



Gleanings

a monthly newsletter from The Gesneriad Society, Inc.

(articles and photos selected from Chapter newsletters, our journal GESNERIADS, and original sources)

Volume 2, Number 4

April 2011



Welcome to the latest issue of **Gleanings!** This issue includes photos from Kathy Spissman's growing area, photos from the Philadelphia International Flower Show, an article on *Petrocosmeas* by Leonard Re, Bob Clark on Growing Species *Saintpaulia*, and more Coming Events.

Hope you enjoy **Gleanings!**

Mel Grice, Editor

The photo on the right of *Aeschynanthus guttatus* was taken by Carol Ann Bonner of Nashville, Tennessee, USA. "In the pictures I saw of *A. guttatus*, the flower looked kind of brown, so I was not impressed. I left the pot hanging near the glass of my slightly shaded greenhouse where it gets direct morning sun and is protected from afternoon sun by an adjacent oak. Winter temperatures away from the heaters get down to the 50's°F (10°C), and in the summer I'm sure it hits the upper 80's°F (27°C), since many of my plants summer outdoors.

Another year, still no flowers. But then I made a change in my regimen that has made all the difference in my plants. I started paying more attention to them. Lots of things have bloomed for the first time or put on better shows than ever before. *Aeschynanthus guttatus* is one of those. The flowers are bigger and brighter and more open than I had expected. They're still not flashy, but their size and patterning is terrific, and I would love to see them used in hybridizing. Meanwhile, I'm just trying to self it to get the seed in the Seed Fund since I'm sure lots of people would like to grow this surprising gem."



A Visit to Kathy Spissman's, Tucker, Georgia, USA

Kathy Spissman <mrsstrepstrep@comcast.net>



Kathy Spissman



Stephen Maciejewski



Photos courtesy of
Mel Grice and
Peter Shalit



Johnnie Berry admiring the latest
Gesneriad Society apparel — "the Height
in Hort Couture!" that is available for
purchase on the website —
www.gesneriadsociety.org click on "shop".



Gesneriads at the 2011 Philadelphia International Flower Show

Rhytidophyllum leucomallon (top left in photo) won the Liberty Bell Chapter Award for foliage on one of the three judging days.



Sinningia leucotricha



Sinningia 'Pristine'



Aeschynanthus gracilis



Streptocarpus 'White Ice'



Challenge Class (30 entries) —
Streptocarpus 'Purple Martin' —
plants distributed to growers last
September — winning entry on left



Growing Petrocosmeas in Warm/Dry Climate of Southern California

Leonard Re <buffboy@socal.rr.com>

Fountain Valley, California, USA

My interest in growing Petrocosmeas started in 2008. In conjunction with my first Gesneriad Society Board of Directors Retreat we visited the Tampa Bay Gesneriad Chapter meeting. Paul Kroll was giving a talk on Petrocosmeas and with his usual generosity gave us offshoots and leaves of his cultivars. During his talk he mentioned cool growing conditions, limited watering and limited repotting. Paul lives in Buffalo, New York (I also lived there 40 years ago but left for San Francisco and eventually moved to warmer Southern California). In 2009 I met Tim Tuttle who we all know as "Mr. Petrocosmea". Visit Tim's beautiful website for extensive Petrocosmea information <http://petrocosmea.blogspot.com/> Tim has similar conditions as Paul and grows most of his plants in a cellar. So, cool growing conditions are my biggest challenge as my house averages in the low to mid 70's (21-24°C) during the summer and high 60's (15-19°C) during the winter with around 35% humidity.

