

PETAL TONES



Newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of the Gesneriad Society

Volume 54 Number 4

April 2023

President's Message:

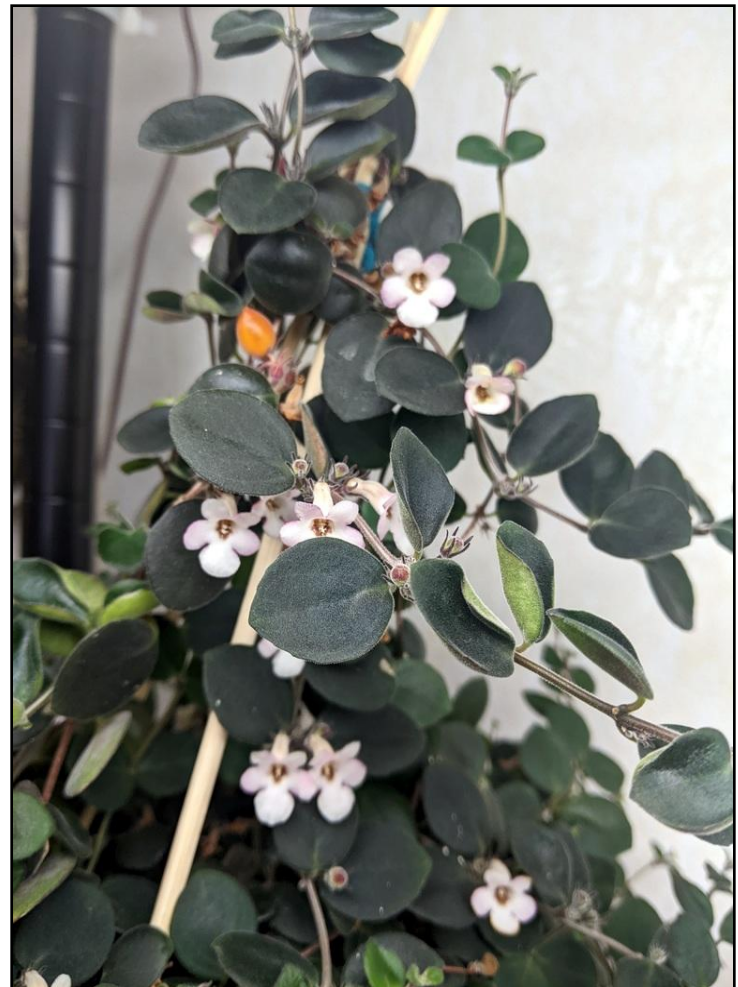
Last month was our propagation workshop at the church. Although turnout was light, the workshop was fun and productive and we all left with lots of goodies. In addition to sharing plants, Minh gave us a demonstration of how to use the INSV test kit, which was very helpful. He had ordered a large quantity of kits at a reduced price on behalf of people who wanted them. Members from Richmond AVS had ordered some and Bill was there to pick them up for the club. I volunteered one of my kits for Minh to demonstrate and Nadya tested one of her plants as well.

Those of us from Richmond (and some judges) spent last weekend on our annual show and sale. Our sale plants were pretty much cleaned out on Friday before the show. Although bad weather kept attendance low on Saturday, we had record turnout on Sunday. The public is still very interested in violets and other gesneriads. We also picked up some new members and a number of others took applications, which makes shows quite valuable for increasing membership.

We now have our sights set on the Gesneriad convention in Richmond this July. Have you registered yet? There are lots of great speakers and events planned. Also, remember to register for classes in design and the arts, including the challenge classes, which may fill up quickly. Finally, we are hoping to have lots of plants at the plant sale. Save your "extras" to sell or donate to the cause. Last month was our last in person meeting probably until September. This convention will be the best "plant swap" for this year. I hope many of you plan to attend. Barbara

No In Person Meetings until June 2023

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



Nadya's beautiful *Codonanthe devosiana* with a fleshy, berry type seed pod.



Jill Fischer's Best in RAVS show Design Class

Barb Borleske's Primulinas



Barb Borleske's *Primulina Pseudoyungfuensis* without and with flower.



Barb's *Primulina* hybrids. The white is called *Primulina* 'Lacey'. The primulina with the large flower is not named yet.

