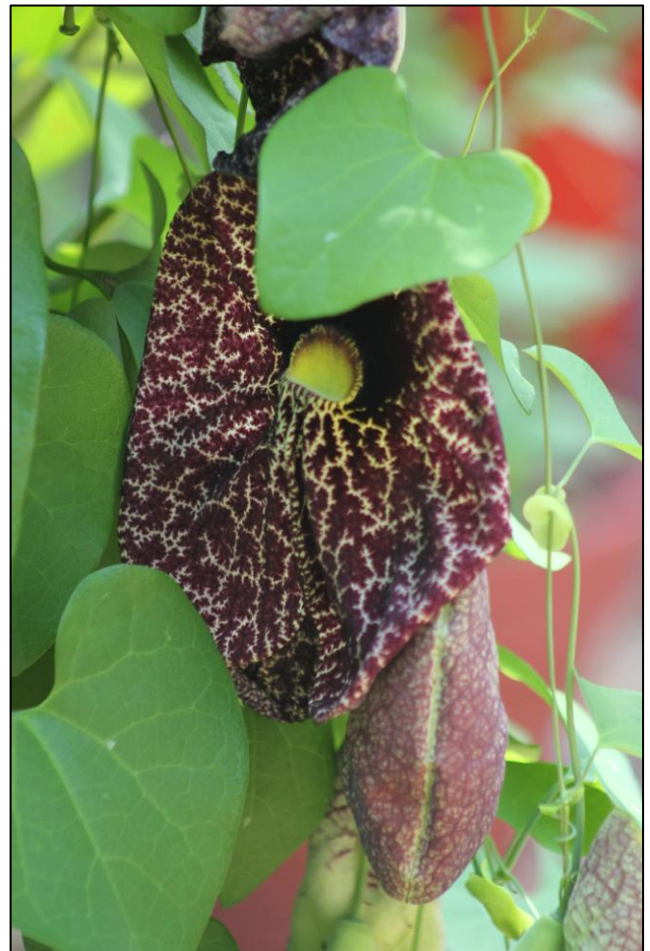
Barb's *Streptocarpus* _Spiritual Corridor'

Bloomin Now cont'

Jim's gems!



Knockout Flower



Dutchman's Pipe



Hardy Sinningias



Lysionotus brought back from China



Hardy Sinningia of a lighter variety



A little beauty from China

Seemannias As Bedding Plants

John Boggan

For almost 20 years, I was so fixated on gesneriads as houseplants that my growing--and breeding--was entirely directed towards small plants, indoors, under fluorescent lights. When I lived in upstate New York I occasionally summered plants outdoors—always in pots--but it was only after I settled down in a house with a yard in Washington, DC that I started to appreciate the potential of some of the larger-growing gesneriads not only as outdoor container plants but as bedding plants grown directly in the ground.



I've tried a variety of gesneriads outdoors but one of the most successful genera has been *Seemannia*. This small group of species, included until recently in *Gloxinia*, do quite well in our mid-Atlantic climate and at least one species, *S. nematanthodes*, is supposed to be hardy to zone 7b. I've also been inspired by seeing *S. sylvatica* grown as a bedding plant, in full sun, in while on vacation in southern Florida in the winter. In the last few years I've been working on producing dark-leaved hybrids and I think some of these hybrids may have commercial potential as bedding plants.

Seemannia purpurascens 'Purple Prince' was my first *Seemannia* hybrid, resulting from a cross between two different wild collections of the species. 'Purple Prince' is a tall, dark-leaved hybrid with pink flowers with a contrasting green limb. Although

pinching helps keep it compact, it ultimately gets too tall for growing indoors but performs very well outdoors in containers or in the ground where it has plenty of head room. Inspired by my success with this plant, and intrigued by the reputed hardiness of *S. nematanthodes*, I've made crosses between these two

species in hopes of producing hybrids with attractive foliage that are also hardy. In this I have been at least half successful and have recently released three new cultivars from these crosses that combine dark foliage with bright red flowers.



'Big Red' and 'Little Red' are sibling seedlings from the cross (*S. nematanthodes* x *S. purpurascens*) x *S. nematanthodes* 'Evita'. The *S. purpurascens* parent was not the same as the one that produced 'Purple Prince' but was a dark-leaved seedling that popped up among green-leaved seedlings in a sowing from wild-collected seed of the species. The F1 hybrid was nothing exceptional so I backcrossed it to *S. nematanthodes* in an attempt to get a dark-leaved version of that species, with some success. 'Big Red' has large olive-green leaves and large scarlet-red flowers much like those of 'Evita'. 'Little Red', as the name suggests, has smaller flowers. The foliage is also smaller but darker and contrasts nicely with the intense red flowers. Big Red is the nickname of my alma mater (Cornell University) and is also the name of one of our neighbors' cats. Our neighbors have a second cat from the same litter named Little Red, which suggested the name for the second plant. The two are probably too similar, but my hope is that at least one of them will inherit some of the hardiness of 'Evita'. 'Red Prince' is an F1 hybrid from *S. nematanthodes* 'Evita' x *S. purpurascens* 'Purple Prince'. I had previously made the same interspecific cross but using different selections of the two parent species; I repeated it because both 'Purple Prince' and 'Evita' are superior versions of the species. The new F1 hybrid likewise had much better form and foliage than the previous F1 hybrid that I had used to produce 'Big Red' and 'Little Red'. 'Red Prince' has very dark, glossy foliage and deep red flowers. It's very similar to the other two hybrids but I've used it in further breeding and decided it was nice enough in its own right to name.

Seemannias As Bedding Plants cont'

Seemannia species and hybrids are easy to grow in rich, well-drained soil that is neither too wet nor too dry. Most do well in bright or dappled shade but will stay more compact and bloom better if they get direct sun for part of the day, preferably in the morning. *S. nematanthodes* and its hybrids, in particular, benefit from morning sun but direct mid-day sun will scorch their leaves. They respond well to pinching when young to produce a fuller, more compact plant. My plants have held up well to sun, rain, heat, and humidity in my zone 7 garden and I have had virtually no problems with slugs, aphids, or other pests. I hope to see more growers trying these plants outdoors.

Seemannias go dormant in the winter and produce scaly rhizomes that can be overwintered indoors, and will stay dormant for months as long as they are kept cool and dry. In this respect they are very similar to *Achimenes*, but the scaly rhizomes are larger. The rhizomes can be started indoors in later winter or early spring under lights—providing as much light as possible—and planted out in early May. Although *S. nematanthodes* ‘*Evita*’ is supposed to be hardy to zone 7b I haven’t yet found this or any other seemannia to be hardy in my zone 7a/b garden, even through a mild winter. I keep leaving hybrids in the ground every fall, mulching and crossing my fingers, in hope of hitting the right genetic combination to get such great plants to survive more than one growing season!

Ask Mr. Gesneriad

What do I need to do to keep the tips of my *Streptocarpus* from turning brown or curling under?



Streptocarpus grow in areas with long periods of drought. One of the ways that they compensate for this is to sacrifice the tips of the leaves when there is insufficient water. If only half of the leaf gets water the plant can live on half as much water. Unfortunately, this sacrificial trait is carried over into most of the hybrids that we grow. On the one hand, Streps don’t like to be overly wet. They grow in dry

areas, often clinging to bare rock. Their roots need air. On the other hand, their leaves turn brown if the plant starts to dry even a little bit. Streps need a light airy mix so that the roots get a lot of air. They also require that the soil never dry out. Many growers feel that Streps can’t be grown on wicks. However, that’s the only way I can get them to grow well. The trick is to use a very loose mix. So... constant moisture with a lot of air around the roots. One day with a dry wick and you may have some browning occur.

