



Petal Tones

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

Volume 42 Number 2

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Streptocarpus 'Summer Parfait,' first place in Class 31B at NCAC-hosted 2009 convention in Silver Spring. Photo by Kyoko Imai

This will be a short message. I'm at the Pittsburgh airport trying to get from a business trip to L.A. BWI was closed last night so we were all diverted to here. How I hate travel in the winter. Carrying clothes (and coats) for two very different climates, trying to be prepared for everything. Never seems to work out quite right.

L.A. was gorgeous. 75 degrees and sunny. I hope Atlanta is nice too when I head out tonight for the Gesneriad Society's Board of Directors Retreat. And now that I've mentioned our parent society, I have to talk up Convention a bit. Hopefully many of you are planning to attend. It's going to be in Philadelphia this year and will likely be as big or bigger than our own Convention in Silver Springs a couple of years ago. And if you are planning to attend, you should already have your potential show plants put aside for extra grooming and shaping. It would be really great for NCAC to walk away with some of the top prizes. We have the talent to do so. For those of you new to the

Meeting Schedule:

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

February 12, 2011 - Growing Plants From Seeds workshop. Also, bring gesneriads to donate to Druid Hill Conservatory. (More info in this issue.)

March 12, 2011 - Growing *Saintpaulia* for show.

The only gesneriad to have its own society and its own specific rules for growing and showing. Learn from an expert (to be determined) the secrets to growing large perfect standard violets, as well as miniatures and trailing types. Rules for judging violets in a gesneriad show defer to the general rules as determined by AVSA except that the plants are judged competitively and not on their own merit (only one Blue Ribbon per Class).

group, look back at the Chapter's blog for photos of the winning plants we had at our Convention.

We also have to start working on our September show. The show location, at Behnke Nurseries in Beltsville, should be challenging and exciting. We've had our shows at the Arboretum for so many years that we really know exactly what to do when we walk in on Friday for setup. It won't be quite so easy at Behnke's. But the lighting will be wonderful for showing our plants, and the judges will enjoy the plant environment.

We have to pick Chairs at this meeting, so if you're interested in helping, be ready to volunteer. If you can't make it to the meeting but want to Chair one of the spots, get in touch with me (show chair positions are listed at the end of the newsletter). I'm willing to volunteer as Show Chair if no one else wants to fight for that position. Brian Connor is Vice Show Chair for the Philly Convention, so I doubt he wants responsibility for both shows. Think of a theme for our Show. We need that in order to send publicity

to the Gesneriad Society soon. The theme could be something relating to movies, songs, books, authors, historical events, holidays, or just about anything else we can come up with. The theme is used almost exclusively for the desithe classes but could carry over into the color ribbons we use between sections or the color print we have on section cards. Bring an idea and we'll vote on it.

We also want to discuss the table favors for the Philly Convention. Lots of great ideas have been brought forward. Bring pricing and pictures of your ideas to the meeting.

And finally, as I conclude my rambling "short" message, remember to send your dues payment to Larry Skog. His address can be found on the last page of Petal Tones. Our Chapter is really turning into something special. Membership continues to increase. Volunteerism is up. Thanks so much for all your help!

—Jim Roberts, President

BRAZIL SEED CLUB

The new list from Brazil Plants was sent out to members of the Chapter. 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. <http://www.brazilplants.com>

Here are the rules: You have to be a paid member of the National Capital Chapter of the Gesneriad Society. Each request should be limited to 3-4 seed selections so that everyone has an opportunity. That's it. 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 Peixoto, 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.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Dues are due! Please contact Larry or bring your dues to the February meeting to maintain your membership status.

