

# Petal Tones



National Capital Area Chapter of the Gesneriad Society Newsletter

Volume 48 Number 5

April 2017



Kitty's *Streptocarpus* 'Targa'

## President's Message Barb Stewart

Waiting for rhizomes.....(and tubers). I have several trays of dormant rhizomes and tubers sitting on the sidelines resting. They were all repotted after going dormant, so they are ready to go when their time comes. I water them every so often with plain water which gives me a chance to check and see if anything has sprouted yet. One pot has put up a couple of sprouts, probably an achimene; however, they are just labeled "rhizomes", so I have to wait and see what they become.

Which brings me to a tip on labeling. I have yet

NCAC meetings are held at BEHNKES NURSERIES  
11300 Baltimore Ave, Beltsville, MD 20705  
Behnkes opens at 8:00am if you would like to browse and shop before the meeting. We gather at 10am to get set up, with the meeting beginning at 10:30am. Meet the second Saturday of the month. \$10 yearly dues.

April 8<sup>th</sup> 2017: African Violets with unusual leaves and flowers (bustle, spoon, girl leaves, chimeras, longiflora)

May 13<sup>th</sup> 2017: Show Workshop: making sure everything is ready for the show on May 20<sup>th</sup> weekend

May 19 – 21<sup>st</sup>: NCAC Plant Show and Sale. Springfield Town Center, 6500 Springfield Mall, Springfield, VA 22150

June 10<sup>th</sup>: Growing Gesneriads outdoors for the summer

to find a fool-proof system of labeling. Stakes fall out, tape fades, and sometimes I just forget to label the plant when I repot it. Many plants are unidentifiable until they bloom. However, there are so many hybrids of plants like *Streptocarpus* and *Kohleria*, it is still hard to identify them even when they bloom. This happened recently with one of my *Kohleria*. When I repotted it, I just labeled it "Kohleria A" and waited for it to bloom.

Fortunately, I keep an inventory of my plants which I update each year before going to the convention. This keeps me from buying plants I already have or not buying plants I forgot I had lost. It also helps when I lose a label. Instead of searching hundreds of blossom photos on



the Internet (which may or may not be named correctly), I just need to check the ones on my inventory list, and can quickly identify the mystery plant. So my “*Kohleria* A” turned out to be *Kohleria* ‘El Crystal’, a vigorous plant with a bold yellow and red blossom (see photo).

One final note: Keep a paper copy of your inventory list. I lost mine when a virus wiped out all the documents and photos on my computer last summer. Fortunately, I still had the paper copy I took to the convention. (whew!) Barbara

### Bloomin’ Now



Kitty’s *Saintpaulia* ‘Bob Serbin’



Barb’s *Streptocarpus* ‘Wow’



Kitty’s *Saintpaulia* ‘Ian-Minuet’



Barb’s *Sinningia* ‘Prudence Ridley’





Barb's *Sinningia* 'Prudence Ridley' close-up



Barb's *Kohleria* 'El crystal'



