



Petal Tones

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

Volume 41 Number 8

October 2010

PRESIDENT/EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Boy, I miss you guys. Having missed the September meeting I haven't seen most of you since the picnic in June. I'm going out of town on business tomorrow and should be back home late Friday so I'll be able to get to the meeting. I need a little shot in the arm to get me moving again with the plants.

I planned to put this issue together yesterday but decided my time was better spent watering the plants. They hadn't been touched since Sept. 5. Lots of brown and crispy leaves, and some are dead for sure, but there were also a number of plants still in flower and looking good. Even in trays that were completely empty of water.

I don't have all the details of what happened at the September meeting. I do know that we have groups working on finding a show location for next year and getting a slate of officers for the December elections. One topic near and dear to my heart is providing plants to various display gardens in the Baltimore/Washington area.

Doris Hill requested plants for the Conservatory at Druid Hill Park in Baltimore. This weekend I visited the National Aquarium. Do you know that there isn't a single Gesneriad in the entire display on the roof! I met with Chris Baker, one of the horticulturists responsible for the plants there. He'd love to get some Gesneriads out on display. He just doesn't know much about them. Some large species *Nematanthus* or *Columnea* (all plants must be New World) growing in the trees would look great. Imagine large horizontal stems with *Nematanthus brasiliensis* flowers dangling down and moving in the breeze. Or the red windowpanes of *Columnea gigantea*. Or some *Episcia* and *Nautilocalyx* as ground covers. Lots of possibilities, but he needs our help.

It seems that display gardens will do well with Gesneriads as long as there is someone working there who knows the family and has an interest. When Jonathan Ertelt worked at the Aquarium there were Gesneriads out on display.

Meeting Schedule: (Most meetings at National Arboretum)

October 9, 2010 – Smithiantha. Quentin Schlieder will present a talk on *Smithiantha*, a very ornamental genus of rhizomatous gesneriads. National Arboretum classroom (downstairs). Room opens at 10:30 and the talk starts promptly at 11:00. We're not sure of microwave availability so please bring foods that don't need to be heated up. Business meeting after the talk.

December 11, 2010 – Holiday Party – National Arboretum

When Elizabeth Varley worked at Longwood Gardens there were huge displays of Gesneriads. Our Charter calls for educating the public on Gesneriads. What better way to do so than providing them to places visited by hundreds or thousands or tens of thousands of visitors a year.

This is a discussion I'd like to continue at the meeting this month. Where can we put more Gesneriads on display? What types of plants will make the most impact on the public. Shows are great for getting the plants out in front of the public for a couple of days, but displays at public gardens make an even bigger impression.

This month is going to be very hard on me. I'll be in Raleigh this week, Detroit next week and Arkansas the week after. However, there is good to be had with the bad. While in Arkansas I'll be visiting with Jon Linstrom. Those who belong to G-philes have seen the photos of his amazing and complex *Sinningia* and *Sinningia* intergeneric hybrids. Hopefully I'll come back with pictures for a November article.

Which reminds me; where are all your articles? I have just about nothing for this issue. Is no one doing anything interesting with his or her plants? Nothing special in flower that you'd like to share with everyone? This is the time of year that we'll be having our show next year. If there really isn't anything in flower or looking good in anyone's collection, maybe we should forget about a show next year? DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT!!!

BRAZIL SEED CLUB

The new list from Brazil Plants will be out soon. 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 when he gets it.

Here are the rules: You have to be a paid member of the National Capital Chapter of the Gesneriad Society. That's it. The one and only rule. 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 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 deleted the list of plants last month and no one has added anything back onto it. So I guess I'll start the ball rolling with a few wishes.

Streptocarpus holstii..... Jim Roberts
Chirita angustifolia..... Jim Roberts
Gesneria 'Yellow Bird' Jim Roberts

Jim

DON'T FORGET THE RAFFLE TABLE!

At every meeting members with extra plants, cuttings, supplies donate them to the raffle table. Tickets for the raffle are only 50 cents each (3 for a dollar) and everyone who attends the meeting gets one ticket just for showing up (including guests). Here's what you'll see on the table at a meeting:

Gesneriad plants, rhizomes, tubers, cuttings, seeds

Companion and/or garden plants, cuttings

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

World Gesneriad Conference

The World Gesneriaceae Research Conference 2010 will be held at Marie Selby Gardens in

Sarasota, FL on 13-15 October, 2010, sponsored by the Gesneriad Research Center at Selby. WGRC will be followed by gesneriad show sponsored by the Suncoast Chapter of The Gesneriad Society on 15-17 October also at Selby Gardens.

The World Gesneriaceae Research Conference 2010 will bring together several researchers, students, enthusiasts, and growers to discuss recent developments in research in the plant family through a series of lectures, posters, tours, and social events. The keynote address will be given by Dr. Anton Weber of the University of Vienna, Austria who has devoted his research career to the study of Old World Gesneriaceae.