DESPERATELY SEEKING

Gesneria 'Yellow Bird'..... Jim Roberts
Sinningia 'Snowflake'.....Jim Roberts
Sinningia 'Star Eyes' Jim Roberts
Sinningia 'Bright Eyes'..... Jim Roberts
Episcia 'Unpredictable Valley'.....Barb Stewart
Begonia bogneri.....Jim Roberts
Nautilocalyx pallidus.....Jim Roberts
Streptocarpus cuttings/plants.....Jim Roberts
Begonia smithiantha.....Donna Beverin
xAchimenantha 'Dutch Treat'...../.....Donna Beverin
Petrocosmea baby plants (have HT-2/Rosettifolia).....Donna Beverin

Last Request For Hong Kong From Jim Roberts

As I try to prepare myself for my trip to Hong Kong and China at the end of March, I find that I need to make one more request of the group. Luke Leong in Hong Kong sent me a wish list of plants that he would like to grow. Leaves, cuttings, or rhizomes are all acceptable. After the meeting when I know exactly what I'll be bringing him, he will apply for his import permit.

If you have any of these plants that you could share at the meeting in February, I would be most appreciative. If you don't have them for the February meeting. I supposed I could mail them on later, but I'd rather get everything done at once. So, here's Luke's Wish List:

Kohleria grandiflora
Kohleria 'Longwood'
Kohleria rugata
Kohleria 'Sciadotydaea Hybrid'
Kohleria 'Royal Gem'
Kohleria 'Caliph'
Kohleria amabilis
Kohleria 'Cinnamon Toast'
Kohleria 'Keystone Morning'
Kohleria 'Gunsmoke'
Kohleria 'Rebecka'
xGlokohleria 'Goblin'
Saintpaulia 'Silverglade Apples'
Saintpaulia 'Kermit'
Saintpaulia 'Enchanted Pink'
Saintpaulia 'Tea's Blueberry Butterfly'
Saintpaulia 'Pink Pistachio'
Saintpaulia 'Morgan's Barossa'

If you are looking for a plant and can't find it, list it here.

Petal Tones has a wide distribution and chances are good that someone will be able to get you what you want.

AMAZING GESNERIAD SEEDS

By Brian Connor

Don't let the tiny, dustlike seeds of gesneriads intimidate you. Sowing seeds is fun, easy and a great way to expand your plant collection with exotic gesneriads from far away places that are unavailable in any other form.

There are many successful ways to cultivate seedlings. Here are a few guidelines:

- Use any clean container. I like solo cups for their small size and convenience.
- Use any well-draining soil mix. **Warning:** I do recommend sterilizing any soil mix used for starting seeds, although such extremes are not necessary for potting plants.

3 Methods To Sterilize Soil (don't tell your roommate)

1. Microwave moistened soil in a bowl for 15 minutes.
2. Bake soil at 250 °F for 30 minutes (yes in the oven!).
3. Pour boiling water over soil.

In any case, do let it cool before using!

- Add a top layer of 1/4" pre-moistened Milled Sphagnum Moss. This helps prevent damping-off fungus. The moss can be difficult to wet thoroughly, so I often use boiling water.
- Make certain that the soil mix and moss are saturated with water. It should be very moist.
- Sow *some* of your seeds on the surface (never sow all seeds at once and never bury gesneriad seeds).
- Try not to sow the seeds too densely. Use a creased piece of paper and lightly tap the seeds so that they are evenly distributed over the solo cup.
- Enclose the container for high humidity. Place in a bright, well lit, warm area. Fluorescent

Brian's Seed Experiment

A friend gave me some old Gesneriad Journals and the Jan/Feb 1990 edition had an article referencing some novel ways to start gesneriad seeds based on some experiments by Darrell Trout.

A couple of weeks before Christmas, I could not resist trying one "experimental" method of starting seeds using agar plates. It was supposedly faster and more sensitive than conventional methods. I had access to some agar at work. So, I made 1% agar plates (10 g/L) with 1 g/L Orchid fertilizer dissolved in the agar. I had no autoclave at my disposal, so I boiled the agar and then cooled it to about 50 °C (122 °F) to add the fertilizer solution. I sowed seeds of *Streptocarpus porphyrostachys*, *Streptocarpus modestus*, *Streptocarpus silvaticus*, *Streptocarpus lilliputana*, *Henckelia sp.* 0604, *Henckelia hispida*, *Henckelia albomarginata*, *Ridleyandra quercifolia*, *Ridleyandra morganii*, and *Sphaerorrhiza sp.* 'Raizama' on agar plates, as well as on soil/milled sphagnum moss.