Ed note: Barb told me : She is still working on *Primulina* hybrids. She finally got several plants of *P. pseudoyungfuensis* to bloom and is using the pollen wherever she can. When working on hybridizing *Primulina*, they don't all "take" so she does not know what to expect, but there is always something new!

Bloomin' Now



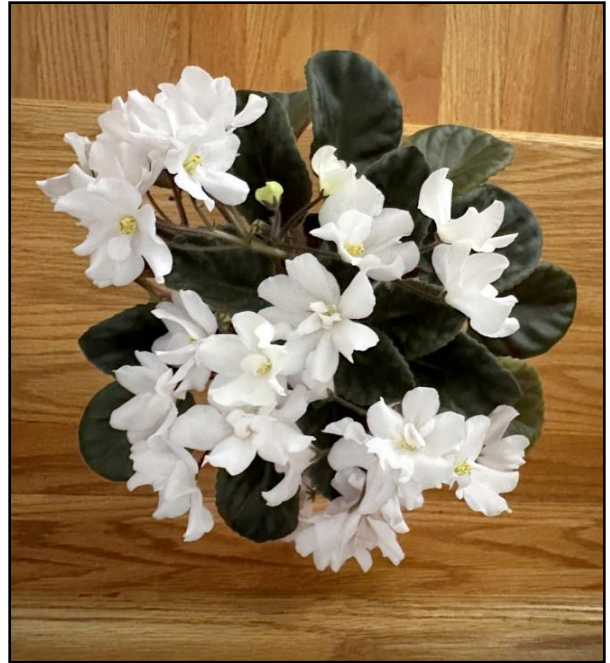
Barb Stewart's *Sinningia* 'Carolyn'



Barb Stewart's *Sinningia* 'Prudence Risley'



Nadya's *Streptocarpus* 'Salamandra'

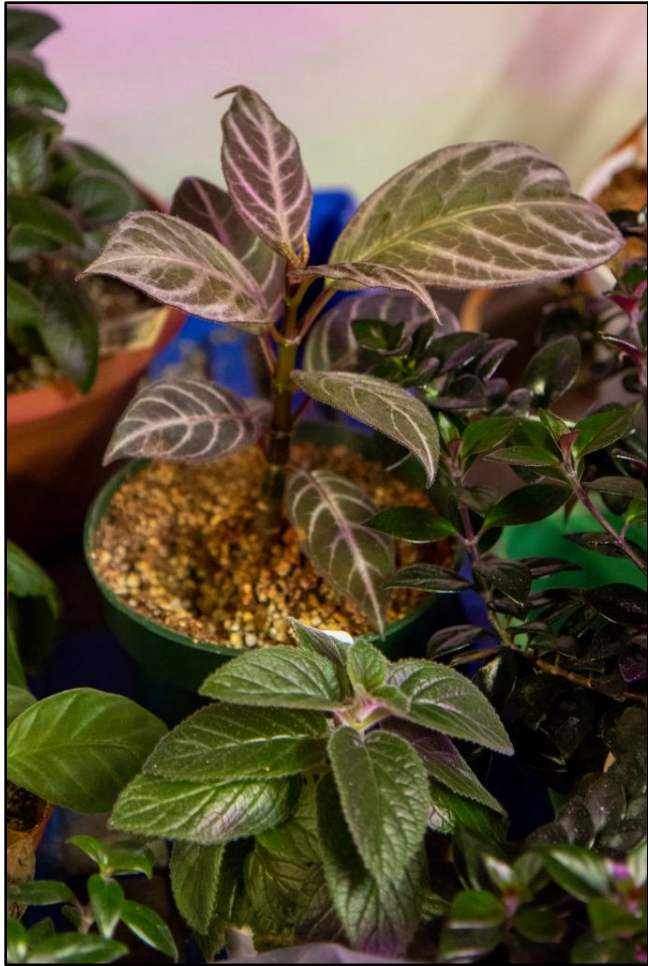


Dena Horton's *Saintpaulia* 'Cameo Queen'