What gesneriad genera might fare well in a dry area with steady cool temperatures (an air-conditioned room)?

There are a number of genera which will do well under those conditions. Not all gesneriads grow in humid cloud forests. For example, many of the genera found in Brazil (*Nematanthus*, *Codonanthe*, *Sinningia*) grow in temperate forests with very high summer temperatures and very cool winter temperatures. Brazil is a warm country, but I’ve been there in the winter (July) when temperatures were just above or even slightly below freezing. The vining plants from Brazil often have thick, succulent leaves and seem to be blind to humidity conditions. Tuberos plants go dormant when it gets cold, but are fine with normal room conditions. On the other side of the globe, Chinese plants are also found in temperate regions. *Chirita* and *Petrocosmea* grow in areas where daytime temperatures are in the mid 80’s and night temperatures again go down near freezing. The thick leaves are not sensitive to humidity variations.

Instead of talking genera, look at the foliage of the plant. Thin, hairy leaves are much more sensitive to humidity or the lack thereof. Smooth, thick, succulent leaves will put up with a lot. The thinner the leaf the quicker it will shed moisture in a dry room. When it sheds faster than it can take up new water the leaves will get brown edges or just get “crispy.” If you have to grow in a dry, cool, air conditioned environment choose your plants carefully. If you want to grow something that requires more humidity than the room will provide, try gravel trays filled with water under the plants to increase the local humidity. Or put the plants under cover.

Chapter Desperately Seeking

<i>Streptocarpus 'Harlequin Blue'</i>	Brian Connor
<i>Streptocarpus 'Rose Halo'</i>	Brian Connor
<i>Streptocarpus 'Shenandoah Sugar Plum'</i>	Brian Connor
<i>Niphimenes 'Lemonade'</i>	Brian Connor
<i>Henckelia malayana</i>	Brian Connor
<i>Henckelia ANYTHING!...;</i>	Brian Connor
<i>Saintpaulia</i> , any species besides <i>Rupicola</i>	Bev N.
<i>Pearcea hypocyrtiflora</i>	Jim Roberts
<i>Episcia lilacina 'Panama'</i>	Jim Roberts
<i>Streptocarpus kentaniensis</i>	Jim Roberts
<i>Columnnea orientandina</i>	Jim Roberts
<i>Begonia smithiantha</i>	Donna Beverin
<i>xAchimenantha 'Dutch Treat'</i>	Donna Beverin
<i>Columnnea gallicauda</i>	Lee Linett
<i>Rhynchoglossum notonianum</i>	Lee Linett
<i>Sinningia hirsuta</i>	Lee Linett
<i>Sinningia 'Tinkerbells'</i>	Lee Linett
<i>Smithiantha 'Santa Clara'</i>	Lee Linett
<i>Vanhoutea lanata</i>	Lee Linett
<i>Saintpaulia 'Pygmy'</i>	Lee Linett

Please send a list of a plant you would love to grow via email. It will be posted here in the newsletter. A generous member will share! Petal Tones has a wide distribution and chances are good that someone will be able to get you what you want. Please share your results with the editors!

Report on the 2011 Convention

Brian Connor

As most of you know, the Gesneriad Society held its convention and annual flower show the week of July 4th last in Philadelphia.

There were 317 entries (210 horticulture, 61 artistic, 40 arts, 5 educational, 1 commercial) This is more than last years' show in Vancouver, but did not surpass the record breaking 2009 NCAC sponsored show in Silver Spring!

In all, 84 blues, 82 reds, 70 yellows and 11 honorable mentions were awarded.

We were treated to rarely seen gesneriads from Jim Roberts, Nancy Kast, Paul Kroll and Tim Tuttle.

Lynn Cook and Troy Ray had several outstanding large plants [remember the 7 foot *Alsobia* in Silver Spring?... it was back]... including *Sinningia bulbosa*, *Nematanthus pyncophyllus*, *Drymonia uninerva* and *Episcia 'Blue Moon'*.

Charlene Marietti won Best in Show with a beautiful *Nematanthus corticola* that was loaded with dangling flowers. She also exhibited a lovely *Pearcea hypocyrtiflora* and a *Columnnea purpureovittata* that made me drool.

There was also a memorable display of micro-miniature *Sinningias* by Irene Sobotincic.

I spotted 14 NCAC members... what a great turn out

and I might have missed someone (granted, I am including a couple of members who belong to multiple clubs including ours and who can't come to meetings very often).

Please congratulate Neale Stuart-Merriman who was runner-up to Sweepstakes in the Artistic section. Altogether (including horticulture), Neale took home 5 blues, 1 red, 1 yellow. Barbara Stewart won 3 blues, 3 reds, 4 yellow for diverse exhibits including a photograph of a *Kohleria* flower, a terrarium and horticulture. Jim Roberts won 2 blues (those awesome Chinese gesneriads!) and I snagged 1 blue for an *Episcia*.

Lets let the convention inspire us for our September show!

Flower Show Report –

Show Chair Jim Roberts

We are getting closer to our Fall Show every week. I hope you're all getting cuttings started for the sales table. I hope you're all busy transplanting seedlings for the sales table. I hope you have figured out which 3 or 6 or 20 plants you're going to enter into the show. I hope some of you will consider entering some arrangements – there are still openings in all the Classes (contact me to reserve a space). I hope the weather is great and we have a ton of visitors. I hope for a great show overall.

But HOPE won't get us there. There's a lot of hard work ahead of us. What is really going to complicate things is that this is first time at Behnke's. They've been great at helping us, but until we get there and get set up I'm going to worry. Some Saturday in the next few weeks we're going to hold a meeting for the Show Chairs who can make it at Behnke's. We'll look over the show and sales areas and figure out what we need to buy to stage the perfect show. We'll also look over the areas where the lectures will be held and the judges will be seated for their lunch.

For the September Petal Tones I would like each of the Show Chairs to write a short report on where we are on getting ready. Sales will need volunteers. Hospitality will need some help. Judges and Clerks are coming along okay. How are awards coming along? Where will we have our Awards Dinner? How many of us plan to go to the dinner? Please get in touch with me if you have any questions.

Challenge Plants at the Show

Jim Roberts

I hope you all remember that we're supposed to be entering Jim Steuerleins's Sinningia hybrids in the show next month. You can enter it either an educational exhibit or as horticultural exhibit in Section I. Since this was my crazy idea I guess it's my job to prepare the exhibit. However, I don't want to go through all that unless there are going to be some exhibits. Please get back in touch with me and let me know that you are bringing a plant for the F2 demonstration of hybrid.

FOODIES, UNITE

First, I'd like to thank all of you who responded so quickly to my request for food and drinks for the Judges/Clerks Lunch at our September show and sale. The middle of a heat wave probably isn't the best time to send out an email for such items, however, we have to plan ahead so that everyone can be assured of having a satisfying lunch after all their hard work at judging our wonderful show. Secondly, let me mention that we will have access to refrigeration and heating facilities. Briefly, we're looking for:

- salads: pasta, rice, veggie, fruit, tuna, chicken, ham
- assorted cheeses: sliced, cubed, and whole
- casseroles: noodle, veggie, meat
- cut fresh veggies with dips or spreads
- cold cuts, sliced meats & cheese
- pickles, relishes
- crackers,
- snack: chips, nuts, crunchies
- breads, rolls, pita,
- desserts: brownies, fudge, cakes, cupcakes, pies, cookies, decadent is always preferable
- cold beverages: lemonade, iced tea, juices

These are only a few suggestions and represent what we have served at past shows. Please bring what you would like. It is a semi-organized pot luck lunch! We expect twenty-five to thirty people to partake of the foods on the buffet tables, however, most will take a spoonful so please don't think you must bring enough for an entire Thanksgiving meal! Think more along the lines of the chapter's annual holiday party.