None of the *Ridleyandra* or *Henckelia* are doing anything, anywhere [sigh]. They will have to be held a good long time I am certain.

The *Sphaerorrhiza* sprouted within 2.5 weeks on the agar and then so did some of the Strepts. However, then a fungal colony emerged on the plate with the *Sphaerorrhiza* and may have damaged the seedlings.

Three of the 4 Strept species sprouted on the agar first; one has not sprouted at all. After sprouting on the agar, the seedlings must be transplanted to a soil/moss mix.

So I am not sure it was worth the trouble and I will have to check the fate of the *Sphaerorrhiza* seedlings. However, I only had a few *S. silvaticus* seeds and one lone seedling sprouted—only on the agar so far.

I will try to have a demo agar plate at the February meeting.

lights are perfect!

- Now you wait! Some seeds will sprout in the first 2 weeks. Most will take 2-8 weeks. Rarely, some species will really lag behind and take 3-6 months. All of the conditions for seed viability and speed to germination are not well understood.
- Excess seeds can be stored at room temp for short periods of time. They can be refrigerated for extended periods if kept dry.

U.S. NATIONAL ARBORETUM DECISION TO DE-ACCESSION SELECTED COLLECTIONS

By Harold Belcher

Last November, the U.S. National Arboretum (USNA) announced that a decision had been made to de-accession its Glenn Dale Hillside of its Azalea Collection on Mt. Hamilton, as well as its National Boxwood Collection and its Perennial Collection, both of which are on the Bladensburg Road side of the USNA. This decision was based on the loss of a long-standing financial support for the USNA Asian Valley Collection from a private donor. Losing this financial support will require the USNA Gardens Unit to cut two gardener positions, which were funded by that private donor for its Asian Valley collection, in 2012. As a result of the loss of funding and the necessity of cutting two gardener positions, the USNA believes that it has insufficient personnel to maintain all of its gardens and collections and must now evaluate the best use of the Gardens Unit's financial and personnel resources.

The Arboretum has begun this process so that it can be completed before the loss of the two privately funded positions in the Asian Valley Collection in 2012. The Gardens Unit staff, under the direction of Mr. Scott Aker, analyzed the USNA collections for de-accessioning by considering the scientific value



Photo by Don Hyatt of the Glenn Dale Hillside at the USNA (germplasm) of each collection, its educational and interpretive value, its aesthetic value and appeal to visitors, and the current level of stakeholder involvement/support for the collection. The collections selected for de-accessioning will be removed. Important germplasm within those collections will be preserved by taking cuttings, or in

some cases, transplanting elsewhere on the USNA grounds. The Gardens Unit staff will document identified plants in the selected collections for propagation and, when practicable, shipment to other gardens, nurseries, and collections. The remaining plants will be removed, destroyed, and low-maintenance native trees or meadow plants will be planted to restore the areas.

The Arboretum had long-term plans to remove nearly all of the undocumented azaleas (those plants that cannot be positively identified) on the Glenn



Photo by Don Hyatt of the Glenn Dale Hillside at the USNA Dale Hillside (about 20-25%, or about 2,000 mature plants, of the total azalea collection) so that they may be replaced with known Glenn Dale azalea introductions massed in large groups for visual impact. Unfortunately, the azaleas to be de-accessioned are the oldest and most majestic plants. The decision to de-accession the collection will expedite those plans. They will now shift to a fast-track removal of azaleas of unknown pedigree so the area is less of a maintenance burden. Most removals are expected to take place in the summer of 2011. The USNA rationale for de-accessioning the Glenn Dale Azalea Collection is that it is for the most part undocumented plant material for which they cannot justify the expense of long-term maintenance. This plan is to cut down the undocumented azaleas on the Glenn Dale Hillside and apply herbicide so that they cannot return. The plants that are removed will be replaced by new identified rooted cuttings from their propagation program. However, replacing 60 year-old azaleas with rooted cuttings will leave a barren eyesore, highly subject to erosion, and will also provide favorable growing space for new invasive species in one of the most visible and frequently visited locations in the Arboretum.

