



Petal Tones

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

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings!

I hope you've all had a great summer. I know we helped a lot of folks have one of the greatest gesneriad summers they've ever experienced. We all deserve to give ourselves a great big pat on the back for pulling this one off the way we did. We're a small chapter but no one who attended Convention in July 2009 will ever believe that. It all came together flawlessly – trips, speakers, plant sales and of course, the show. THANK YOU ALL for the great job!



Tour at the National Arboretum

But now it's time to face our next set of challenges. The Arboretum has some stimulus money to spend, and that may mean losing our meeting place for up to a year or more. The good news for us is that the reconstruction seems to have been delayed until some time next year, so we may be okay for the remainder of this year through the spring. Frank Daspit may have more to say about this at the meeting.



We have a show to put on in March. It may seem early to think about that to most of you, but now's the time to pick a Show Chair and all the sub-chairs, as well

as finalize the venue. Will we have it at the Arboretum? I hope so but at this point the availability is still up in the air. Where else could we have it? A Mall? A Nursery?

We also have to put together a list of programs for the year. Ki's survey has given us some ideas, but we have to finalize the schedule and confirm all the speakers. I'm sure Brian would appreciate the names and contact information of any good speakers that you know or have heard.



I think we're in for another great year.

Jim

UPCOMING MEETING DATES AND EVENTS

September 12, 2009: Ken Meier – Gesneriads in Ecuador

Doors open at 10:30. Program starts promptly at 11:00.

October 10, 2009: doors open at 10:30 AM; Program TBD

December 12, 2009: Holiday Party

FRELINGHUYSEN CHAPTER SHOW

The Frelinghuysen Chapter of the Gesneriad Society is holding its annual show on **October 4**. Details will be available in the October issue. Brian Connor and I will be

going up on the 3rd to judge the show. Please put this on your calendar. It should be a great getaway and a chance to see some more fabulous plants.

Jim

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Hi. Me again. Sorry about the delay in getting this to everyone. There were a number of technical difficulties, starting with the total collapse of my laptop. I've ordered a new motherboard, for those of you who know a little about computers, and will probably require a whole weekend to put it in once I get it.

Then I thought I'd just put it all together on the Macintosh. Problem is I don't have Office on the Mac and I couldn't for the life of me figure out the word processing program that I do have on it.

Third choice: my wife's Vista computer. The problem there is that she has Office 2007 and I had problems with it too. So here I am at work on Tuesday morning (5:30 am right now) putting together Petal Tones.

This will be a small issue. Ki's Petal Tones Blog has pretty much covered the Convention for us. Lot's of great photos of the winning plants, which Ki is continuing to update. If you haven't been there yet and you're reading this on your computer, click on this link to be taken there for a quick look:

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

I need some help with Petal Tones. We all have things we could share and I need some of you to put them in writing and get them to me. Places you've visited. People you've seen. Plants that are doing especially well for you. Get out the computer (and camera) and share with the rest of us.

Jim

Ken Meier – Orchid Grower

Wait a minute! Isn't this a Gesneriad group? Ken is an avid orchid grower, collector and judge. He recently went on a collecting trip to Ecuador and discovered a number of non-orchids growing among the plants he was there to photograph and collect. I remember that same feeling as Mauro and I sometimes had to push aside orchids and bromeliads to get to the gesneriads. Come see Ken's remarkable photos of Gesneriads in their native habitat. Ecuador is home to many of the plants we love (and let's try to help him identify them).

They're not always show quality when growing in their natural habitat!



LITTLE SHOW

Guess what? Brian Connor is now a judge! It's going to be so much easier now to have Little Shows. If you have a plant worthy of a show but no show to enter it in, bring it to our meeting. Brian and I will likely tap one of the former judges in our group to be the third panel member, but Little Shows will get judged during the break between our program and the business meeting. **I would like to see us get some practice at arrangements too (for the spring show), so there will be an arrangement title in each Newsletter. For September, how about "Back to School": a "Happy 10" x 10" x 10" arrangement using a "back to school" accessory.**

BRAZIL SEED CLUB

Just a note to remind you, if you are a member of the NCAC and would like to participate in this seed club, just watch your e-mail for a list from Brian Connor. As Mauro posts new seed lists Brian will send the list out to everyone in the Chapter. There is no cost to you; it's part of your membership privileges.