One other suggestion - please bring a serving utensil for your dish.

After you've selected your show entries and groomed them and after you've potted and labeled your sale plants, leaves, and cuttings, take time to decide on your dish or drink and contact me:

Lee Linett slinky238@gmail.com

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Website & Blog: Kyoko Imai

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Newsletter Editor: Donna Beverin

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or

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web@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

**The National Begonia Society's
Potomac Branch
presents**

29th Annual Begonia Show and Sale

Green Spring Garden Park
6403 Green Spring Road
Alexandria, VA

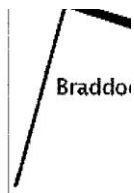
Saturday-Sunday, August 27-28
Saturday 9:00 am to 4:30 pm
Sunday Noon to 3:30 pm

Feast your eyes at this free flower show sponsored by the Potomac Branch of the American Begonia Society. Expand your plant palette; be tempted with splashes of color for homes and greenhouses that last long after frosts have put our outdoor gardens to bed! This sale

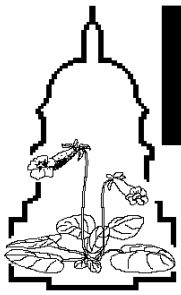


offers

a wide variety of begonias, including unusual subtropical species. Be sure not to miss this annual event!



Green Spring Garden Park
703-323-7513
703-451-7238
703-642-5173



Petal Tones

The newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of
The Gesneriad Society

Volume 42 Number 8

September 2011



Petrocosmea flower: This is one of the species that my friend in China shared with me March 2011. Gorgeous purple flower color that is really that dark and rich. Since I'm not really good at Pet. ID's I have no idea what species this is. Any ideas? Someone has suggested martinii but this flower doesn't have any yellow at all and the pictures of martinii I found on the web all have yellow on the top petals.

President's Message

Can we cancel the show? Is it too late? I've been on the road the last three weeks just when I should be grooming and preparing everything for the big event. I haven't even prepared plants for sale yet. Guess that will get done this weekend. No more than 300-500 hundred probably.

We need one more disaster before September 17th or the show might end up as the third (you know disasters always come in threes – earthquake, hurricane, Gesneriad Show). Hope everyone has recovered by now. I've heard that some of you are still without power. Hopefully no injuries or serious damage to anyone's property.

I was in Texas for the earthquake, so I missed it entirely. And then Irene pretty much missed me. We got a lot of rain and some wind on Saturday night; enough to knock down a tree. But nothing more than

Meeting Schedule:

Meetings will be located in the trailer at the National Arboretum unless noted.

September 10, 2011 : National Arboretum
10am "Grooming for the Show"

September 17 & 18, 2011: NCAC Flower Show at Behnke's Nursery
11300 Baltimore Avenue, Beltsville, MD

October 11, 2011: Joint meeting with The Begonia Society. Guest speaker is John Boggan "Testing the Limits with Hardy(ish) Gesneriads and Begonias".

what we get with a typical thunderstorm. I didn't even bring plants in from the patio. The large begonias didn't lose any leaves. The Sinningia are still flowering. The 12 foot tall Passiflora vine is still standing tall (cut a bamboo shoot as a stake and it climbed all the way to the top and has draped itself all the way back down). I watered everything tonight for the first time in two weeks. Thank goodness for wicks or I wouldn't have anything left. And also thank goodness that gesneriads for the most part are able to withstand short periods of dryness. And I really do mean DRYness !

This weekend I'll start picking out and grooming some things for the show. Of course that means setting up a new light area where I can place the plants in positions where they have some possibility of flattening out in the pot, if they're meant to be flat rosettes, or correcting the one-way leaners if they're meant to grow upright. Have no idea what I'm going to end up with in the show.

Is it just me, or are our shows turning more into mini-Conventions than just shows? I've been to shows in

other parts of the country and they have a nice assortment of plants and some really beautiful ribbon winners, but I can't recall any shows with speakers. Or Awards Banquets. Or as many cash awards as we seem to be able to garner !

I've been spending like crazy for the show. I know we have a show budget but I can't remember what it is and I'm just buying what I know we need. I bought a box of name tags and holders because we don't seem to know what happened to the ones we already had. I bought ribbons, rosettes and extra-President's message cont'

special rosettes to go along with the cash prizes. I bought a 40 cup coffee urn because our little Mr. Coffee just doesn't do for a group our size any more. I bought thank-you cards for the judges and clerks and will be giving each a special plant/ cutting. Anything that the Chapter decides was an illegal or excessive expense I'll just keep for myself. I've often dreamt of making a suit out of green ribbon rosettes.....

But there are still a number of jobs that need doing, and I hope we can get them all organized at the meeting on the 10th OR BEFORE. We need someone to cut and assemble the niches. This can all be done ahead of the show and just carried to Behnke's for the final taping. But someone has to do it. We (I) still haven't started to look for a location for the Banquet. Behnke's suggested that the Holiday Inn where some of the judges will be staying has a good restaurant with a private room we might be able to use. But when I'm home I have a house and a dog and a mother-in-law to take care of.

Please get in touch with me if you can do either of these jobs. Jobs still on my plate: Print the name tags and print all the score sheets for the judges to use.

Enough of the show business. As you will see elsewhere in Petal Tones, by contact in China just sent me some more great plants. The best of the bunch was a plant that looks a lot like Chirita minutimaculata but has leaves that are long and slender rather than short rounded ovals. Very different. Very ornamental. Very wantable. He then wrote to say that he just got back from another collecting trip and has some things for me that are

even more amazing. Things that aren't even in cultivation in China. Guess it pays to follow up on strange overseas requests. My relationship with Yang started with a simple request on g-philes for Saintpaulia leaves. He sent back a Chirita and a few Pets. Then he wanted some Streps. Then I got to visit him and tour around. Now I have 3 speaking engagements lined up and I'm sure more to come.

Well, it's getting late (for me). My back is still sore but mostly recovered. But the rest of me is slowly falling apart. I cracked a rib two weeks ago bending over the back gate trying to reach the patio with some clay pots. I knew that if I dropped them they'd crack, so I sacrificed a rib to keep them whole. Then last weekend I had to cut up a small tree that fell across the driveway. Not a thick tree, but dense cherry wood and very tall. Dropped one of the logs I cut onto my toe (wearing sandals is not a good idea when using a chain saw) and broke my toe. So I'm tired and I'm going to say goodnight before I fall asleep at the computer and break my forehead against the keyboard. Hope you all make it to the meeting on the 10th.
Jim

Show Update Information from Jim Roberts

In order for our show to be a success we need to have entries. Please look over your plants as a novice would. Don't be overly critical. If the plant is healthy and in bloom, see what you can do to shape it up, or stake it if necessary, but bring it to the show. Lots of points go towards the health of the plant, cleanliness of the plant and pot, and overall vigor. A missing or damaged leaf may reduce the plant from a blue to a red ribbon, but chances are excellent that the public will still want to see that plant.