Barb's *Nematanthus wettsteinii*



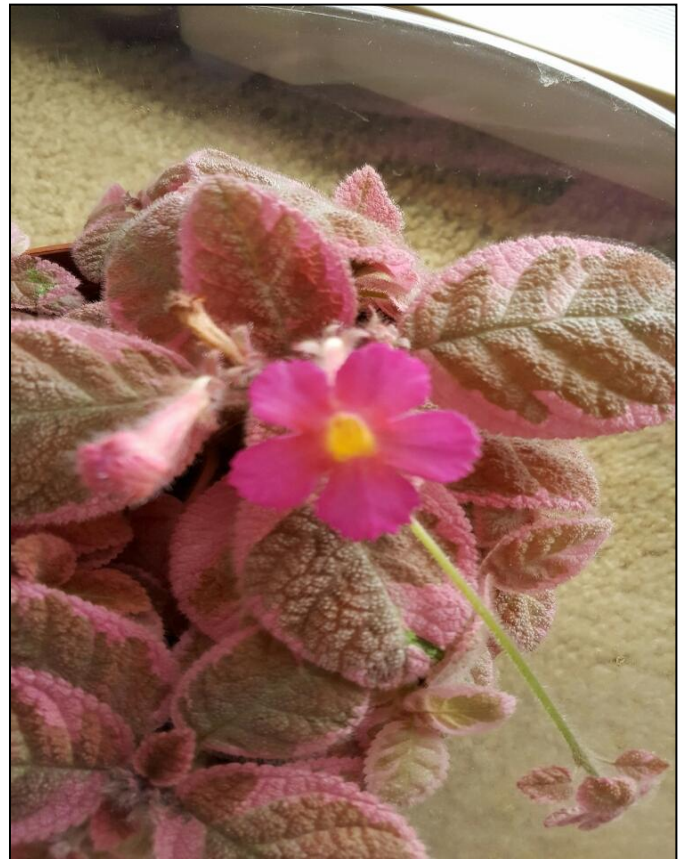
Barb's *Kohleria* rhizome untangled

NCAC  
Our Plant Show and Sale:  
May 19<sup>th</sup> – May 21<sup>th</sup>  
Springfield Town Center, 6500 Springfield  
Mall Springfield, VA 22150





Barb's Strep 'Jules' with stolens growing from blossoms



Kitty's *Episcia* 'Pink Puff'



Kitty's *Sinningia speciosa* 'Multibells Cherry' x 'Empress Red'



Kitty's *Saintpaulia* 'Kentucky Red Devil', a triple threat with bicolor thumbprint wasp blossoms and semi-miniature bustle back foliage. Now, if it was only variegated!

Richmond African Violet Society  
 Judged show and sale  
 Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden  
 1800 Lakeside Avenue Richmond,  
 Virginia 23228  
 Show: April 8th 1:00-5:00pm  
 April 9th 9:00am - 4:00pm

Sale: April 7th 1:00pm - 5:00pm  
 April 8th: 9:00am - 5:00pm  
 April 9th: 9:00am-4:00pm

Info: Sharon Long [804-740-5322](tel:804-740-5322)  
 Email: [slong15781@aol.com](mailto:slong15781@aol.com)





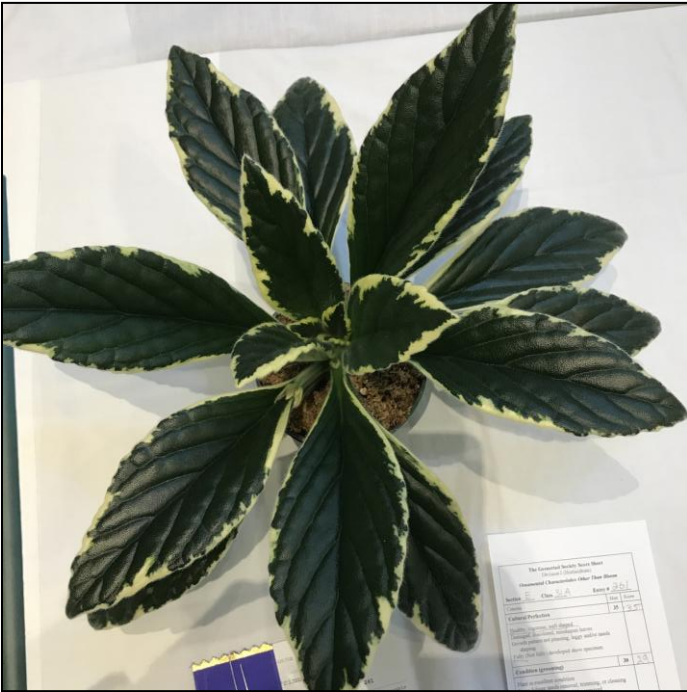
Donna's *Pearcea hypocyrtiflora* close-up



Donna's *Pearcea hypocyrtiflora*

Jim judged the Toronto Gesneriad Society Show

Pictures by Jim Roberts below:



Bev Williams' *Primulina* 'Cynthia' Best in Show



Jackie Hill's *Episcia* 'Jim's Pineapple'





Doris Brownlie's *Kohleria* 'An's Busy Bee'



Steve Kerr's *Episcia* 'Red Gator'



Emma Bygott's *Streptocarpus* 'White Butterfly'



Bev Williams' *Primulina sclerophylla* "a very difficult plant in perfect condition" per Jim Roberts

## Growing Gesneriads Under Artificial

Lights reprinted with permission from the Long Island Gesneriad Society's March 2017 Gesneriads Newsletter