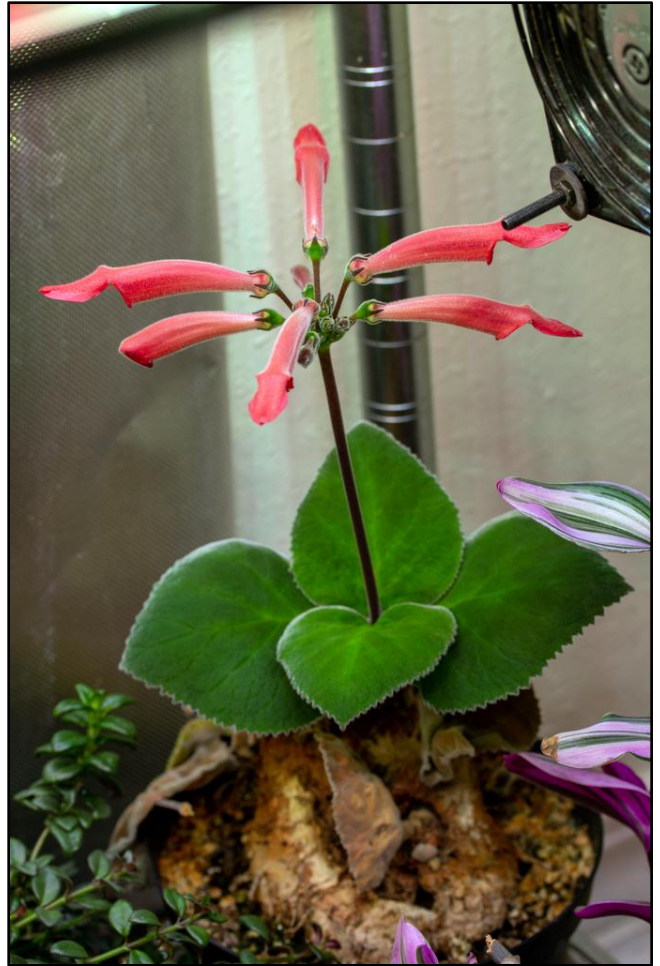


Nadya's *Sinningia speciosa* seedling growing so well, awaiting blooms!

Bloomin' Now



Alcie's *Drymonia chirbogana*



Alcie's *Sinningia iarae*



Alcie's *Primulina heterotricha*



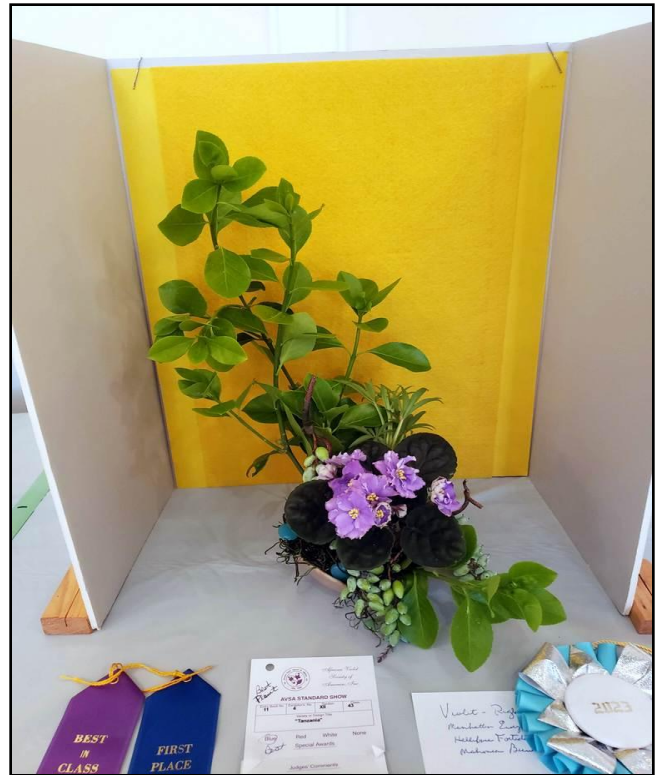
Alcie's *Primulina* 'Moonlight'

RAVS Show Photos

Photos by Barbara Stewart



Barb's 2nd Best in Design in RAVS show



Bill's: Best Interpretive Plant Arrangement



Barb Stewart's 3rd best in Design at RAVS



Barb Greenawalt's *Primulina* 'Patina'

RAVS Show Photos



Barb Koski's *Saintpaulia* 'Optimara myHeart' won best in horticulture and best other gesneriad.