There were several plants that I tossed into boxes for the last show at the last minute. One was so under potted I just buried the old pot at the bottom of a new one (didn't want to disturb the crowded roots). That plant scored in the high 90's - way too many points in my opinion but that's what the judges saw. I lost the plant (should have done a real re-potting) but got a leaf back at Convention from one of the judges who loved the plant so much that I had to share a leaf with her. The leaf has already sent up plantlets.

The final ribbons are in. Everything looks great for a good show (NO HURRICANES PLEASE!). We need you to make the show complete.

Jim's Plants



I'll have to have Tim Tuttle help me ID this and all the other new Pets that I'm getting from China. Probably a species already in cultivation but I'm not big on *Petrocosmea* identification.



This one is probably a new import of *Chirita brassicoides* Marble Leaf. It's got some buds on it so I should be able to confirm that in a few months.



No idea on this one, but the leaf pattern looks like it could be a very nice plant when it grows up.



This *Chirita* one looks a lot like *C. minutomaculata* except that the leaves are very, very long in comparison. Leaves have a great shine and thick texture. Have already put down a few leaves to share at Holiday Party!



This one looks pretty plain until you get a peek at the reddish undersides of the leaves.

Donna's *Streptocarpus*



'Bristol's Goose Egg': I rec'd this scented baby at one of our last raffles. It is doing well on my counter under light in the kitchen. Very delicate stem and have not repotted yet. Has been with a bloom constantly and is now with many buds.

Ideas To Share about the Show:

- The space we will be using at Behnke's looks lovely. We have about half of the houseplants' greenhouse, and our space will be broken up into the show area, the sales area next to it, the lecture area, and a judges/staff breakout area.
- There will be lots of space, so bring many show plants, as well as any plants you might want to display in the lecture area. We have asked for shade cloth above the show area in case we have a sunny three days. Hanging plants can be suspended on S hooks from the greenhouse structure.



Donna's *Sinningia richii* 'Robson Lopes', from Jim's seeding



-
- All sales items must have a 3/4" round blue sticker.
 - This is by request of Behnke's, so that their cashiers will be able to tell our plants from their plants. (It's official because I checked with Stephanie at Behnke's, and she is informing their staff.)
 - Ki bought 2000 stickers and will bring them to the September 10th meeting.
 - **Plants must have: blue dot sticker, removable price tag with your initials and label with name of the plant**
 - If you can help out at the plant sales table please email Donna: donnabeverin@gmail.com

- Jim mentioned that Behnke's has a lot of hooks to hang plants from the ceiling for those of you who may be entering hanging baskets.
- Kmart has the hanging basket holders as seen at the show in PA on sale.
- There will be a microwave at the buffet table for dishes needing reheating.
- To park at Behnke's basically, turn off route 1 onto Howard then look for an entrance to the parking area on the left. The first gate is locked but there is another entrance further down. They will try to have a sign for us.
- You can also drive up to the greenhouse to unload your stuff. To do so, drive down Howard to Queen Anne. Queen Anne is usually gated shut because it is Behnke's property, but they will have it open. Then turn onto Wicomoco (which might look more like a driveway than a road - I'm not sure) up to the greenhouse which will be on your right. There's a door right into the show and sales area of the greenhouse.
- When you're finished, please move your car to the parking area. See you all there!

Chapter Desperately Seeking

<i>Streptocarpus 'Harlequin Blue'</i>	Brian Connor
<i>Streptocarpus 'Rose Halo'</i>	Brian Connor
<i>Streptocarpus 'Shenandoah Sugar Plum'</i>	Brian Connor
<i>Niphimenes 'Lemonade'</i>	Brian Connor
<i>Henckelia malayana</i>	Brian Connor
<i>Henckelia ANYTHING!..;</i>	Brian Connor
<i>Saintpaulia</i> , any species besides <i>Rupicola</i>	Bev N.
<i>Pearcea hypocyrtiflora</i>	Jim Roberts
<i>Episcia lilacine 'Panama'</i>	Jim Roberts
<i>Streptocarpus kentaniensis</i>	Jim Roberts
<i>Columnea orientandina</i>	Jim Roberts
<i>Begonia smithiantha</i>	Donna Beverin
<i>xAchimenantha 'Dutch Treat'</i>	Donna Beverin
<i>Columnea gallicauda</i>	Lee Linett
<i>Rhynchoglossum notonianum</i>	Lee Linett
<i>Sinningia hirsuta</i>	Lee Linett
<i>Sinningia 'Tinkerbells'</i>	Lee Linett
<i>Smithiantha 'Santa Clara'</i>	Lee Linett
<i>Vanhoutea lanata</i>	Lee Linett
<i>Saintpaulia 'Pygmy'</i>	Lee Linett

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National Capital Area Chapter (NCAC) A Chapter of the Gesneriad Society, Inc.

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(NCAC bylaws, revised April 1981.)

NCAC meets on the second Saturday of the month in the Administration Building of the U.S. National Arboretum. For details, please refer to the latest issue of *Petal Tones*, the website, or contact one of the people below. All are welcome and new attendees are invited to a free item from the raffle table.

The Gesneriad Society website: www.gesneriadsociety.org
 NCAC website: www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org
 NCAC Blog: <http://petaltones.blogspot.com/>
 Website & Blog: Kyoko Imai
web@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

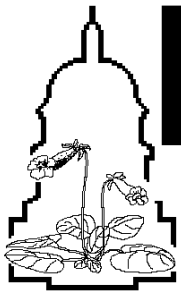
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Petal Tones

The newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of
The Gesneriad Society

Volume 42 Number 9

October 2011



Congratulations to Ki for growing the NCAC's
Best in Show: Sinningia 'Li'l Georgie'

President's Message

I am writing this in my hotel room in Germany. I'm here for the week for some company training. Life has been super-hectic for me since the show a couple of weeks ago. Now I get some time to sit back and relax. No ear tied to the phone all day in the office. Enjoying lots of nice company and lots of good German beer at the end of each day. I just spent the last hour in the hotel's health facility in the basement. It has nice in the floor pool, several saunas, a whirlpool and a couple of exercise bikes. The health clubs over here concentrate on the mental well-being more than building muscles. I need that right about now.

Wasn't the show great this year! I'm so proud of all of you. At the end of Friday it looked like it was going to be a small show, but entries came in on Saturday morning and really filled the room nicely. It's a good thing we had 5 panels of judges. I can't single any one of you out. Everyone helped in so

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October 11, 2011: Joint meeting with The Begonia Society. Guest speaker is John Boggan "Testing the Limits with Hardy(ish) Gesneriads and Begonias".

November: no meeting, see you at the Christmas Party meeting

many ways. Behnke's was a great venue. Stephanie was so helpful at getting us everything we needed to make the show, the breakfast and lunch, and the talks all successful. So THANK YOU ALL!

Our next meeting should be a really interesting one. As the night temperatures start to drop we all start panicking. Where in the world are we going to put all these plants that have grown like crazy out on the front steps or on the deck or patio? Wouldn't it be nice not to have to worry? Wouldn't it be nice to be able to just plant your Gesneriads (or Begonias) in the ground and leave them there? Well that's exactly what John Boggan has been experimenting with in his DC garden. Come learn about growing your plants outdoors and (just maybe) leaving them there year round. Since this will be a joint meeting with the Begonia Society, we'll keep our business meeting to a minimum. Both groups are likely to have some things to discuss. But let's make this an extra special raffle. Bring in all the extra sales plants from the show. You know you don't really need them. Bring in Begonias and other plants too. The club needs this kind of support, and your contributions both in plant material and the purchase of raffle tickets provide most of our annual income.