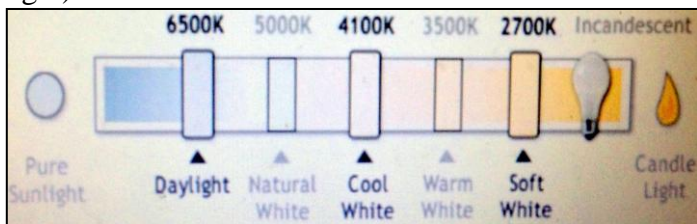
Written by Paul Susi

Eric Strauss and Paul Susi presented a program that gave us all a lot of information on using artificial lights to grow our gesneriads. As one of the presenters, I focused on the more traditional use of fluorescent tubes while Eric discussed the emerging field of LED lighting for plants.

Fluorescent tubes used to come in three varieties (T12, T8 and T5) but in 2012 the production of T12s ceased since they were determined to be of low energy efficiency.

Nonetheless, all three types of tubes (and LED lights) provide excellent light for growing gesneriads, which require both the blue and red/yellow spectrums of light.

The sun produces light in the blue spectrum (at or higher than 6000K), which encourages good vegetative growth, while the light in the red/yellow spectrum (under 3000K) encourages bloom (note that the K stands for degrees Kelvin and is a relative measure of the color, not the temperature, of the light).



In the world of fluorescent tubes, cool white tubes provide a good balance of these spectra. The value of T8 tubes is that they are 30% more efficient than T12 tubes and have a life expectancy of 36,000 hours. Over time the price of these tubes has dropped so that now they can be purchased for about \$3 each in a ten-pack. T5 tubes, while about 10% more efficient than T8s, cost about twice what a T8 costs and may not necessarily be a good choice for growing at this time.

Unfortunately, neither T8 nor T5 tubes can be used in old T12 fixtures successfully, since the T12 ballast is electromagnetic while the T8 and T5 ballasts are electronic. It was mentioned at the meeting that a member has successfully used T8 tubes in a T12 fixture. Research that I have done since the meeting indicates that this will most likely shorten the life of the ballast and is not recommended. One would either have to replace the old ballasts (the T8 tubes will fit in T12 fixtures, but

the T5 tubes will not) or purchase new fixtures. There are two other points to keep in mind about artificial light: lumens and the CRI. The former is a measure of light intensity (how bright the light is) and the latter is the color rendition index — the ability of the tube to render colors accurately (the sun has a CRI of 100).

With energy-efficient T8 tubes, you can choose ones with higher lumens and not spend more on energy. Eric's presentation moved us one step closer to the "endless" light bulb. It is estimated that an LED bulb will last up to 50,000 hours when on 12 hours a day!

The downside with LEDs is that they are currently expensive and, although they are about 30% more energy efficient than standard fluorescent tubes, the high initial cost offsets any energy savings over time. However, as the cost of LEDs drops, they will be the least expensive way to light your plants. The major decision to be made regarding LED lights is how to upgrade from either T12 or T8 fixtures. Eric presented four options, from the "no brainer" to one which would require more work on the grower's part.

- Universal (T8 Electronic or T12 Magnetic) ballast compatible LED fluorescent replacement tubes are the newest, most costly but also easiest to install. These LED tubes will work with any type of existing technology — T8 (Electronic Ballast) or T12 (Magnetic Ballast). The install is as simple as taking out the old fluorescent tube and installing the LED tube. The downside is that you are still dealing with the old ballast and the accompanying energy use. This is the method Eric has been using.

- T8 Electronic Ballast Compatible LED Fluorescent Replacement Tubes are a relatively new option. As their name might suggest, they are meant to work with electronic ballast installations and therefore will not function with magnetic ballasts (T12). Industry data suggest that this combination alone accounts for over 1.2 billion tube lights; thus they are perpetually growing in popularity.

- Hybrid (T8 electronic ballast compatible/ T8 or T12 ballast bypass LED) fluorescent replacement tubes work with Electronic Ballasts (T8) or have the ability to bypass ballasts when the ballast no longer works. This has given rise to a new category, the hybrid tube light. Hybrid tubes work with T8 electronic ballasts but can also be wired directly like a ballast bypass tube light (for T12 fixtures).