Kitty's floriferous *Sinningia* 'Li'l Georgie'

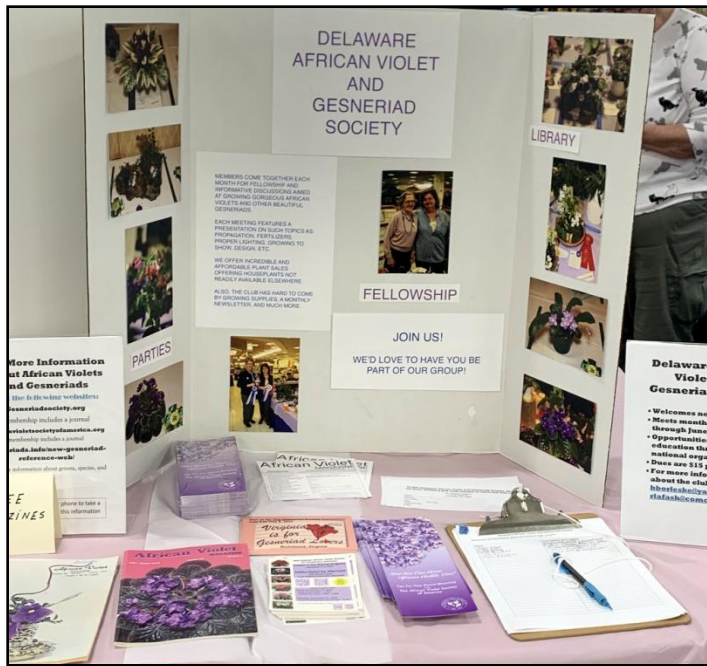


Barb Koski's *Sinningia bullata* sport won Best Other Gesneriad



Nadya's *Streptocarpus* hybrid

DAVS Exhibit & Sale



The DAVS exhibit provided excellent education materials.



Primulina 'Short'nin Bread'



Sinningia 'Prudence Risley'



Sinningia 'Sim Sim Salavim'

Donna: "I had a great time visiting the DAVS exhibit and sale at Boscov's in Newark, Delaware on April 1, 2023. Their members who include Barb Borleske, Maria Walueff, Mary Schaeffer, & Elizabeth Varley, who are NCAC members as well, showed a very interesting collection of gesneriads. The sale was very good and a group from Philadelphia had arrived early and nearly bought them out of sale plants, so they did well. I bought several I am excited to grow including *Primulina petrocosmeoides* and *Petrocosmea macciejewski*.



***Moussonia septentrionalis* G1202**

Karyn Cichocky : “ I received some old seed back in 2017 of this species. The seed was between 15-20 years old and I got a few plants to come up. I was happy to see that the remaining plant was finally going to bloom for the first time. The flowers are paler than *Moussonia elegans* and have fringe on the petal edges. I've made cuttings and hope to have plants for the convention plant sales tables.”

Donna Beverin: “Karyn, does this plant have a tuber, rhizome or fibrous roots? I could not find anything on Google. “

Karyn C: “It is considered a rhizomatous plant, however as far as I know none of them have been known to form rhizomes. Attached is a picture of the bulbous root structure, which looks like a tuber that my *Moussonia elegans* had. I felt under the soil like of *M. septentrionalis* and although I felt a grouping of roots, it doesn't feel like the same type of structure has developed.

In my conditions, *M. elegans* would go dormant and then sprout from the top of tuber like structure, elongating it each year as some *Sinningia* do. Pretty interesting.”



Karyn's **Moussonia** tuber



Johanna's *Achimenes* growing rhizomes on the stems !

A New Hybrid

Wallace Wells: "Ever since *Primulina* was enlarged by Weber in 2011 to include most of the genus *Chirita*, people been trying to find out if the species formally label as *Chirita* would hybridize with *Primulina tabaccum* . Most of the attempts ere not successful; however, a member of the Long Island, Gesneriad Society, Leve Hajdu was successful in crossing, *Primulina tabaccum* and *P. petrocosmeoides*. This (picture below) is the resulting hybrid. It is a rosette which has small format, much smaller than *P. tabacuum* the flowers are borne in profusion very dainty and appealing with open-faced corolla tubes with a central line down the middle, which is reminiscent of the *P. tabaccum* parent."