President's message cont'

Also, if you have a plant that's a few weeks behind schedule and is in its full glory at the time of the meeting and missed the show, bring it in for a 'Little Show.' I think the Begonia folks are attending to see what makes our Chapter so successful, in addition of course to coming for John's talk. I don't know that I can point to one thing that we do that has caused our Chapter to grow so much over the past 5 years. I think it really all has to do with the quality and openness and willingness to share plants and knowledge that we all bring to the meetings. See you all on the 15th.

Treasurer Needed

One of the business items that we need to address at our meeting this month is that Larry Skog has decided to resign as Treasurer. Larry has done a great job for us for the past ten years in this position but feels it's time to let someone else do the job. I don't know what our by-laws state about open positions for officers. I'll look into that sometime between now and the meeting next month. If we need to have a Nominating Committee come up with candidates or a candidate for an election in December, then I'm going to need volunteers for the Nominating Committee. If the vacancy can be a simple Presidential or Executive Committee Appointment then I'm going to need a volunteer to fill the position. I'll send out a separate email to all the members once I figure out which way we need to go on this. But let's all remember to thank Larry for his years of service in this position.

After Thoughts from Our Show

-I learned that it's wise not to second guess yourself. Two plants that were initially not considered for show several months ago would up with two blue ribbons. They weren't fussed over or given special attention and certainly didn't receive "the best place on the shelf". The photography section section was really good and the educational exhibit highlighted one of The Gesneriad Society's aims - to educate the public, this time to show that gesneriads are found in far away places, not just in a local store. It would have been nice to see more Petrocosmeas, Kohlerias, Saintpaulias, Streptocarpus, Nematanthus, Smithianthas. The lack could be due to more second-guessing as in thinking that other exhibitors would bring them. Lee

- I enjoyed seeing what others are growing: Nautilocalyx pemphidius with the biggest leaves I have ever seen; a "home made" Sinningia bullata hybrid from Carol Hamelink's hybridizing efforts; the Kohleria with fantastically dark leaves and saturated flowers....

- I wish we'd had more blooming Saintpaulia and Streptocarpus in the show. They really light up a table!

- I had no good excuse not to have more miniature Sinningia in the show.

- I should have put together an educational exhibit months in advance.

- I should have prepared the photo entries in advance, instead of running to get matting the day before.

- Potting up some plants for potential show and growing them outside paid off (...except for the cold snap right before, the heat that washed out the flower colors, and the storms that came through wrecking buds and foliage....) Ki

-I enjoyed the camaraderie of our group working together for the show and sharing knowledge with one another.

-Learned a lot from judges about how to select the right category for a plant. I should have put the Nautilocalyx pemphidius in the Nautilocalyx class instead of terrarium.

-Fun to see people enjoy the crazy growing pattern and beautiful flowers of the Sinningia bullata x 'Pink Tiger'. (It is even more beautiful now with flowers all over the place!) Donna

Chapter Desperately Seeking

Streptocarpus 'Harlequin Blue'.....Brian Connor
Streptocarpus 'Rose Halo'.....Brian Connor
Streptocarpus 'Shenandoah Sugar Plum'.....Brian Connor
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A Tale of Three Terrariums by Barb Stewart



Terrariums are a lot of fun to create, and you can get a lot of mileage out of them. This terrarium has been in three shows. It was first created for an African



violet show last spring. It won a best in class award. It then traveled to the Gesneriad convention in Philadelphia. Many of my favorite plants had to be replaced with gesneriads. The judges were not impressed and gave it a score of 80, but it did earn a red ribbon. They did not care for the selaginella (club moss) plants or the little black bear standing up against the driftwood in the back. So I took their

advice and replaced the selaginella with gesneriads, removed the black bear, and changed some of the gesneriads that were getting too big. Then I entered it in the NCAC show. This time the judges were pleased with the new design and awarded it a blue ribbon with a score of 95. You never can be sure how an exhibit will be judged, but with practice you will see your designs and scores will improve.



Sinningia bullata x 'Pink Tiger'

Still Bloomin' Now: this is the first plant I have shown and it won a second place at our show in September. No ribbon can compare with the beauty of these lovely flowers! Such a delight! Donna

My First Collection
Barbara Stewart

Each time I enter a show, I like to challenge myself by trying something new. For our September show, I decided to try entering a collection. My best candidates were my petrocosemas. I have a collection of various items I have picked up at yard sales and flea markets that I use for showing plants on educational displays. My favorite one is the branch with bird nests which was just the right size for the petrocosemas.



I got many compliments on my unique display. The judges commented on my “clever presentation” and gave me a score of 85 and a red ribbon. Most of the points taken off were for cultural perfection and variety, although no particular comments were made except to pay more attention to growing conditions. Entering a collection was easy and fun, and I definitely plan to try it again.

Show/sale Report from Larry

The gross proceeds from the Sale amounted to \$1,437.97. From this must be deducted sales taxes to Maryland, the cut to growers (70% grower/ 30% chapter), and any bills for Show/Sale. After I have paid the bills, I will give you a further update. I do not know yet how this total compares with previous shows, and will give you that info in the later update. If anyone has any outstanding bills for the Show/Sale, please let me know soon. Thanks to all of you for your help and contributions to the finances of the chapter,

Larry Skog, NCAC Treasurer

The Baltimore African Violet and Gesneriad Club's Annual Fall Sale

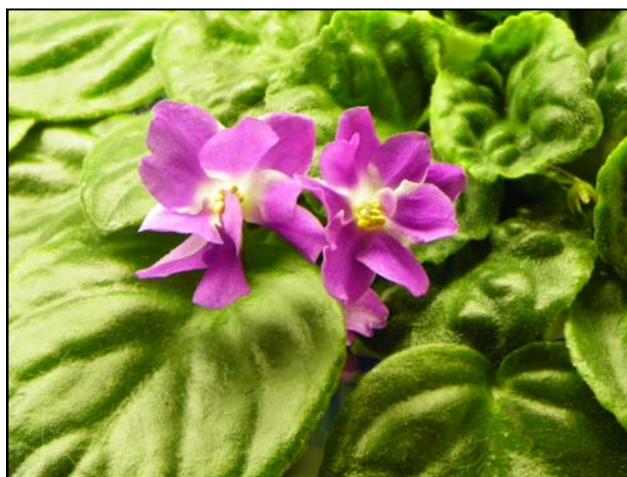
The Shops at Kenilworth
800 Kenilworth Drive, Towson, MD 21204
Saturday, October 15, 2011
Hours: 8:30 am to 5 pm

Hundreds of beautiful sale plants including violets, other gesneriads, and unusual houseplants, supplies, leaves, cuttings, soil mix, plant rings, self-watering pots and much more. Experienced growers will be there to answer your growing questions.