Everyone interested in Gesneriaceae is invited to attend both the Conference and show. Registration for the Conference is now open and information about either the Conference or show can email wgrc2010@gmail.com or gesneriadresearch@gmail.com. Dr. John R. Clark, Director of the Gesneriad Research Center at Selby Gardens, is chair of the WGRC Steering committee. Also, check out the Gesneriad Research Center's Blog: <http://gesneriadresearchcenter.blogspot.com>.

At the April meeting of NCAC, members agreed to support student research in Gesneriaceae, and the funds agreed upon will be used to support a student to attend the WGRC.

My love of Lotus

Donna Beverin

If you are an all around gardener who happens to love gesneriads, you may enjoy the experience of growing Lotus.



Presently I don't have a pond but someday!!! So for now I grow my lotus in a container and enjoy them so much! The flowers are so beautiful and fragrant and last for several days.

It is economical to purchase tubers in early spring via ebay or various aquatic plant websites for around \$8

to \$30 each. There are directions for growing these lovelies from seed and I have germinated a seed but not to maturity yet. So I stick to starting them from the tubers. The big thing to remember is to be very careful handling the growing tip of the lotus tuber while you prepare it for planting. I fill a large pot without holes with garden soil and dehydrated cow manure. Soiless potting mix with vermiculite, sphagnum and perlite will not work for this project!

Once the container is 1/2 filled with soil, lay the tuber into the soil with the growing tip facing up. Some say to pin it down with a piece of wire, but I never have. Fill the rest of the container with water. I add about an inch or two of water after the soil is saturated and continue adding water as the leaves grow. The lotus roots begin growing as the water warms in the spring and seem to find their way down into the soil. The heat of the spring days will result with round leaves floating on the surface and as the season progresses and the sun heats the water to 80 degrees and above, the tall umbrellas like leaves emerge. Round containers are best so the roots don't have to hit a right angle as they grow. I also add water just about every day all summer.

Technically these plants are hardy in zone 7 and lower, however I bring mine in my basement for winter and repot them in the spring. Just keep them moist and don't allow them to freeze. Then in spring, I just dump out the entire container and choose the best roots for repotting. There are many sizes of plants including miniatures and small lotus as you can see on in the blue container and the comparison picture of the 2 sizes.



Last year 2009 plants: Sacred Hindu and Red Children

Usually lotus bloom for me later in July however this year my large Sacred Hindu Lotus in the pics bloomed the week of June 18th with more buds

forming. The lotus are heavy feeders and I give them water lily plant tabs several times during the summer. You can find blooming lotus at some nurseries in late spring and they go for around \$40 to \$70 all potted up in water containers.



My new babies who have not bloomed yet



Blooming plant June 18th



New baby bud June 18th



Blooms in June

Lotus at Brookside Gardens in Wheaton, Maryland. I emailed with the horticulturist from the gardens and he said they have the pots submerged into the ground and can be kept in the ground during wintertime. I

would like to try that this year with one of my smaller pots. I just have not decided what area of my garden I want to dig to bury the pot of lotus. I may try with one of my smaller pots.



Huge pond of lotus at Lilipon's Aquatic Center
Driving to work I saw a sign that read Lotus Festival. I googled and found that the Mount Harmon Plantation has an event in the summer called the Lotus Festival. Mt. Harmon is very close to my home on the Eastern Shore and it was a fun surprise to discover the yellow lotus grows wild in quiet estuaries of the Chesapeake. Visiting Mt. Harmon on July 31 was a wonderful day with low humidity to explore the grounds of the plantation, enjoy vendors, but mainly to sit in amazement just looking at the lotus in the water.



Nelumbo lutea: American Lotus : wild flower growing in the river by Mount Harmon Plantation on the Chesapeake. Take a canoe ride on the Sassafras River and find them! www.mountharmon.org
If you already grow lotus I hope we can chat at a meeting and maybe trade tubers next spring! Enjoy!

Ed note: Thanks Donna for the interesting article. Pictures and all. Make any of you feel guilty???

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

President: Jim Roberts
2408 Henson Dr.
Marriottsville, MD 21104
(410) 549-2409
jim-roberts@hughes.net

Vice President: Brian Connor
3003 E. Monument St.
Baltimore, MD 21205
(443) 845-3423
Brian_Connor@bd.com

Treasurer: Larry Skog
611 Roberts Dr. NW
Vienna, VA 22180
(703) 615-2299
SKOGL@si.edu

Secretary: Denise Whitman
7607 Riverdale Road, Apt. 333
New Carrollton, MD 20784
(301) 306-0417
ddw4@hotmail.com

Directors:
John Boggan
Jim Christ
Carol Hamelink

Committees:
Hospitality: Lee Linett
Membership: John Boggan
Programs: Brian Connor
Newsletter Editor: Jim Roberts
editor@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org
or
Petaltones@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

Website and Blog: Kyoko Imai
web@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

Membership: John Boggan
jkb25@cornell.edu
(202) 328-8145