Interestingly enough, I have found "acceptable" areas and the plants have adapted. I've experimented in growing under both natural and fluorescent lighting and the plants have done better under fluorescent lights (two cool white tubes on 11 hours per day). I utilize the vacant corners of the plant trays which probably have the least amount of light. I use my standard African Violet mix of peat/perlite/vermiculite with a "pinch" of dolomite lime in each pot. I use shallow 1–1½ inch (3 cm) condiment cups and put a small hole in the bottom of the cup with a very thin wick. I bottom water the very small starter plants. Once mature, they are wick watered using distilled water with 10 drops of PH up. On most days I mist all my plants as soon as the lights turn on and later after I have a couple of cups of coffee. I use the same fertilizer rotation on all my plants (Dyna-Gro; Gro-More; Eleanor's VF11 and non-urea orchid fertilizer). Also, once per month I drench all my plants using distilled water with an added ½ tsp. of Epsom Salts.



Petrocosmea 'Short'nin' Bread'

Blooming is the area that remains a challenge for me. The only ones I have been successful with on a consistent basis are *Petrocosmea minor* and *Petrocosmea* 'Momo'.

The others either have not bloomed or bloomed once or twice. But as an offset to this, I use the plants extensively in my dish gardens and terrariums as they add interesting plant material to the exhibits and fill in vacant space.



Petrocosmea minor

Caution is needed regarding transplanting! As both Paul and Tim have warned me, they don't like their roots disturbed and transplanting should be limited. I can testify to this as the few plants that I have lost occurred after a transplant. So have fun with Petrocosmeas. They grow slowly, take up little space, and make for interesting plant material.

Growing Species *Saintpaulia*

Bob Clark <bobclark98122@gmail.com>
Seattle, Washington, USA

Growing species *Saintpaulia* for me is no different than growing the hybrid cultivars of *Saintpaulia*. I came to join The Gesneriad Society from the African Violet Society in order to become a better grower and judge. In the process, I have come to appreciate many different gesneriads but still have a great enjoyment in growing African violets.

I grow most of the clones of *Saintpaulia* species that are in cultivation with few exceptions. Most are grown on light stands as are the rest of the plants in my collection. I have grown in natural light as well and continue to (especially as light-stand space is at a premium). I have two light stands on the second floor of our home in a spare bedroom, and two stands on the third floor in the converted attic where my office is also located. The office location is the cooler of the two locations, having windows on the east and west as well as skylights that can open to let in fresh air in the warmer months. Lights are on 12 hours a day.

My potting mix is a light mix of peat, vermiculite, and perlite prepared by my local Seattle African Violet Society. I find it easy to use and, if needed, I lighten it with a bit more perlite. I wick water my *Saintpaulias* and fertilize with every other filling of the reservoirs. In order to raise humidity in the area, I can pour water into the trays in which the reservoirs sit. I have had good success growing this way in Seattle. When I lived in New England, I grew in the basement, and no supplemental humidity was needed as the plant stands were in the basement. Cooler-loving *Saintpaulia* species thrived there, but I did have problems with common *Saintpaulia ionantha*, *Saintpaulia rupicola* and *Saintpaulia nitida*. Here in Seattle, the two growing locations make it ideal to grow each species according to its temperature likes. Most grow well in either climate, but *Saintpaulia shumensis*, *Saintpaulia teitensis* and the *Saintpaulia velutina* clones have enjoyed the cooler temperatures of the third floor.



Saintpaulia 5a. cl. *grandifolia* #239 grown by Bob Clark
(photo by Julie Mavity-Hudson)

I have not yet grown the notoriously difficult *Saintpaulia goetzeana* in this climate. In Massachusetts, I had it and kept it for several months before it succumbed to a quick rotting disease. I intend to try growing it out on the front porch year-round and bring it in only when temperatures dip below 40°F (5°C). I really want to get this one again and keep it going! I was amazed at the pictures supplied by Kenji Hirose posted on the Internet mail group Gesneriphiles showing three plants of *S. goetzeana* in full bloom. (See photo on next page.) Being a judge of *Saintpaulia* species, I can vouch that I have never seen such flowers on exhibit. In fact, seeing such floriferous plants in those pictures makes me realize that such goals are possible, and indeed achievable!



