

# Petal Tones

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

Volume 43 Number 4

April 2012



*Saintpaulia* 'Ozio'

## President's Message

Jim Roberts

Well, it's official. There will be no winter during the 2011-2012 December through March period. Spring arrived in February after a slightly chillier than normal fall finished up at the end of January. I'm not sure what the people attending the Cherry Blossom Parade in DC on April 14<sup>th</sup> are going to see on the trees. Certainly not flowers! Maybe some baby cherries?

I strongly urge as many of you as possible to come to this month's meeting. Michael Riley, our guest speaker from New York City, has been growing Gesneriads even longer than I have. He has been on a number of plant-hunting expeditions and even has a *Columnea* named after him: *Columnea rileyi*. Michael grows a wide variety of plants in his Manhattan apartment (Gesneriads, Orchids, Aroids, Begonias, etc.), as do many NY growers. But Michael does things in a most unusual way. He developed his unusual growing methods based on what he saw in the wild. There should be a number of good take-aways for us all.

## Meeting Schedule:

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

### Saturday, April 14<sup>th</sup> AFTERNOON MEETING



Michael Riley, "Epiphytes in the Concrete Jungle" Michael grows a wide assortment of plants in his Manhattan apartment. That in itself is not so amazing. Many growers grow plants in the city. It is the way that Michael grows his plants that will amaze you!

Meeting begins at 1:00pm

1:00-2:00: Set up, raffle, snack

2:00 Michael's Presentation

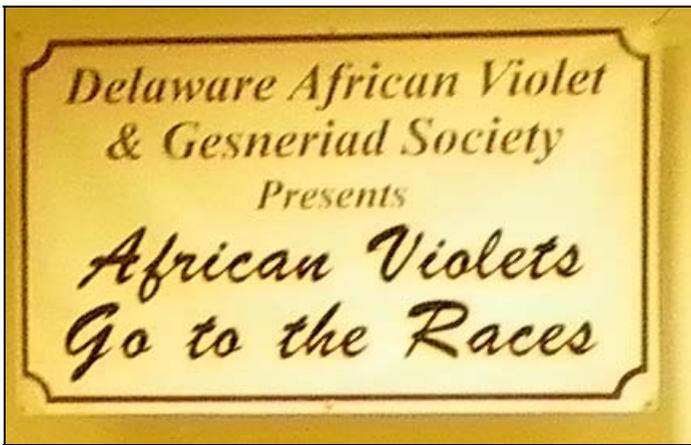
### Meeting dates for 2012

May 12th, June 9<sup>th</sup> Behnke's Social Day, June Summer picnic, September 8th, October 13th, December 8th

I know the calendar shows that our meeting starts at 1:00 this month, but I'm repeating that in my message. Please don't show up too early. There is another group meeting in "our" room and it's not scheduled for us until 1:00. We normally start our meetings with the speaker, then a lunch break and raffle, followed by the business meeting. Because we can't get in until 1:00, I would like to use from 1:00 until 2:00 to get everything set up, including our speaker, and start off with our food and raffle selling. At 1:30 we can hold the raffle and have Michael speak at 2:00. We'll follow that with our short business meeting. The time change comes with some pleasant benefits. A few people who have not been able to attend morning meetings have stated that they will be coming to this one. Let's make them feel welcome (never a problem with our group).

If all goes well we will be in our new meeting space in the Administration Building next month. I'm going to miss the temporary room. In many ways it was much better than the permanent space we had in the big building. See you all on the 14<sup>th</sup>!

Here is a link where you can enjoy an article by Michael Riley: [http://www.hortmag.com/gardens-and-gardners/garden-visits/the\\_life\\_of\\_riley#walls](http://www.hortmag.com/gardens-and-gardners/garden-visits/the_life_of_riley#walls)



by Brian Connor

At the end of March, I was fortunate enough to exhibit plants with the Delaware African Violet & Gesneriad Society (DAVS), who put on an outstanding sale and show with nearly 200 entries on Saturday, March 31<sup>st</sup> at Boscov's. Since the event was on only one day the judges had to work while the event was open to the public. It did propose some unique challenges being in the Boscov's community room which was not very large. However, it was great to consolidate the activities to one day for the benefit of everyone's schedules. Members blocked off the aisles while the judges worked in certain classes and the judges had their work cut out for them. They gave four awards of Special Merit in addition to the Best in Class awards.