Karyn Cichocki: "Leve distributed pots full of seedlings from this cross to several people. I kept one that I really like, but so far the one you showed is the best one yet with a great combination of both parents."

Leve: "My cross doesn't have a scent as far as I can tell. The trick is you need to take a spent flower cut it in half and take the pollen from the wall, there is also sap in there so it may take a few tries. *P. petrocosmeoides* was the mother it accepts pollen better than most primulina which tend to be picky. I said I wasn't going to register it, but if people really start propagating it, then maybe I should."

Mel Grice: "I will be bringing lots of starter plants of this cross to The Gesneriad Society Convention in Richmond, VA this July for convention plant sales."

Michael Riley: "To the end that "people will be propagating it" - it sure would be nice to have a hybrid name or temporary number to make certain that the material in cultivation is the same plant and not one of the other siblings in the cross?"

Irina Nicholson: "Michael is so right. Choosing one superior out of the batch or more if they are distinct ones and naming them - even with a temporary name as LH22-01 and LV22-02 will help with a confusion in future... until the further inspiration. "

Correction

Donna: "*Primulinas* are fibrous rooted. Last month, in the March issue, I put Karyn's comment about *Moussonia* on the *Primulina* page instead of the *Moussonia* page."



"Another hybrid of *Primulina tabacum* with former *Chirita*. This is *Primulina flavimaculata* x *Primulina tabacum* I made in 2014. There is a scent on the leaves." Toshi Okuto



Bloomin' Now for Minh Bui's modern hybrid *Saintpaulia* 'Genetic Blush'

Genetic Blush @millennialplantdr



Dale Martens:

"In over 30 years of growing this species, I've never had this many flowers before on *Phinea albolineata*, a small rhizomatous gesneriad. I'm growing it on a wick reservoir as it must never dry out (or will collapse). The only difference is I'm using HydraFiber on all my gesneriads. (2 brands of HydraFiber are Sta-Green Perfect and then Glee) mixed with perlite and my favorite AV mix Ferti-lome. The Sta-Green Perfect I got from Lowe's on sale last fall for \$5, but I see it's \$9.98 now. 1 part Hydr-Fiber, 3 parts perlite, 1 part AV mix.

"HydraFiber is pressurized through a special thermal refining process to create long, thin fibers with a large surface area that offers quick root establishment and rooting, as well as a low bulk density and high porosity, according to Kevin Spittle, Profile Products' Director of Research and Development." My photo is the brand that Lowe's sells, "Perfect".



New Sinningia hybrid

Dale Martens: "JJ Wu in Taiwan is an amazing hybridizer who has crossed micro sized sinningias with much larger species such as *S. aghensis*. This time he crossed *Sinningia concinna* x *S. nordestina*. The result is micro sized."



New Kohleria hybrid

Dale Martens: "Another reason to attend The Gesneriad Society's convention in Richmond, VA: rhizomes to be given away at the GHA meeting. Congratulations to Clay Anderson on his *Kohleria* 'Baby Yaddle' hybrid. He was trying to increase the color yellow on the "face" of the flower and the bonus is a floriferous hybrid with up to 9 flowers/buds per node at this time. Last 2 photos: I lifted up a leaf to show all the flowers & buds that were hidden."

Clay Anderson: " For those who are curious, the parents are *Kohleria* 'Baby Yoda' (my hybrid of 'Bud's Little Gollum' x 'Springsong') x 'Springsong'. In the Star Wars universe, Yaddle is a female of the same species as Yoda. When Baby Yoda grew up and had a "child" I thought it made sense to name it after her." →



Facebook: Hoover's Hybrids, Darryl Hoover's Posting



Darryl Hoover "I must admit, I'm a fan of testing out new things. Sometimes it's a new tech gadget, a new golf ball, a new brand of wine and even new potting mediums for my gesneriad collection.