The plants in National Boxwood Collection and its associated Perennial Collection will be completely and accurately inventoried. Selected plants on the inventory will be used for cuttings, propagation, and distribution of the resulting plants, or to form the basis for new plantings elsewhere in the Arboretum. Removal of plants would not take place until autumn or winter of 2011-2012. The National Boxwood Collection forms a beautiful green barrier from the

heavy traffic on Bladensburg Road and contributes greatly to the tranquil ambiance of the USNA. The plan would entail the removal of every plant in this collection, leaving unobstructed views of the highway and allowing the sounds of the highway to intrude. Removing this collection and planting low-

maintenance trees, which will take years to mature, will do little to maintain the Arboretum's ambiance and attract visitors.

The Perennial Collection represents plants that most gardeners are familiar with and have in their gardens. It provides visitors with a stunning display from the tree peonies in early spring, daffodils and herbaceous peonies, and daylilies somewhat later. The collection provides visitors with obvious and subtle differences in flowers, fragrances, and colors. It should not be removed and replaced by a meadow.

The interim USNA Director responsible for this decision, in a letter to the President, National Capital Area Garden Clubs Inc., dated November 15, 2010, stated that "permanent sustained funding to support the minimum number of staff needed to develop and maintain their collections, but especially the boxwood and perennial collections and the azalea hillside, is the only viable way they can be saved. Should such funding become available, the replacement of undocumented azaleas on the Glenn Dale Hillside with Glenn Dale cultivars could be accomplished gradually, in a way that maintains the



Photo by Don Hyatt of the Glenn Dale Hillside at the USNA

spring show while newly planted azaleas become established, and the de-accession of the National Boxwood Collection and Perennial Collections will not be necessary" and, "In the short-term, the arboretum will continue to examine other possible funding mechanisms." In that letter, the Interim USNA Director also stated that although "some might argue for the simple abandonment of garden spaces when staff positions are lost, this is not a

responsible approach. Abandonment is environmentally harmful because of the potential for invasive species to become entrenched. It is nearly impossible to recover such collections after just a few years of abandonment without considerable expense." It should be noted that the USNA Azalea Collection was abandoned in the past and after years of neglect has been brought to its current state of restored beauty and health by the devoted efforts of the

Curator and a staff of volunteers over the past 20 years. During that time, the Curator and her staff of volunteers have been able to positively identify numerous previously undocumented azaleas on the Glenn Dale Hillside. These efforts, if allowed to continue, will provide documentation for many more of the undocumented plants in the collection and preserve these beautiful plants.

It is very difficult to understand how the future loss of those private funds can justify such a drastic decision. Several questions come to mind concerning the USNA decision to de-accession its collections.

If the availability of funding is the only issue, why take such drastic, irrevocable action that once done cannot be reversed should funding become available?

How does the loss of funding for two positions in the Asian Valley Collection, which by the terms of that funding required those positions be used only to supplement the regular work and not to supplant government funds, or the two other full-time federal gardeners who regularly maintain that garden, justify the de-accessioning of three completely unrelated

collections? With regard to the azalea collection, it is currently maintained by one full time position (the Curator) and a volunteer staff.

Were the stakeholders, such as the Azalea Society of America, American Daffodil Society, American Hemerocallis Society, American Peony Society, American Rhododendron Society, American Boxwood Society, Friends of the National Arboretum, and National Capitol Area Garden Clubs Inc., who have a long established relationship with and an interest in the Arboretum and its collections, contacted to obtain their input prior to this decision being made? It should be noted that these stakeholders have provided significant financial and volunteer support to the USNA over many years. In the past, the Arboretum's Advisory Board, consisting of its stakeholders, would be consulted prior to taking action that would substantially alter its collections. The Arboretum needs to restore its Advisory Board so that future decisions will have input from its stakeholders.