A number of lovely gesneriads were on display, featuring some intriguing crosses by Betty Cessna. Betty, you may already be aware, is well known for hybridizing *Episcia* 'Pink Smoke.'



*Streptocarpus* 'Harlequin Blue'

Three *Streptocarpus* to watch out for: *Streptocarpus* 'Harlequin Blue' and *Streptocarpus* 'Bristols Very Berry,' both shown by Mary Schaeffer and the beautiful and unique fantasy *Streptocarpus* 'Liberty Bell' was exhibited by Quentin Schlieder and hybridized by the aforementioned Ms. Cessna. If you find any of these three *Streptocarpus*, please buy them and then share a leaf with me please!



*Streptocarpus* 'Liberty Bell'

The *Kohleria* were even better than the *Streptocarpus*! It was surprising to see 15-20 different *Kohleria* entered by various chapter members at a local show.



Mary Schaeffer grew *Kohleria* 'HCY's Jardin de Monet' to perfection and was awarded Best Gesneriad in Show. One of the Special Merit awards was a Betty Cessna cross of *Kohleria* 'Luciani' x *Kohleria* 'Peridot's Kitilope,' #16, also grown by Mary. The flower color transitioned from a glowing burnt orange near the calyx to a hot pink color on the flower limb. It was striking! In Mary's *Kohleria* collection, there was yet another plant from the same cross with very fat, pink bell shaped flowers.

The *Episcia* were dominated by Angie Celano, although Mary entered yet another Betty Cessna hybrid, *Episcia* 'Thad's Pink Flamingo' x *Episcia* 'Alice's Aussie.'

I always enjoy seeing what Libby Behnke is growing. As it turned out, a wonderful *Columnnea*, a great *Saintpaulia* 'Rockin Robin' and delightful *Sinningia* (like S. 'Kiddo,' an excellent old Beslisle hybrid, I believe). As if Mary Schaeffer had not accomplished enough, she entered a Charles Lawn florist gloxinia grown from seed.

Overall, I felt good about most of my gesneriads, but not so much about my *Saintpaulia* entries, which were just starting to bloom. My *Primulina* 'Rachel' won Second Best Gesneriad in Show, which was very exciting, as I had never won that award before.



*Episcia* 'Karlyn'

In Baltimore, my *Saintpaulia* are sadly used to sharing the showroom with those grown by Marie Burns and Rodney Barnett. I had hoped Delaware would give my poor little semi-minis and standards a reprieve, but they didn't stand a chance next to Bobbie LaFashia's plants! Bobbie won Best in Show and Second Best in Show with 'Precious Red' and 'Optimara New Jersey' respectively. Both were covered in flowers. My violets have about 6 weeks until the Baltimore AV club show (May 11 & 12); will they put out enough bloom in time? Stay tuned!



Bobbie LaFashia's *Saintpaulia* 'Optimara New Jersey'



Brian's *Primulina* 'Rachel' nestled among other beautiful plants

The designs at the DAVS show were lovely and I can't say enough good things about the plant sale, featuring plants grown by Gary Hunter. Gary supplies Longwood Gardens with gesneriads where he is selling around 75 *Streptocarpus* a week! He offered a variety of small begonias, ferns, moss and other small terrarium plants along with large *Sinningias*, *Streptocarpus* and *xSinvana* for sale. Quentin Schlieder had several boxes off to the side of the popular sales table for Gesneriad enthusiasts to peruse among and select some unique gesneriads for sale. Donna found Jim's hybrid *Gloxinia* 'Dragonsong', *Episcia* 'Jim's Daphne's Choice', *Streptocarpella* 'Blueberry Cream, and *xVanvonna* harlequinade. All in all, a good time was had by all at an outstanding event! And it was great to speak with so many knowledgeable members of various gesneriad groups. If northern Delaware is accessible to you, check out the DAVS web-site for meeting times.

<http://gesneriadsociety.org/chapters/DAVS/>

### **Bloomin' Now** Donna

This begonia was grown from the bulbils received from John



Boggan when he spoke at our October meeting on Testing the Limits with Hardy(ish) Gesneriads and Begonias. Had a chilly winter in my frig! So beautiful! Hope for late summer blooms!

## Ask Mr. Gesneriad



### Question:

The *Streptocarpus* plant is located near an insulated window. The flowers on the leaf closest to the window are a solid color purple. This solid colored purple flower is not the exact same shade of the bi-colored flower.