- Ballast bypass or direct wire LED fluorescent replacement tubes are the oldest, least expensive and most widely installed option. Instead of building

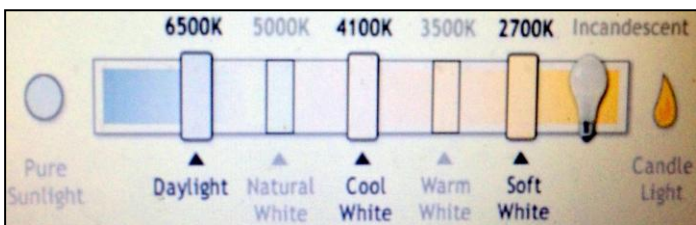


expensive circuitry inside to enable the function with a ballast, this option allows the user to bypass the ballast entirely and run directly off of the line voltage at the installation. Eric recommended that anyone interested in purchasing LED lights should visit this website for a very good overview of all things LED: <https://www.earthled.com>.

## **LED Lights for Growing my Plants**

Donna Beverin

For years I grew plants using T-12 florescent lights and 48 inch fixtures with reflectors found in all the home stores. No problem. Occasionally I would change the type of bulbs, using aquarium lights or kitchen or daylight bulbs and for a time would buy “Wide Spectrum” bulbs for the best blooms, although I never really studied the Kelvin range.



Since LED's have been introduced I have been watching and looking for what LED 48 inch products were available at the local stores and on line. I finally saw a relatively cheap four foot LED fixture at Wal-Mart for \$19. So I bought one to try out and I found just using the single tube greatly increased the blooms on plants that I did not get to bloom very easily like Kohleria. These tubes have a solid white area on the top of the tube which limits the light to



the bottom half of the tube and do not have reflectors. I have been very happy with these fixtures and they are so easy to install compared to the T-12, four foot fixtures that had to be installed with chains and S hooks.



The single LEDs have a cable gadget that easily fits into the top of the bulb area and I just wrap the wire around the stand shelf and in less than a minute they are installed.



Wal-Mart stopped stocking these LED tubes and thus I was on the lookout for the next LED light I could purchase. Surfing the web I found the double tube 3600K LEDs on Amazon and am very happy with them for \$29. I was happy to see the same design used for the hanging cable.





The double tube LED also does not have a reflector so I continued shopping and found the light pictured below which is the most current light I purchased.



This 5000K LED is \$33 and has a reflector. The width is only 3 inches wide for this 48 inch light\_ and it is very light and easy to use. I put it on the top shelf where the light just shines all the shelves. All these



lights have on/off switches on their cords which is very handy if you want to keep just one shelf lit.

I have all the LED plugs in a surge protector where I can switch them on/off in the am/pm. I don't use timer because I just find it easier to switch them on manually. Ideally it is good to have two lights on each shelf. As of now my plants are growing very well with all the various LEDs and my electric bill has actually lowered using these fixtures, but as Paul mentions it is an initial investment that will be recouped as you replace the florescent tubes. Give one a try and I think you will enjoy using them and will especially be happy with the beautiful blooms!

[https://smile.amazon.com/gp/product/B01H2LXB78/ref=oh\\_aui\\_detailpage\\_o07\\_s00?ie=UTF8&pssc=1](https://smile.amazon.com/gp/product/B01H2LXB78/ref=oh_aui_detailpage_o07_s00?ie=UTF8&pssc=1)



Bottom view of the 2 tube LED light with reflector

[https://smile.amazon.com/gp/product/B01MSUQ603/ref=oh\\_aui\\_detailpage\\_o02\\_s00?ie=UTF8&th=1](https://smile.amazon.com/gp/product/B01MSUQ603/ref=oh_aui_detailpage_o02_s00?ie=UTF8&th=1)

## 2017 DELAWARE AFRICAN VIOLET AND GESNERIAD SOCIETY



### SALE/DISPLAY/EDUCATIONAL EXHIBIT

FRIDAY, APRIL 7th 12:00 PM TO 9:00 PM  
SATURDAY, APRIL 8<sup>th</sup> 10:00 AM TO 4:00 PM  
BOSCOV'S DEPARTMENT STORE  
CHRISTIANA TOWN CENTER  
ROUTE #273, CHRISTIANA, DELAWARE  
JOIN US FOR LECTURES AND  
DEMONSTRATIONS  
ON SATURDAY, APRIL 8th AT 1:00 PM  
LEARN HOW TO REPOT AN AFRICAN VIOLET,  
PROPAGATE FROM LEAVES,  
PLANT CARE, AND MORE. FREE ADMISSION