Any questions, you can contact Shirley Huffman
bshuffman2@aol.com 301-854-2021

Bloomin' Now

A few things blooming for Donna
Unknown Violet





Sinningia 'Wood Nymph'



Nautilocalyx pemphidius



New bud on Episcia 'Silver Skies'

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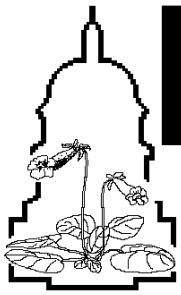
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Petal Tones

The newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of
The Gesneriad Society

Volume 42 Number 10

December 2011

President's Message

Let me start with a friendly reminder before I forget: Dues for the 2012 year are due at the December meeting. Just \$10 per household or address. Please remember to bring a check or cash to the meeting. Now for the more interesting stuff. I've been busy. Donna is probably really relieved to see this message since I've been so incommunicado for so long. Went to Munich in September and saw some interesting gesneriads at the Munich Botanical Garden. Went to Toronto in October and saw some really nice hotels for the 2013 Gesneriad Society Convention. Went to Tampa this month on vacation and saw some really nice gesneriads at the home of Nancy Kast and also at the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens. Then life went rapidly downhill. The week started off nice. I gave my talk on the China Trip to MAAVS on November 12. Well received. Then I flew to Tampa on Sunday, the 13th. I spent three great days at the beach plus the visit to Nancy and Selby Gardens. And then on Friday night I had my first ever gall bladder attack. I gave my talk to the Tampa Chapter on Saturday while in a lot of pain, but got through it okay. Visited Jay Sespico's home in Tampa and saw some more nice plants there. Then dinner with the group where I ate very light but still suffered for it. Sunday morning I hit the beach one more time before my flight home on Sunday afternoon. On Monday went to the doctor and had x-rays and a sonogram. Yep, it was just what Google told me it was. Next on Tuesday was at the hospital for a gall-bladder function test. Then had more extreme pain and then Wednesday went to the surgeon's office. I'll be having the gall bladder removed on December 2nd, which is both good and bad news. I was scheduled to give my China talk to the Long Island Chapter on December 10th; however, I doubt I'll be able to make that drive just a week after the surgery, so I had to



Meeting Schedule:

Meetings will be located in the trailer at the National Arboretum unless noted.

Saturday, December 10, 2011 NCAC Christmas Party
Door opens at 9:30am Meeting at 10:30am

Meeting dates for 2012

February 11th, March 10th, April 14th, May 12th,
September 8th, October 13th, December 8th

cancel the talk. This means I may be able to make it to our National Capital Holiday Party if I can find a ride! I'll still be very limited in what I can do, but I should be able to run the meeting. Depending on how I feel I'll either bring a lot of stuff for the raffle table or won't have anything at all with me.

At the December meeting we have a lot of interesting stuff to talk about and I have some new interesting plants and cuttings (rooting) to share with the group. One big topic is a proposed Regional Gesneriad Show to be held next September or October at the University of Delaware. The Delaware Chapter and the Liberty Bell Chapter have already decided to do the show. Brian and I think our Chapter would also be willing. But we'll have a discussion and vote at the meeting. We also have to line up a schedule of talks for next year. Or at least come up with some potential topics that Brian and I can pursue.

I still have some hardy Sinningia pots outside. The plants are long gone, but the tubers are still sitting in their pots out there. No really bad frosts yet, so I'm sure that the tubers are still okay, but I've got to bring

them in this week. After the surgery on Friday I won't be able to lift them. What a great fall it has been. I hope this doesn't mean a really nasty winter ahead of us. But let's all think positive. A nice light snow for Christmas day and then temperatures between 30-45 for the rest of the winter with no more snow. Wouldn't that be nice? I know I'm dreaming, but that's what this season is all about. Making wishes and having them come true.

I hope to see you all in December at the meeting. If not, have a safe and happy holiday with lots of wishes coming true for you! Jim

TAKE SOME TIME TO ...

by Lee Linett

1. Dust or wipe with a clean, dry cloth: the tops of your reflectors and the fluorescent tubes they hold.
2. Cross out the former name of the plant(s), turn over the label(s) and write the new name on the blank side.
3. If you've just bought a large container of fertilizer, put a small amount (about 2 months watering worth) into a clean, smaller container and label it (name and directions for use).
4. Properly dispose of fertilizers, insecticides, fungicides that have been sitting around for many months; for the most part, they've lost their potency due to time and air exposure.
5. Reset your automatic timers.
6. Clean fans, blades.
7. Hit the holiday sales, pre and post to find a variety of storage containers.
8. Consider making up a batch of potting mix just in case you're snowed in and have nothing to do.
9. If some plants do need repotting but there's no time to do it, put them, pot and all, into a larger pot to keep them from falling over because they're top heavy and repot later.
10. Update your Plant Record Book or start one.
11. Update your computer lists if you've switched over and be sure to keep a list of suppliers and nurseries you like.
12. If you've gone on a sprucing up spree and can't bear to throw away perfectly good cuttings and leaves, label them and bag them up for the chapter's raffle.

13. Sharpen dulled scissors and pruners by cutting several strips of sandpaper or an emery board.
14. Epsom salt (not salts!): when the new issue of "Gesneriads" arrives (4 times a year), I water with 1 Tablespoon Epsom salt per gallon of water.
15. If you've decided to go on a pot-cleaning spree to start out the New Year, put a small strainer over the sink drain to catch any bits of potting mix or sphagnum moss that would otherwise get into the pipes and potentially cause a blockage.
16. Before storing your outdoor gardening tools for the winter, clean them and then give the metal parts a light wipe with 3-in-1 oil for moisture (the enemy of metal) protection.
17. To prolong the life of your water tank, drain out a few gallons. Mineral sediment does accumulate in the bottom. Drain until the water runs clear.
18. Use some of your vast collection of curtain rods from every place you've ever lived in: lay one across the back of a shelf of a plant stand to hold hanging baskets.
19. Buy an inexpensive pack of bamboo skewers at the supermarket and use them for plant stakes; they're sturdy and lasting.

Ask Mr. Gesneriad

I have never grown large numbers of African violets, but at the September show I ended up walking home with quite a few. A couple of them are showing very obvious signs of powdery mildew. I don't think I overwater these, and there is at least gusts of air throughout the day. No other plants are showing such signs of mold. What do you suggest I do to combat this on my AVs?

Mr. G's advise: If the case of powdery mildew is mild, you may want to spray the affected plants with a dilute soapy solution (1 drop ivory in 1 quart,--- or if you can find it, Safer Soap). After spraying, let the plants sit a couple of minutes and then mist with water to rinse the leaves. Do this during the day and try to avoid wetting the central crown excessively. Any leaves that are dripping wet



can be gently blotted. This will often do the trick for a mild case of powdery mildew.

For a more serious problem, spray with a solution of "plain" liquid Lysol (the brown stuff, not the Lysol with special fragrances added). Dilute per directions (I think I remember 1/4 tsp per gallon) and use as above in the place of the soapy solution.

There is an insecticide called Bayer Advanced 3 in 1 Insect, Disease, & Mite Control that is also effective against powdery mildew.

<http://violetgallery.com/html%20pics/bayeradvanced3in1.html>

This particular brand was recently reviewed in AVSA magazine as a safe product to use indoors (safe relative to many other insecticides/anti-fungals). It does not degrade to more toxic compounds and can conceivably take care of multiple plant pathogens. It is also sometimes available at Loews or Home Depot. Some people use Neem oil to control powdery mildew, but this may require multiple sprayings.

For really severe cases you could try an anti-fungal such as benomyl (Benlate) or Captan. There are also some sulfur containing compounds on the market for combating powdery mildew and other fungal pathogens.