*Streptocarpus* 'Roulette Azure'

The flowers opening away from the window side of the plant have the typical white flower with the purple border. Are *Streptocarpus* very temperature sensitive? Is this a regular occurrence? I plan to propagate leaves from both sides of the plant to see if the color forms are stable. Any insights and suggestions would be greatly appreciated! Barry Woolf

### Answer:

The *Streptocarpus* 'Fleischle Roulette Azur' and 'Fleischle Roulette Cherry' both have this unstable characteristic of producing solid colored as well as several variations of the white flower with a colored border. It has nothing to do with temperature. You will probably find that some leaves produce solid colored flowers and others produce the correct coloration. There isn't much that can be done to prevent this except to remove the leaves that produce the solid colored flowers and hope for enough leaves that produce the "ringed" flowers to give a nice full showy plant.



Please send questions to Mr. Gesneriad  
c/o Donnabeverin@gmail.com

Dear Mr. Gesneriad,

### Question:

Do you recommend tip nipping on *Sinningia tubiflora*? I have one started on my southern windowsill and it is zooming skyward and is about 2 feet so far. Ditto for Arkansas Bells? Except I have to let it go now because AB is full of buds! Donna

### Answer:

No, I don't recommend tip cutting or pinching of *Sinningia tubiflora*. Many of the *Sinningia* will only flower on that original long spike. Pinching will cause branching, but the plants may not have enough time to send up enough growth to get flowers before the fall.



Jim's Trip to Fairfield Gardens, Florida



Just a small planting of Episcia as a groundcover at Fairchild Gardens



Nautilocalyx species growing in patches in the greenhouse



Seemannia species growing outdoors by a pond at Fairchild Gardens



John R. Clark and Jeanne Katzenstein on the jungle path at Fairchild Gardens



Not just plants at Fairchild Gardens!



Really nice Columnnea hybrid growing in the greenhouse at Fairchild Gardens



Rhytidophyllum tomentosum at Farichild Gardens growing outdoors and at least 7 feet high and wide



Jerry and Nancy Kast - at Fairchild Gardens

**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>Begonia schmidtiana</i>	.....Donna Beverin
<i>Sinningia</i> 'Li'l Georgie	.....Lee Stradley
<i>Chirita</i> 'Veracunda'	.....Barry Woolf
<i>Kohleria warszewiczii</i>	.....Barry Woolf
<i>Columnnea glicensteinii</i>	.....Barry Woolf
<i>Columnnea linearis</i> 'Purple Robe'	.....Barry Woolf
<i>Koelikeria erinoides</i> "Starry Night"	.....Barry Woolf
<i>Columnnea glicensteinii</i>	.....Dr. Leon Glicenstein
<i>Columnnea linearis</i> 'Purple Robe'	.....Dr. Leon Glicenstein
<i>Saintpaulia magungensis</i>	.....Lee Linett
<i>Saintpaulia tonguensis</i>	.....Lee Linett
<i>Saintpaulia</i> 'House of Amani'	.....Lee Linett
<i>Columnnea picta</i>	.....Lee Linett
<i>Nautilocalyx picturatus</i>	.....Lee Linett
<i>Petrocosmea forestii</i>	.....Lee Linett

**Plans for Regional Show Continue to Unfold**

The Mid Atlantic Regional Gesneriad Show, Sale and Symposium, a collaborative event of the Delaware, Liberty Bell and National Capital Area Chapters of The Gesneriad Society, will be held in Townsend Hall at the University of Delaware Botanic Gardens, 531 South College Avenue, Newark DE from 10 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, September 30, 2012. Newark, Delaware is about a ninety minute ride from Washington, DC and the University is located just off Interstate 95.

The show, with the theme “Gesneriads Across the Globe: An International Family,” and plant sale are free and open to the public. The show and sale set up will be on Saturday, September 29, 2012 in the morning with judging in the afternoon. Brian Connor developed the theme and the flower show schedule which has been sent to The Gesneriad Society for approval. The Flower Show Banquet will be held Saturday evening at Timothy’s Restaurant in Newark.



Dr. John L. Clark documenting gesneriad specimen’s on a recent expedition.

In addition to the Show and Sale, there will be two wonderful presentations on Sunday. The first will feature John L. Clark from the University of Alabama who will give a presentation on "Searching for Gesneriads in Cuba".