If the criteria for evaluating potential collections for de-accessing were "its aesthetic value, appeal to visitors, and the current level of stakeholder involvement/support for the collection," why were the Glenn Dale Hillside azaleas on Mt. Hamilton selected? The Azalea Collection, especially the Glenn Dale Hillside azaleas on Mt. Hamilton, which are one of the prime floral attractions in our Nation's Capital, serve as the premier draw for the general public to visit the Arboretum in the spring, attracting thousands of visitors each year. The lovely mature azaleas, many of which are over 60 years old, occupy perhaps three to six acres of the 446-acre Arboretum. Those azaleas are not overgrown or in decline and there is no space issue. The USNA's Glenn Dale azaleas are among the oldest and most spectacular specimens in the country. The Glenn Dale Hillside azaleas have considerable historical value as well and are of particular importance to the USNA. They were developed by its first Director, Benjamin Y. Morrison, and represent the top 454 selections of the 75,000 seedlings he raised during the development of Glenn Dale Azaleas. Dr. Morrison's colossal breeding project has had no equal. It produced the first large-flowered azaleas created for the climactic conditions of the Mid-Atlantic region, particularly the Washington metropolitan area. They have proven hardy in the Mid-Atlantic region, and many of them are found in Mid-Atlantic gardens. It was the magic

of the spring azalea displays on the Glenn Dale Hillside of Mt. Hamilton that first prompted the Arboretum to open its doors to the public in 1954. They are indeed a national treasure that should be preserved.

Those of us who would like to see the decision to de-accession the Glenn Dale Hillside of the Azalea Collection on Mt. Hamilton, the National Boxwood Collection, and the Perennial Collection at the Arboretum reversed, or at least reconsidered, are encouraged to express their concerns to Dr. Colien Hefferan, Director of the USNA. Dr. Hefferan's contact information is:

Dr. Colien Hefferan
Director
U.S. National Arboretum
3501 New York Avenue NE
Washington, DC 20002
Phone: (202) 245-4539
Fax: (202) 245-4574
E-mail: Colein.Hefferan@ars.usda.gov

Additional Contacts are:
Thomas Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
Jamie L. Whitten Building
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250
E-mail: agsec@usda.gov

Information about congressional representatives may be found through these links:
www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm

writerep.house.gov/writerep/welcome.shtml

Please note that if you wish to write your Congressional representatives, they will receive your letter sooner if it is sent to their home district rather than their office in Washington, DC.

More information is available from Friends of the National Arboretum at www.fona.org or (202) 544-8733 and online at www.savetheazaleas.org. If you would like to view the USNA collections, please visit usna.usda.gov.

On a lighter note, there is an interesting video about the Arboretum's plans to de-accession a part of its Azalea Collection on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=QAMNSBPmmFg and a very interesting and informative video about the Arboretum's Azalea Collection at www.youtube.com/watch?v=HS7L2Uhmsvg.

If you have trouble with any of the links, simply copy them and past them into your browser.

DON'T FORGET—MARCH IS DRUID HILL MONTH!

By Aarti Shah

As many of you know, the Druid Hill Conservatory, adjacent to the Baltimore Zoo, is interested in increasing the number of gesneriads in their displays and has asked the National Capitol Area Chapter if we could help them increase their holdings by donating plants. The details haven't been finalized yet, but we are hoping that when these plants are displayed a label will note that they were donated by our chapter.

For those of us who have never visited it, the Druid Hill Conservatory (officially named the Howard Peters Rawlings Conservatory and Botanic Gardens of Baltimore) is a lovely Victorian-era conservatory located inside of Baltimore. Built in 1888, it has a Palm House, an Orchid Room, and three greenhouses mimicking desert, tropical, and Mediterranean habitats. In addition, it has a 1.5 acre garden containing 35 flowerbeds. The Conservatory has about 20,000 visitors each year.