Where does the powdery mildew come from? High humidity combined with warm day temperatures and temperatures that are too cool at night can lead to a problem with this fungus. African Violets on one of my light stands (only) seem likely to develop powdery mildew in the fall. This light stand is adjacent to a very large, drafty north window. The temperature is probably dropping too much at night. I am thinking if I move that light stand, I can perhaps avoid the problem. I wonder if the grower has his plants in a similar setting? Some people say improving the air circulation helps (which it does), but I think temperature is the critical factor.

Merry Christmas!



Hardy(ish) Begonias and Gesneriads

by John Boggan

Listed below are some of the gesneriads and begonias I discussed in my October 2011 talk, as well as many more that MAY be hardy and are worth experimenting with. I have not grown all of these plants; some are hardy(ish) by rumor or reputation only. As I tried to stress in my talk, planting early, planting in a sheltered location, planting in well-drained soil, and mulching in the fall makes a huge difference in plant survival.

Begonias

Of the begonias listed below, *B. grandis* is by far the hardiest and is usually reliable in zone 6, and probably zone 5 with some protection. The rest are marginal in the Washington, DC area but *may* survive through a mild winter, especially if grown near a foundation and mulched. With rhizomatous begonias, deep planting (in addition to mulching) may help the rhizome to survive. The plant names in **bold** represent those that have survived at least one winter in my own garden. An asterisk (*) indicates that heat (in) tolerance may be a problem in our area.

*B. boliviensis**

B. chitoensis

B. cucullata var. *arenosicola*

B. deliciosa

B. diadema

B. emeiensis

B. formosana

B. grandis* ssp. *grandis (“*evansiana*”)

B. grandis ssp. *sinensis*

B. grandis ‘Early Bird’

B. grandis ‘Nanjiang Silver’

B. hemsleyana (U404)

B. heracleifolia

B. palmata

*B. panchtharensis**

B. pedatifida

*B. taliensis**

B. sutherlandii*

B. U358 (PDN’s ‘Pewterware’)

B. U475

B. U584

B. ‘Barbara Rogers’

B. ‘Benitochiba’

B. ‘Connee Boswell’

B. ‘Darlene Fuentes’

- B. 'Kaylen'
- B. 'Little Brother Montgomery'
- B. 'Metallic Mist'**
- B. 'Silver Splendor'
- B. 'Torsa'

Gesneriads

Of the plants listed below, *Hemiboea subcapitata* is reportedly the hardiest, followed by *Titanotrichum oldhamii* and *Sinningia sellovii*. These three species should be reliably hardy in most of the Washington, DC area with good care and minimal protection. The rest are probably hardy to zone 7b at best, which means they will be marginally hardy in our area and may require placement against a foundation, excellent drainage, and/or mulch to overwinter. I have not included any of the alpine genera (e.g., *Ramonda*, *Haberlea*, *Jancaea*), which are quite cold-hardy but tend to do poorly in regions with hot summers. Many Chinese species are newly introduced to cultivation and have yet to be tested for hardiness; some of these may reward experimentation. The plant names in **bold** represent those that have survived at least one winter in my own garden. For more putatively hardy gesneriads, particularly in the genus *Sinningia*, refer to the Plant Delights Nursery catalog (<http://plantdelights.com>).

- Achimenes* 'Purple King'
- Conandron ramondioides*
- Hemiboea subcapitata* (formerly *H. henryi*)
- Raphiocarpus petelotii*** (slug candy)
- Seemannia gymnostoma*** (returned late and very weakly)
- Seemannia purpurascens*
- Seemannia nematanthodes* 'Evita'
- Seemannia* 'Big Red'
- Seemannia* 'Little Red'
- Seemannia* 'Red Prince'
- Sinningia sellovii*** & hybrids
- Sinningia tubiflora* & hybrids
- Sinningia leucotracha*
- Sinningia* 'Carolyn'
- Titanotrichum oldhamii***



A Fall Road Trip

by Barbara Stewart

Belonging to several clubs and balancing multiple commitments has its challenges. Those of us from the Richmond African Violet Society, who love growing gesneriads,



try to keep up with both. After donating plants to the Druid Hill Conservatory last spring, we wanted to visit Druid Hill, since none of us had ever been there before. NCAC club members planned a visit, but due to other commitments (like our annual violet show), we were not able to travel north when the trip took place.



Nell & Agave

However, we finally got an opportunity to tour the beautiful conservatory and park.

After the summer break, we were unable to attend the September meeting because it always falls on the same day as our September violet meeting. As a result, we missed the reminder that the October meeting would be postponed until the third Saturday. So, Nell and I embarked on our usual trip to DC on

the second Saturday, only to find the Arboretum meeting room empty. After sending the Arboretum staff into a panic thinking they had made a mistake in scheduling meetings, we realized our mistake and found ourselves with time on our hands.



So we headed for Druid Hill to search for gesneriads. We found two. One was a beautiful blooming *Streptocarpella*, trailing over the wall where it was planted. The other was a sprawling *Nematanthus*, happy to be out of its pot and covering the ground. Both plants looked very happy in their new home. There were many other amazing plants in the conservatory, particularly the monstrous Agaves, and we thoroughly enjoyed our unplanned trip to Druid Hill Park.



Treasurer Needed

One of the business items that we need to address at our meeting this month is that Larry Skog has decided to resign as Treasurer. Larry has done a great job for us for the past ten years in this position but feels it's time to let someone else do the job. I don't know what our by-laws state about open positions for officers. I'll look into that sometime between now and the meeting next month. If we need to have a Nominating Committee come up with candidates or a candidate for an election in December, then I'm going to need volunteers for the Nominating Committee. If the vacancy can be a simple Presidential or Executive Committee Appointment then I'm going to need a volunteer to fill the position. I'll send out a separate email to all the members once I figure out which way we need to go on this. But let's all remember to thank Larry for his years of service in this position.

Bloomin' Now

Barry Woolf: Brian had given several of us cuttings at our recent show. I had hoped that the gloxinia leaf would root. I did not expect it to flower!



The cuttings of *Columnnea columbiana* certainly rooted and took off.

Bloomin' Now from Mike Salapka



2 views of unknown *Aeschynanthus*



Gloxinia Sylvatica 'Brazilian Sunset'

Chapter Desperately Seeking

<i>Streptocarpus</i> 'Harlequin Blue'	.....	Brian Connor
<i>Streptocarpus</i> 'Rose Halo'	.....	Brian Connor
<i>Streptocarpus</i> 'Shenandoah Sugar Plum'	.....	Brian Connor
<i>Niphimenes</i> 'Lemonade'	.....	Brian Connor
<i>Henckelia malayana</i>	.....	Brian Connor
<i>Henckelia</i> ANYTHING!.,;.	.....	Brian Connor
<i>Pearcea hypocyrtiflora</i>	.....	Jim Roberts
<i>Episcia lilacine</i> 'Panama'	.....	Jim Roberts
<i>Streptocarpus kentaniensis</i>	.....	Jim Roberts
<i>Streptocarpus</i> 'Bristol's Goose Egg'	.....	Donna Beverin
<i>Begonia smithiantha</i>	.....	Donna Beverin
<i>xAchimenantia</i> 'Dutch Treat'	.....	Donna Beverin
<i>Sinningia</i> 'Li'l Georgie	.....	Lee Stradley
<i>Chirita</i> 'Veracunda'	.....	Barry Woolf
<i>Kohleria warszewiczii</i>	.....	Barry Woolf

Please send a list of a plant you would love to grow via email. It will be posted here in the newsletter. A generous member will share! Petal Tones has a wide distribution and chances are good that someone will be able to get you what you want. Please share your results with the editors!