Saintpaulia goetzeana grown and photographed by Kenji Hirose

This article appeared originally in GESNERIADS Vol. 59, No. 2, Second Quarter 2009, Jeanne Katzenstein, editor. Read other interesting articles like this about gesneriads by becoming a member of The Gesneriad Society and receiving our quarterly 56-page journal.

Coming Events

April 16— Delaware — The Delaware African Violet and Gesneriad Society's show and sale at Boscov's Christiana Town Center Store Auditorium, Christiana, Delaware. Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Contact Quentin Schlieder <qcsjr@comcast.net>

April 16-17 — Montreal, Quebec, Canada — Societe des Saintpaulia de Montreal will have its annual judged show and sale at Chalet du parc Maisonneuve, 4601 Sherbrooke Street East, Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Saturday and Sunday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Visit our [web site](#) for details — [Page for the show](#)
Admission: \$ 2.00

April 30— Vancouver, BC, Canada — The Vancouver African Violet and Gesneriad Society's show and sale at Floral Hall at VanDusen Botanical. Saturday 1 to 4 p.m. Admission: \$2.00. Contact Bill Price <billprice@shaw.ca>

April 30 — Etobicoke, Ontario, Canada — Lakeshore African Violet Society annual show and sale at St. Philip's Lutheran Church, 61 West Deane Park Drive, Etobicoke, Ontario (The East Mall and Rathburn Road). 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free parking. Contact Doris Brownlie at 905-270-6770 or email Beverley Williams.

April 30 & May 1 — New York — African Violet and Gesneriad Society of Western New York judged show and sale, "Travel Destinations" at Galleria Mall, Cheektowaga, New York. Saturday 12 to 6 p.m.; Sunday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Contact Paul Kroll <pfkroll@roadrunner.com>.

April 30 & May 1 — Ohio — Cincinnati AVS annual judged show & sale, Eastgate Mall, 4601 Eastgate Blvd, Cincinnati, Ohio. Saturday 12 to 9 p.m.; Sunday 12 to 5 p.m. Free parking and admission. Contact Penny Wichman or Al Cenci.

Convention 2011

The Gesneriad Society's
55th Annual Convention
Loews Philadelphia Hotel
1200 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA, USA
July 5-9, 2011

Hosted by the Liberty Bell Chapter





From the editor —

I just returned from the Toronto Gesneriad Society Show. Look for photos in the next issue.

See more Coming Events on the Society's website www.gesneriadsociety.org. Please continue sending photos and articles. If you have suggestions, comments, or items for possible inclusion in future issues, please feel free to contact me at editor.gleanings@gesneriadsociety.org.

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Paul Susi, Development Chairperson
117-01 Park Lane South, Apt. C1A, Kew Gardens, NY 11418
For additional information, contact: [<development@gesneriadsociety.org>](mailto:development@gesneriadsociety.org).

Membership and Changes of Address

The Gesneriad Society Membership Secretary, Bob Clark,
1122 East Pike Street, PMB 637, Seattle, WA 98122-3916 USA

Changes of Address — Send changes of address to the Membership Secretary [<membership@gesneriadsociety.org>](mailto:membership@gesneriadsociety.org) 90 days prior to moving to avoid missing an issue. The Society is not responsible for replacing issues missed because of late notification of address changes. Back issues may be ordered from The Gesneriad Society Publications.

Renewals — Send dues to the Membership Secretary. A Renewal Notice is sent two months prior to the expiration date of your membership. (The expiration date is printed on your mailing label/membership card on the back cover of GESNERIADS.) Please remit your dues prior to the expiration date to avoid missing an issue as we are not responsible for replacing issues missed because of late payment of dues. Back issues may be ordered from Publications.

Application for Membership — *The Gesneriad Society, Inc.*

WELCOME — membership in our international society includes quarterly issues of *GESNERIADS* — *The Journal for Gesneriad Growers*, a copy of *How to Know and Grow Gesneriads*, a packet of gesneriad seeds and a wealth of information about our Chapters, Flower Shows, Publications, Research, Slide Programs and Seed Fund. Membership begins upon receipt of dues.

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