Needless to say, this is a great opportunity to educate the public about gesneriads and maybe even to spread the word about our chapter! The March meeting has been designated Druid Hill Conservatory Day, meaning that each member attending the March meeting should try to bring in something to give to Druid Hill. In terms of what to bring, Druid Hill has not put limitations on the type of plants they will accept—both hybrids and species are acceptable, as are both Old World and New World plants. Plants with bright blooms or striking foliage might be particularly well suited to display. Druid Hill is most interested in full-grown and mature specimens that are ready for exhibits. However, starter plants that they can cultivate are acceptable too, so it's not too late to start a cutting or plant a rhizome for the March

meeting today!

Please don't forget to bring your plants to the March meeting! Some members have kindly agreed to drive the donations over to Druid Hill after the meeting.

(While you're at it, please consider starting a



Photo of Druid Hill Conservatory by Barry Woolf

cutting or rhizome of a New World species for the National Aquarium in Baltimore. More details will be forthcoming in the next Petal Tones, but the Aquarium has also expressed interest in donations of New World Species, and April is National Aquarium Month.)

Thank you!



ASK MR. GESNERIAD

How do I get more plants of a Petrocosmea with very tiny leaves?

There are a few plants out there with leaves so small that typical leaf propagation could be a problem. Inserting the tiny stem into the soil mix would likely lead more to damage and rot than it would to getting new plants. One method that I've used for these very small plants is to simply lay the leaf on the surface of a very finely milled and very wet sphagnum moss. Enclose the container with the leaf in a tightly closed bag. Within a very short period of time, roots should extend down into the sphagnum and new leaves will start to grow. Of course dealing with the newly formed minuscule plants presents another set of problems, but at least you'll have new plants. This method also works with

the micro-miniature *Sinningia*, such as *S. pusilla* and *S. concinna*.

I have a pot full of small seedlings. How long should I wait before I transplant them?

Once the seedlings are big enough to see, they're big enough to move. Veteran grower and hybridizer Dale Martens has experimented with this and found that even just moving them slightly in their original container encourages

root growth and subsequently more vigorous top growth. They don't need to be moved into their own pots right away, but moving them frequently helps them develop. In fibrous rooted plants, be careful when moving

them that you don't break off the root system, but you don't need to baby them either. They're actually pretty tough. On some you will see the tiny tubers and they are pretty tough also! You can move them, giving them space in the same container, especially if they are very close together, as sometimes it is challenging to spread out those tiny seeds when sowing.



Ramonda myconi seedlings

Do Sinningia tubers stop going dormant once they reach a certain size? I have a large S. bullata tuber that has gone dormant. I was told that this one doesn't go dormant.

Dormancy in the genus *Sinningia* is more dependent on the species than on the size of the tuber. *S. bullata* is a species that tends to stay in a constant growth cycle. New stems emerge from the tuber before the old ones die back.

And this species never seems to willingly die back; the stems just keep getting longer and taller and new flowers just keep coming. However, the tuber is there and can perform the same function that it does with other species. When conditions aren't right, the plant rests until it feels it's safe to grow. Sometimes the trigger is simply a matter of providing water and light. However, some plants may decide to rest for very long periods. I have had *Sinningia* tubers sleep

for over two years before coming back out of dormancy. Unlike *S. bullata*, some *Sinningia* always go dormant after flowering. This characteristic is a protective feature built into their genetics to help them survive periods of drought or even freezing temperatures in their native Brazil. Either way, treat all dormant tubers the same; very little water until they show some specks of green growing material and then treat them like normal growing plants. However, if you want to extend the dormant period, continue to withhold water. Some growers do this with all of their *Sinningia* and only allow them to grow during the hot summer months, outdoors in a pot in the full sun.

If you have a question for Mr. Gesneriad, e-mail askmrgesneriad@nationalcapitalgesneriads.org. No questions are too basic or difficult. Ask away. Your name won't be revealed, so you needn't worry about that.

BLOOMIN' NOW

Johanna's *Sinningia aggregata* was grown from a raffle table cutting. It is potted in 4 parts Pro-mix and 1 part perlite on a light stand in her basement.



Johanna's *Chirita* 'Destiny' hangs from a bar near the top of her plant room and gets bright light and some morning sun.