Bloomin' Now at Nancy Kast's Home

Jim Roberts



Drymonia coccinea



Nancy's hanging garden



Nancy's *Gesneria shaferi*



Nancy's *Gesneria celsioides*



Nancy's *Codonanthis ulei*





Nancy's *Napeanthus costaricensis*



Episcia groundcover at Selby

Bloomin' Now at Selby Gardens

by Jim Roberts



Cobonanthus caloclamys at Selby Gardens



Drymonia species at Selby



Nautilocalyx lynchii at Selby



Cyrtandra samoensis at Selby

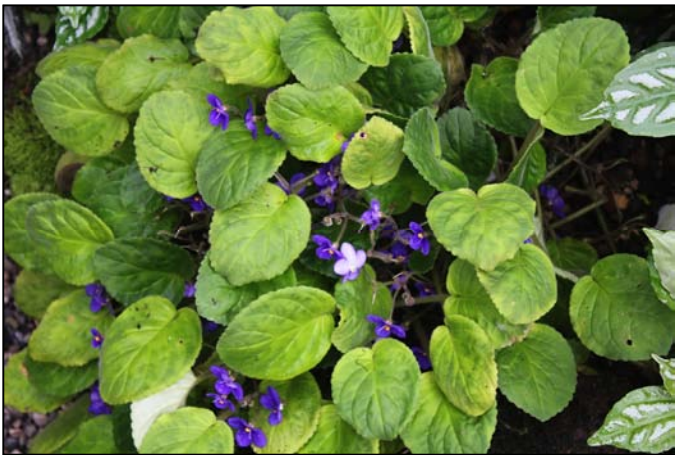




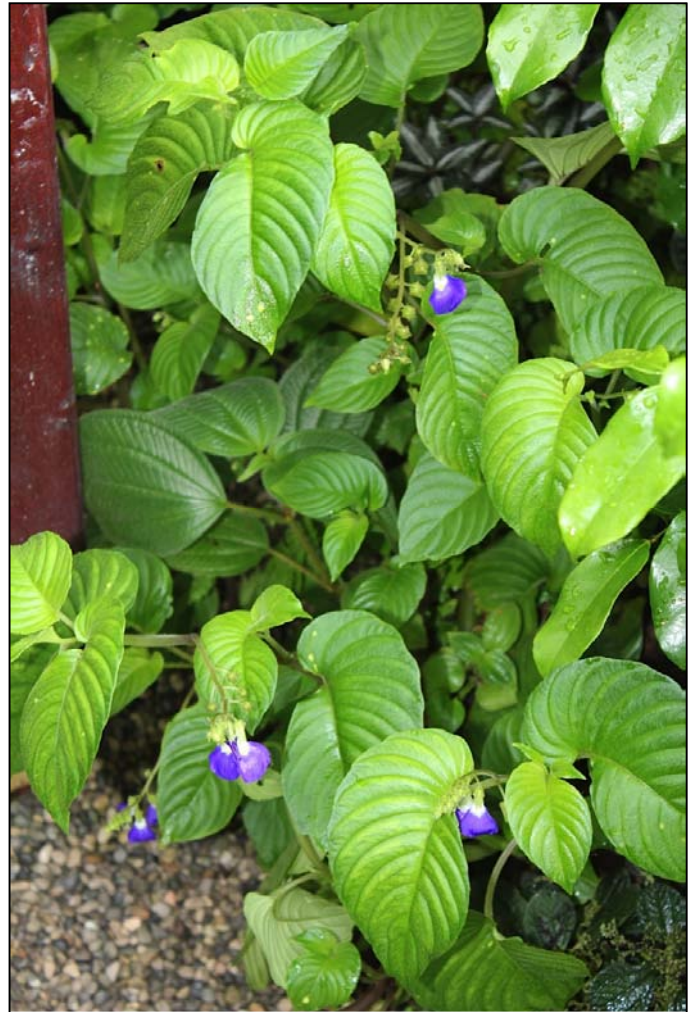
Codonanthe macradenia at Selby

Bloomin' Now at Munich Botanical Gardens

Jim Roberts



Saintpaulia grandifolia at Munich



Rhynchoglossum gardneri at Munich



Rhytidophyllum petiolare at Munich



Diastema vexans at Munich





Ramonda nathaliae at Munich



Columnea sp. at Munich

Mauro's Seed List

First my apologies for being a bit of a seed list slacker. Time to change that! I am emailing all members Mauro's most recent seed list for September / October 2011 and it has 948 items. New selections are in blue. Since we are a Gesneriad club, we wish to order Gesneriads primarily of course, but if you are truly dying for something non-gesneriad, let me know, and we can possibly work in a non-gesneriad. However, non-gesneriads could get bumped if many people wish to order gesneriad seed. Most important, please send me your top 3- 4 choices.... we are only allowed 25 choices per order and want to give multiple people a chance to order. You can send me the top 4 and a substitute or two at most. Just make it clear what the subs are. Mauro likes having a sub, in case he runs out of something. This is rare but it happened once and I did not have any subs for him. Let's try and put in a seed order SOON, maybe by the beginning of next week.... Please email me your selections. Filling orders from the seed list is first come, first serve. Remember there are only 25 choices per order. That means the first 6 people to email me are guaranteed and after that, well, it depends.....Brian Connor



Pirates and Presents!

December 10, 2011

NCAC Meeting Holiday party!

Bring some good food to share!

Christmas Pirate Gift Exchange



Everyone brings a wrapped gift for preselected amount (\$10 maximum).

All the gifts are placed on a table and all participants draw numbers (same amount of numbers as gifts).

The person with number 1 picks a present off the table and unwraps it for all to see. Number 2 then either picks a new present off the table or takes number 1's gift. If 2 picks from the table, 2 unwraps and shows the new number 2 gift for all to see. The next person number 3 can then pick from the table or from gift 1 or 2 and so on. If a person chooses to steal then he or she takes the gift from the person. The person who's gift was stolen gets to either steal from someone else (can't steal an item back) or pick a new gift from the table. We always play that you can only steal once and that a gift can only be stolen 5 times (depends on how many you have). So if you have stolen a gift and now yours is stolen you can only pick from the table. Your gift can be stolen many times, but you can only steal once. Should be fun for all of us! Jim

Congrats to Brian Connor!

He won many awards for his entries in the MAAVS show held Nov. 11th and 12th. Here are a few:



Blue Ribbon: *Streptocarpus* 'Blueberry Butterflies'



First place *Seemannia* 'Medea'



First place design



Blue ribbon: *Streptocarpus* 'Hot Time Tonight'

National Capital Area Chapter (NCAC) A Chapter of the Gesneriad Society, Inc.

"The purpose of the chapter shall be to afford a convenient and beneficial association of persons interested in Gesneriads; to stimulate a widespread interest in the identification, correct nomenclature, culture, and propagation of Gesneriads; and to encourage the origination and introduction of new cultivars."

(NCAC bylaws, revised April 1981.)

NCAC meets on the second Saturday of the month in the Administration Building of the U.S. National Arboretum. For details, please refer to the latest issue of *Petal Tones*, the website, or contact one of the people below from the raffle table.

The Gesneriad Society website: www.gesneriadsociety.org

NCAC website: www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

NCAC Blog: <http://petaltones.blogspot.com/>

Website & Blog: Kyoko Imai
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