Late last Summer, my longtime friend, Dale Martens, sent me a note asking if I had ever heard of the potting medium, glee®. I told her I had not and she explained it was a potting medium engineered from the HydraFiber® process. She mentioned another grower had suggested she give it a try as he was having excellent results with it.

Not knowing anything about HydraFiber®, I thought I would ask Open AI's ChatGPT to explain it to me. When I asked what benefits HydraFiber® had in potting mixes it responded with the following:

One of the main benefits of hydrafiber potting mixes is they can help to prevent soil compaction, which is a common problem in traditional potting mixes. I found this response interesting because that had been my observation since I began using the product in July 2022.

When I asked ChatGPT to explain the HydraFiber® process, it provided the following explanation:

The process generally involves blending and forming fibers to create an absorbent material that can manage moisture effectively. If you ask anyone who has come into contact with HydraFiber® the resounding response is, "It's very fluffy". And honestly, it is! I believe the "fluffy" nature of the material is what makes it resistant to compaction.

It's important to note HydraFiber® potting mixes are sold under different brands including glee® (available on Amazon) and Sta-Green® (available at Lowes). Armed with this information I decided to start experimenting. I created two potting mix recipes:

Recipe #1

- 1 part HydraFiber® (Sta-Green)
- 1 part coarse perlite
- 1 tsp dried molasses
- 1/8 tsp mycorrhizae (Great White brand)
- 2 tsp worm castings

Recipe #2

- 1 part HydraFiber® (Sta-Green)
- 1 part Premier Pro-Mix (HP formula)
- 2.5 parts coarse perlite
- 2 tsp dried molasses
- 1/4 tsp mycorrhizae (Great White brand)
- 4 tsp worm castings

Normal Potting Mix

- 1 part Premier Pro-Mix
- 1 part coarse perlite
- 1 tsp dried molasses
- 1/8 tsp mycorrhizae (Great White brand)
- 2 tsp worm castings

I found the plants grown in Recipe #1 did well, but I wouldn't say they were noticeably better than plants grown in my normal potting mix recipe. Leaf cuttings (African Violets and Streptocarpus) did not seem to perform any better or worse than cuttings started in my normal potting mix recipe.

Plants and cuttings started in recipe #2 performed noticeably better than plants and cuttings growing in either recipe #1 or my normal potting mix.

Trail Along leaf cuttings started November 14, 2022 illustrate how vigorous the root formation is in recipe #2. The photos also illustrate how prolific the leaf cuttings were in producing plantlets.

Leaf cuttings in recipe #2 were also producing significant plantlets below the soil line (subterranean) which I have never seen with any African Violet leaf propagation I have done in 44 years. I have seen this behavior with Streptocarpus cuttings, but never African Violets. I'm not suggesting you go out and swap out your potting mix for recipe #2. But if you want to do a little experimenting of your own, I would be interested in hearing your results.

Happy Growing! Amazon Links:

glee potting mix: <https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B09XN7GPCQ...>

My Kits: <https://kit.co/everythingviolets>

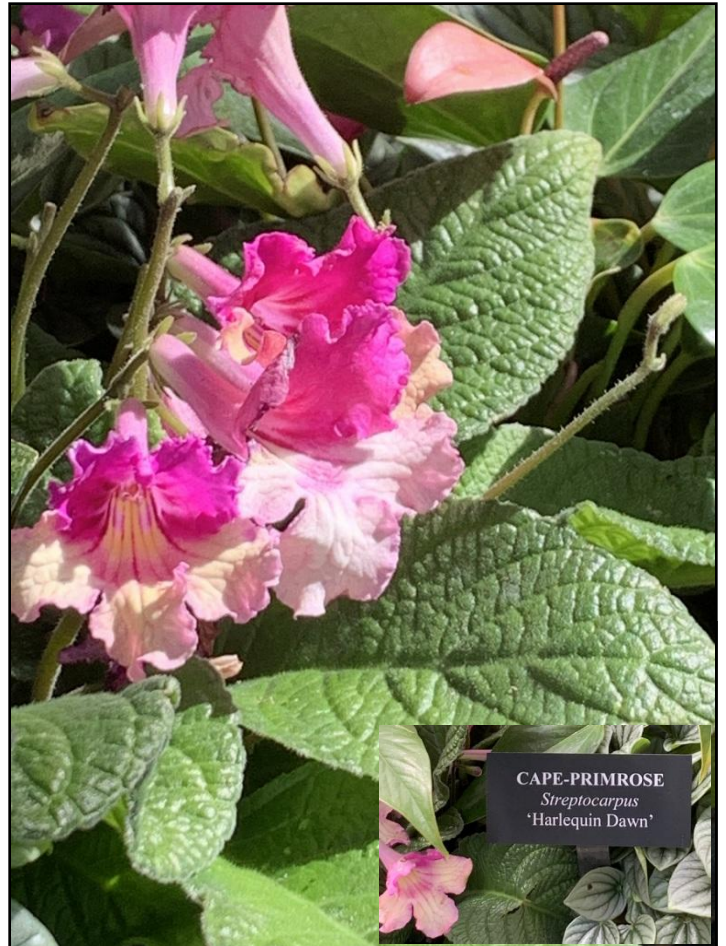
<https://www.facebook.com/HooversHybrids/>