The NCAC is allowed up to 36 packages of seed a year. Send your requests to Brian and he will place the order with Mauro (three total orders of 12 packs each). Brian can be reached at: vicepresident@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org.

Naturally first priority will be for Gesneriad seeds, but if you see something else on the list, add it to your request. If we don't get requests for 12 packets of Gesneriads Brian will fill in with other plants if he has requests. The key is, we are supporting Mauro no matter what we order. Your responsibility is to grow the seeds you get and bring extra plants to the raffle table so that the rest of us can enjoy them too. By getting these new plants into general distribution we're helping to preserve their existence. So many of the natural habitats that these plants came from are no longer there.

In the past some of have been disappointed by getting

very small numbers of seed. This time the seed will only go to the person who ordered it. If two of us want the same seed the packet we order will be split in half. But never more than that. If three or four of us want the same seed we'll order more packets of that seed.

We all saw some interesting new plants at Mauro's talk in July. This is the way to get those exciting new varieties.

Don't Forget the Raffle Table!

Raffle tickets are only \$0.50, or 3 for a dollar, but they provide a great source of income to the NCAC and a great source of plants to new and old members and even visitors to the meeting. Items suitable for the table include any and all objects that plant lovers would appreciate:

Gesneriad plants, rhizomes, tubers, cuttings, seeds

Companion and/or garden plants, cuttings

Growing supplies (pots, labels, soil, leca, sphagnum)

Places I've Been.....

One of the really big benefits of my job is to be able to travel all over the US (and the world) on the company's dime and get to meet people that I've only known through e-mail or even snail mail correspondence. Or to see old friends that have moved away. You all know about my visits with Mauro. But I've also seen Michael Kiehn at the University of Vienna. And numerous friends throughout the US.

This August I had to visit a location in North Carolina. Being one of the moderators for gesneriphiles, I know where a lot of the members live and try to look them up when I'm going to be close by. Not only does this put a face to the name, it gives me some nice dinner conversation with someone other than a co-worker. This trip I looked up Harry Witmore, a co-moderator of gesneriphiles..

For those of you who don't belong to g-philes and don't know who Harry is, try this:
<http://www.cloudjungle.com/portal/>.

Harry is a plant grower. His wife Linda is a birder. This past year they visited Panama where they both got to do their thing. You can read all about that on Harry's personal blog/website: <http://www.witmore.net/portal/>. Oh, yes, Harry's also an artist and has some wonderful paintings and drawings of both birds and plants scattered around the house.

I started out by saying that Harry is a plant grower. I didn't limit that comment to Gesneriad grower. Harry has only been growing Gesneriads for about 5 years. Harry grows just about everything. Aroids, begonias, ferns, and lots of other plant families. The yard is literally packed with baskets hanging from trees, makeshift hangers made of branches, hangers on fences, and pots of all types and sizes lining the paths through his tree covered yard.

I certainly wouldn't want to have to pull all those plants

into the greenhouses in the fall, but that's exactly what Harry does. Out for the summer, in for the winter. Except for those things too big to move, or that are climbing all over the greenhouse walls. Did I mention he has several greenhouses too? And how about the terrariums he has scattered about under lights throughout the house?

He has one terrarium which started out as a 125 gallon aquarium. He turned it on end so that it's close to six feet tall including the base, added a door, a misting system, a wood fiber lining and has it filled with plants native to Panama. What a great way to remember a trip!

The visit with Harry was certainly enjoyable. He and Linda provided a great meal – chicken, southern style potato salad (hot peppers in it) and fried okra (being a "Northerner" I had never had this before). The electricity was out almost the entire time of my visit, but luckily came back on just around 9 pm so that I could see the terrariums.

I'd like this to be a regular column in Petal Tones. But I don't want to be the only contributor. Please let us all now about places you've been, shows you've attended, nurseries with gesneriads (or not) and people you've seen. One of the pleasures of any hobby is being able to share it. And the people who grow Gesneriads are always worth sharing.

Jim

Here are a few unlabeled photos from Harry's garden and greenhouses:





National Capital Area Chapter (NCAC)

A chapter of the Gesneriad Society, Inc.

www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

"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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