INFO: [rlafash@comcast.net](mailto:rlafash@comcast.net)



## Desperately Seeking

Kitty Hedgepeth.....*Sinningia Leucotricha* tuber  
Kitty Hedgepeth.....*Episcia suomi* or any yellow  
Donna.....*Sinningia kautskyi*  
Donna .....*Sinningia 'Amizade'*

## Plants of the Month for 2017

February	<i>Lysionotus</i>
March	<i>Kohleria</i>
April	<i>Saintpaulia</i>
May	Show plants
June	<i>Nematanthus</i>
July	<i>Achimenes</i>
August	<i>Petrocosmea</i>
September	<i>Gasteranthus</i>
October	N/A
November	<i>Mini Sinningia</i>
December	<i>Streptocarpus</i>

## Programs Planned for 2017

- January 14 - workshop on growing in feather rock.
- February 11 - Propagation Workshop
- March 11 - *Kohleria* - an interesting and easy to grow rhizomatous genus.
- April 8 - African Violets with unusual leaves or flowers (bustle leaves, spooned, girl, longifolia, chimera)
- May 13 - Show workshop - making sure everything is ready for the show on the 20<sup>th</sup>
- Show schedule: May 19 – 21, 2017  
May 19 - Show entries and set-up  
May 20 - last minute entries. Judging. Sales and show open until Sunday, May 21 at 4.
- June 10 - Growing Gesneriads outdoors for the Summer
- July & August - TBD (picnic?)
- September 9 - Jim and Drew's Ecuador trip PowerPoint
- October 21 (third weekend - Orchid Show on second weekend) - Judges School for new judges and Student judges
- November 11 - Miniature *Sinningia* - growing these small wonders in Glass Containers - GREAT HOLIDAY GIFTS!
- December - Holiday Party at a member's home.

AFRICAN VIOLET CLUB  
OF MORRIS COUNTY

Presents

## *"Rock 'n' Roll with Violets"*



22nd Annual Spring Show and Sale  
at

Frelinghuysen Arboretum  
353 East Hanover Avenue  
Morristown, New Jersey

Open to the Public - FREE ADMISSION

Saturday, April 8, 2017 from 1:30 PM to 4:30 PM  
Sunday, April 9, 2017 from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Educational Display, Plant Sale and AVSA information  
are all part of the show

For more information call

Emilia Rykowski, President (973-279-5174) or Bob Kurzynski, Vice President (973-546-4962)



Mr. Gesneriad is here to help you with your growing questions! Just send a message to the editor and our expert will answer your question in the next issue! Photos are a help if you have concerns about pests or other subjects when pictures can really help Mr. "G" see your problem!

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**Committees:**

Hospitality: Irene Pittman  
Publications: Donna Beverin  
Propagation: Barb Stewart/Donna Beverin  
Membership: Jim Roberts  
Ways and Means: Brian Connor  
Show: Jim Roberts

**Directors:**

Victor Nicholas  
Brian Connor  
Ki Imai

NCAC website:  
[www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org](http://www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org)  
[web@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org](mailto:web@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org)

NCAC Facebook page:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/174442276299173/?ref=bookmarks>

The National Capital Area Chapter of the Gesneriad Society welcomes all interested Gesneriad growers. The most familiar Gesneriad is Saintpaulia, more commonly known as the African Violet. Dues are \$10 per year (email copy of current year's newsletter). Back issues from previous years available on website.

The international Gesneriad Society is a not-for-profit corporation dedicated to the study, growing and enjoyment of the gesneriaceae. Membership dues are \$25 /year for individuals and \$26 for a family. Benefits include seed fund of hard-to-find plants, reference materials , yearly convention & cultural webinars. Membership requests should be sent to Bob Clark, 1122 E Pike Street, PMB 637, Seattle, WA 98122-3916. Membership includes a subscription to the society journal, Gesneriads.  
<http://www.gesneriadsociety.org/>

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