Streptocarpella 'Concord Blue" Many baskets hanging throughout the conservatory walk.



Kohleria 'Longwood' in an enormous pot.



I was pleasantly surprised to see Longwood staff used *Streptocarpus* 'Harlequin Dawn' to surround the entire water feature in the main conservatory. <https://longwoodgardens.org/gardens/our-plants/signature-plants/blue-poppies>

African Violet and Gesneriad Society of New Jersey
(formerly the African Violet Club of Morris County and the Frelinghuysen Arboretum Gesneriad Society)



Show & Plant Sale
Haggerty Education Building
Frelinghuysen Arboretum (a facility of the Morris County Parks Commission)
353 E. Hanover Ave.
Morristown, NJ 07960

Saturday, April 15, 2023 9:30am - 3:00pm

Show - featuring African Violets and their exotic cousins in the Gesneriad family.
Sale : Featuring plants from Lyndon Lyons Greenhouses & a wide variety of member grown plants.

Baltimore African Violet Club Welcome to Our Spring 2023

Friday, May 12th and Saturday, May 13th

9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
FREE Admission!

African Violet Sale & Display

Friday, May 12th and Saturday, May 13th from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
FREE Admission!

Available for sale will be beautiful African violets, other unusual plants, leaves, cuttings, pots, soil, perlite, etc.

[Great Mother's Day gifts!] Club members will be available to answer questions about growing and caring for violets and their gesneriad cousins. For more information about our club or spring sale, check out our web site at www.baltimoreafricanvioletclub.org.

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NCAC Facebook page:

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

The National Capital Area Chapter of the Gesneriad Society welcomes all interested Gesneriad growers. The most familiar Gesneriad is Saintpaulia, more commonly known as the African Violet.

Dues are \$10 per year You can send your payment to NCAC into our Assistant Treasurer, Andy Meier via PayPal using the email address: ncacotgs-gesneriads@yahoo.com. Please include a note with your Name, Address, Phone number & email address.

Back issues from previous years available on website.

Membership runs the calendar year and can be pro-rated.

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

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

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



Virginia is for Gesneriad Lovers

July 3 to July 8, 2023

The Richmond area convention team invites you to attend The Gesneriad Society's 66th Annual Convention

"VIRGINIA IS FOR GESNERIAD LOVERS"

Venue: The Westin Richmond

<https://gesneriadsociety.org/conventions/2023-convention-richmond-va/>

One of the topics that will be discussed at the 2023 Convention in Richmond, Virginia, in July is growing gesneriads outdoors. The plants in the photos below were grown outdoors in mid-New York State. Our convention speaker will discuss the challenges and rewards of growing gesneriads outdoors. From Margaret Califano the grower: "I put some 'extra' Gesneriads outdoors this summer and got interesting results. The New York weather was very hot and lacked rain in my area, and the porch area was a bit shadier than in the past. Some did better than others. *Chrysosthemis adenosiphon* got huge but didn't bloom. The basket of mostly *Sinningia* 'Prudence Risley' did well. The *Streptocarpus* window box took awhile to grow, but improved with time. *Sinningia* 'Rock Loves Paul' bloomed a lot early, but now wants to restart a crown."