Sinningia aggregata

Blooming in Harold's yard is *Camellia susanqua* 'Yuletide.' It's not a gesneriad, but he says "I thought it might make our members feel better knowing that despite cold weather there are plants that are blooming and adding some life and color to the landscape. It's a very versatile shrub that is easy to care for. Blooms with red flowers and bright yellow stamens that can last for 2 or more months. The

normal bloom time for 'Yuletide' is usually around October to December, however, I planted it last October so I think it's getting acclimatized to the yard. The colder than normal December may also have had something to do with the delayed blooming. It makes a good hedge and container plant. This plant can be treated as a specimen in your yard or in a container on your patio. Like all sasanqua camellias, it will thrive in full sun as well as shade. With its simple yet elegant red flowers and golden centers, this sasanqua variety is among the most popular camellias. When not in flower, its upright habit helps it create a fine evergreen background for a variety of conditions. 'Yuletide' also makes good bird cover on cold blustery days and nights. You can plant 'Yuletide' around the house to cover foundations and to fill window-free walls, or use it along fence lines and to add vivid winter color to outdoor living spaces, porches and patios. It will grow 6' to 7' tall and wide at maturity and can be used as an informal hedge, partition or privacy screen. As the name



Kyoko's *Chirita* 'Dreamtime' is a John Boggan hybrid of *C. sp.* 'New York' and *C. flavimaculata*. It puts out flower spikes of about 2 ft tall bearing clusters of flowers. Although all of the flowers do not open simultaneously, there may be some 20 open at a time per spike. One of the Petal Tones editors was lucky enough to visit this huge plant and received a cutting to root for himself!



Chirita 'Dreamtime' flowers and form (above left)

Barb's *Nautilocalyx* 'Gothenburg' is grown in a large terrarium and blooms all the time. Although she really enjoys the plant, "it is all over the place. I could use some advice on how to control it and make it into a show plant."



Nautilocalyx 'Gothenburg'



Camellia sasanqua 'Yuletide'

suggests, its branches and flowers can be used in holiday decorations in containers or as cut flowers throughout the house.

Sometimes referred to as Christmas Camellias, the sasanqua varieties of *Camellia* are native to the evergreen, coastal forests of southern Japan. It was introduced by Dutch traders into Europe in 1869. 'Yuletide' is a chance seedling of Kanjiro and originated at Nuccio's Nurseries in Altadena, CA. The Japanese use the leaves of sasanqua to make tea, and the seeds are pressed into tea seed oil for use as a lubricant and in cooking and cosmetics."



Petrocosmea floribunda

Barb's *Petrocosmea floribunda* is growing on a shelf where the light has been malfunctioning for some time, but the plant still managed to bloom! It grows with the aid of a wicking tub to help it survive Barb's "feast/famine" routine.



Barb's *Streptocarpus 'Sylvia'*

**NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA CHAPTER
SHOW & PLANT SALE, SEPTEMBER 17-18**

We need to find volunteers for all of the following positions during our February meeting. If you would like to volunteer for any of the positions now or have questions about any of the positions that can't wait until the February meeting, please get in touch with Jim Roberts (jim-roberts@hughes.net). Most of the Chair positions will have a small team of volunteers working with them, but it will be the Chair's responsibility to round up that team and make sure the entire job gets done.

- Show Chair....Requires a Gesneriad Society Judge (or Former Judge)
- Show Schedule....Requires a Gesneriad Society Judge (or Former Judge)
- Judge's Chair.Requires a Gesneriad Society Judge (or Former Judge)
- Awards ChairCan be anyone
- Staging Chair.....Can be anyone
- Placement Chair.....Can be anyone
- Publicity Chair.....Can be anyone
- Speaker's Chair.....Can be anyone
- Artistic Reservations Chair.....Can be anyone
- Hospitality Chair.....Can be anyone
- Plant Sales Chair.....Can be anyone

**UPCOMING MID-ATLANTIC GESNERIAD
EVENTS**

AVSA National Convention (May 15-22)

Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Violets
Crowne Plaza Hotel Philadelphia/Cherry Hill, Cherry Hill, NJ.
2349 West Marlton Pike
Cherry Hill, New Jersey 08002
1-877-898-1090

Website: avsa.org/NationalConvention.html

There is a special one-day registration for \$35.00 and other options (must be AVSA member to register). Early Bird discount by March 31 and cancellation with refund by April 14.