John is an Associate Professor in The University of Alabama's Department of Biological Sciences. His research focuses on the diversification and taxonomy of the flower plant family Gesneriaceae in the New World Tropics. Since 2006 he has participated in eight expeditions to Cuba for ongoing research on the Flora of

Cuba Project. His research has facilitated the rediscovery of plants that had not been documented since the 1800s, some of which have been recently introduced into the horticultural community. John will discuss recent taxonomic changes that affected the names of commonly grown Gesneriaceae from the Caribbean. This will be a wonderful opportunity to see Gesneriads growing naturally in their habitats.

The second presentation will feature Bob and Dee Stewart live in Stowe, MA where they maintain an extensive collection of exotic gesneriads in their greenhouse. Bob and Dee began growing gesneriads almost 25 years ago, starting on windows, moving to light, then to more elaborate lights, and then to the greenhouse. They grow a wide variety of species, including a lot of epiphytes and cool growers. Bob and Dee have won many awards for their plants, and lectured on the greenhouse culture of gesneriads at the AGGS 1998 Convention. They have been members of AGGS (now The Gesneriad Society) for over 25 years. Bob is the botanical reviewer for Gesneriads and is a fabulous photographer. Dee is a wonderful grower. They were featured in the February issue of Gleanings, a free-newsletter from The Gesneriad Society.

Space is limited and registration will be required for the Symposium. Watch future issues of the newsletter for more details, and if you are planning to attend and are able to help, please let Quentin Schlieder, who is the event Chairman, or Jim Roberts, who is Flower Show Chairman, know.  
Quentin

### Up and Coming Shows/Sales of Interest

1. Richmond African Violet Club (European Violet Express)  
April 14 & 15

Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens  
800 Lakeside Avenue  
Richmond, VA 23228

Sat Apr 14 Show and Sale 1:00 p.m.- 5:00 p.m.  
Sun Apr 15 Show and Sale 9:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.

The Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens will be open to the public from 9:00 to 5:00 pm on both days and we would like to encourage everyone to come early to enjoy their annual Festival of a Million Blooms. There is no charge to enter the African violet show, however, there is a fee to tour the gardens. The fees are as follows:  
Adults- \$11.00 Seniors (55+) - \$10.00 AAA Members- \$1.00 off the price of admission. Also, for the month of April, The Garden is offering two for one admission for

entrants presenting a current Public Broadcasting Membership Card. For more information about Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens, please visit their website. The address is

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

NOTE- I saw nothing but good reviews for Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens (seriously they were all 4.5 to 5 star reviews, like 50 of them).

2. Baltimore African Violet Club (Symphony Of Violets)

May 11 & 12 Mothers' Day Weekend

The Shops at Kenilworth in Towson  
800 Kenilworth Drive  
Towson, Maryland 21204

Fri May 11 Show 1:00 a.m. - 05:00 p.m.  
Fri May 11 Sale 9:00 a.m.- 05:00 p.m.  
Sat May 12 Show and Sale 9:00 a.m. - 05:00 p.m.

### **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](http://www.gesneriadsociety.org)  
NCAC website: [www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org](http://www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org)  
NCAC Blog: <http://petaltones.blogspot.com/>

President: Jim Roberts Vice President: Brian Connor  
2408 Henson Dr. 3003 E. Monument St.  
Marriottsville, MD 21104 Baltimore, MD 21205  
(410) 227-2324 (443) 845-3423  
[jim-roberts@hughes.net](mailto:jim-roberts@hughes.net) [Brian\\_Connor@bd.com](mailto:Brian_Connor@bd.com)

Treasurer: Barry Woolf  
1301 Malus Court  
Fallston, MD 21047  
410-879-1654  
[Woolfphoto1@comcast.net](mailto:Woolfphoto1@comcast.net)

Secretary: Harold Belcher  
[secretary@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org](mailto:secretary@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org)

Directors: Aarti Shah, Kyoko Imai, Donna Beverin  
Committees:  
Hospitality: Lee Linett  
Membership: Kyoko Imai  
Programs: Brian Connor

Newsletter Editor: Donna Beverin  
[editor@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org](mailto:editor@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org)  
or  
Petaltones@gmail.com  
or  
[Donnabeverin@gmail.com](mailto:Donnabeverin@gmail.com)

Website and Blog: Kyoko Imai  
[web@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org](mailto:web@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org)