Plant Sales is open on:

- May 19 Thursday, **1:00 pm to 5:00 pm** to Convention Registrants Only
- May 20 Friday, **9:00 am to 5:00 pm** to Public
- May 21 Saturday, **9:00 am to 4:00 pm** to Public

Show room is open on:

- May 19 Thursday, **9:30 pm to 11:30 pm** to Convention Registrants Only
- May 20 Friday, **9:00 am to 5:00 pm** to Public
- May 21 Saturday, **9:00 am to 4:00 pm** to Public

(There is a \$5.00 admission charge to Show for non-members and members who are not registered for the convention. The admission charge for non-members may be applied to membership fees if they decide to join AVSA)

Presentations on Thursday, Friday, Saturday include: "Basic Skills for African Violet Growers" by Linda Abplanalp, "The Wonderful World of *Petrocosmeas*" by Tim Tuttle, "Handcrafting African Violet Miniatures" by Peggy Mooney, "Identifying and Preventing Viral Threats to African Violets" by Panel including Paul Sorano, "African Violets in Print: Taking the Mystery Out of Writing and Publication" by Mary Schaeffer, "Eden in Miniature: Tips and Techniques for Dish Gardens and terrarium Designers" by Olive Ma Robinson, "Modern and Abstract African Violet Design Techniques" by BJ Ohme, "Advanced Judging Skills - Making Your Show Educational: A Classroom in the Showroom" by Panel, Panel Chair, John Carter, "Building and Maintaining Affiliate Club Membership" by Panel, and "Plants I Have Loved" by Dr. Bill Price.

Gesneriad Society Convention (July 5-9)

Philadelphia LOVES Gesneriads
Loews Philadelphia Hotel (in fabulous downtown Philly!)
1200 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107
215-627-1200
1-888-575-6397 (toll free reserve)

Website: gesneriadsociety.org/Conv2011

Early registrations must be made online by midnight or postmarked by April 15, 2011, to take advantage of the 10% discount on meals, activities, trips and purchases. Full refund if cancellation before June 20. Between June 20 and July 5, refund is partial if cancellation.

Plant Sales is open on:

July 7 Thursday, **9:00 pm to 9:30 pm** to Early Registrants Only

July 7 Thursday, **9:30 pm to 11:30 pm** to Convention registrants

July 8 Friday, **9:00 am to 5:00 pm** to Public

July 9 Saturday, **9:00 am to 12:00 pm** to Public

July 9 Saturday, **2:00 pm to 3:00 pm** to Public

Show room is open on:

July 8 Friday, **2:00 pm to 5:00 pm** to Public

July 8 Friday **9:15 pm to 10:30 pm** to Public

July 9 Saturday, **9:00 am to 3:00 pm** to Public

Presentations on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday include: Gesneriad Hybridizers Association Meeting (open to all) Program: "Gesneriad Hybrids from the University of Arkansas" by Jon Lindstrom (University of Arkansas), Conservation Update Meeting (Pre-registration and Gesneriad Society membership required), "The Phylogenetics of the Genus *Petrocosmea*" by Michael Kotarski, "Ask the Experts: A Grower's Forum" moderated by Paul Kroll, "*Gloxinia* and *Seemannia* (and Who Knows What Else)" by John Boggan, and "Genetic Diversity in *Sinningia speciosa*: History and Origins of the Florist Gloxinia" by David Zaitlin.

MAAVS (Nov 11-12)

Violets In Birdland
Crowne Plaza Hotel
Baltimore North-Hunt Valley
2004 Greenspring Drive
Timonium, MD 21093
410-252-7373
1-877-227-6963

Website: maavs.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=82&Itemid=85

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.

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www.gesneriadsociety.org

NCAC website:

www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

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