Gleanings

a monthly newsletter from The Gesneriad Society, Inc.

(articles and photos selected from chapter newsletters,
our journal **Gesneriads**, and original sources)

This issue includes Barbara Stewart's article on the National Capital Area Chapter Show, Josh McKinney's word find, and an article on replicating the natural growing habitats of gesneriad species by Dale Martens and Karyn Cichocki.

Hope you enjoy **Gleanings**!

Mel Grice, Editor

Terri Vicenzi
photo

Terri Vicenzi sent this photo on the right of *Streptocarpus* 'Fred's Purple Tie', a hybrid created by Fred Bellairs. Fred lives in Michigan and frequently sends Terri some of his new hybrids to see how they grow for her.

National Capital Area Chapter Show

Barbara Stewart

The National Capital Area Chapter held its first show since 2017 on September 10-12, 2021. It was one of the first in-person shows since the pandemic began. The show was held in the greenhouse at Homestead Gardens in Maryland, a very popular garden center. Show Chairman Bill Schmidt had the show planned and organized for 2020; however, he had to renegotiate the agreement after the gardens reopened. The show was a success with many beautiful plants and artistic entries by members of NCAC as well as members of the Richmond African Violet Society and the Delaware African Violet and Gesneriad Society. Barbara Borleske (former member of RAVS, now president of DAVGS) won Best in Horticulture with *Seemannia nemantanthodes* and horticulture sweepstakes. Barbara Stewart won best in artistic with a small natural garden, as well as artistic sweepstakes. It was quite hot in the greenhouse (temperatures around 90°F) and a few plants (as well as the judges) suffered from the heat. Damp paper towels were put over some of the plants to protect them. There was concern about not having enough plants for sale, as none were purchased from commercials, but members brought many different varieties to sell. The sales went well and more than covered show expenses. Most of all, everyone agreed that it was great to get together for an in person event and have the weekend to hang out and socialize once again.

Seemannia nemantanthodes

Natural Garden

Barbara Stewart photos

Streptocarpus 'Lavender Ruffles'

Sinningia concinna 'Seropédica'

Blooming now...

S. *shumensis* cl. *shumensis* 'Mather EE' - Leve Hajdu

Gesneriad Word Find

Josh Mckinney

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U S A C P I C W M E P I P H Y T E A B L
R X I Z N F C A H O A N I L U M I R P O
N Z N I A T J T I A K A O G N R L Q X T
A L O Q H B N K E R J R L S E O Y W S E
U I M D T A N M Y B E P E N Z Q L A M N
T L Y G N T O Q Z C Q L S B N A O O E Y
I Y R O A Z U V J L Q E H M U E O M T L
L L D E I N O S T I G M A O C T A A T S
O O I H H P A F Y X I S B K K T E I A
C O R Y T O P L E C T U S Q A U K M L I
A D X U I C D P Y F J Y O N W O E S A N
L A B G M D I C S W K R T J H H I O I T
Y E E H S S N I E Z Y H R P T N O C R P
X Z C N C A N P N T U P G O A A V O T A
Z C V I M N S C E S K L S I Q V T R S U
Y L A R I U H J M P N Y B X A N C T E L
F B O N C I L Y I K R O Y I O B A E R I
Y D G G R C S O H H S L P D Q V K P R A
Q I G M J X R L C L A F I B R O U S E N
A R E O S U P R A C O T P E R T S H T Y
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Achimenes	Alsobia	Calyx
Chrysothemis	Codonanthe	Columnea
Corytoplectus	Deinostigma	Dormancy
Drymonia	Epiphyte	Episcia
Fibrous	Gesneria	Kohleria
Nautilocalyx	Nematanthus	Petrocosmea
Primulina	Rhizome	Saintpaulia
Sinningia	Smithiantha	Stolon
Streptocarpus	Terrestrial	Tuber
Vanhouttea		

Answers on next page

U	S	A	C	P	I	C	W	M	E	P	I	P	H	Y	T	E	A	B	L
R	X	I	Z	N	F	C	A	H	O	A	N	I	L	U	M	I	R	P	O
N	Z	N	I	A	T	J	T	I	A	K	A	O	G	N	R	L	Q	X	T
A	L	O	Q	H	B	N	K	E	R	J	R	L	S	E	O	Y	W	S	E
U	I	M	D	T	A	N	M	Y	B	E	P	E	N	Z	Q	L	A	M	N
T	L	Y	G	N	T	O	Q	Z	C	Q	L	S	B	N	A	O	O	E	Y
I	Y	R	O	A	Z	U	V	J	L	Q	E	H	M	U	E	O	M	T	L
L	L	D	E	I	N	O	S	T	I	G	M	A	O	C	T	A	A	T	S
O	O	I	H	H	P	A	F	Y	X	I	S	B	K	K	T	K	E	I	A
C	O	R	Y	T	O	P	L	E	C	T	U	S	Q	A	U	K	M	L	I
A	D	X	U	I	C	D	P	Y	F	J	Y	O	N	W	O	E	S	A	N
L	A	B	G	M	D	I	C	S	W	K	R	T	J	H	H	I	O	I	T
Y	E	E	H	S	S	N	I	E	Z	Y	H	R	P	T	N	O	C	R	P
X	Z	C	N	C	A	N	P	N	T	U	P	G	O	A	A	V	O	T	A
Z	C	V	I	M	N	S	C	E	S	K	L	S	I	Q	V	T	R	S	U
Y	L	A	R	I	U	H	J	M	P	N	Y	B	X	A	N	C	T	E	L
F	B	O	N	C	I	L	Y	I	K	R	O	Y	I	O	B	A	E	R	I
Y	D	G	G	R	C	S	O	H	H	S	L	P	D	Q	V	K	P	R	A
Q	I	G	M	J	X	R	L	C	L	A	F	I	B	R	O	U	S	E	N
A	R	E	O	S	U	P	R	A	C	O	T	P	E	R	T	S	H	T	Y

Streptocarpus 'DEM-Medusa' - Terri Vicenzi

Back to Basics: Species—Replicating Their Natural Habitats

Dale Martens and Karyn Cichocki

Over the years I've acquired species through convention plant sales, the Society's Seed Fund, Mauro Peixoto's Seed Fund, and through vendors at various gesneriad and African violet shows. But getting the seeds is only the beginning. I research their natural habitats to see what I can do to help them grow well enough to bloom.

Recently I struggled to get seeds from *Sinningia barbata* 'Coaraci Vinho', a plant I had grown from Mauro's seeds. Mauro told me I needed to increase the humidity because Atlantic Forest plants grow in high humidity and that the humidity is even higher during the time the plants bloom and set seeds. I put the plant in a tall glass container and covered it with plastic. Sure enough, I finally got seeds.

I contacted Karyn Cichocki because she is an amazing grower who tries to replicate the natural growing conditions of the species in her care. When she enters species in shows, the accompanying educational card gives details to help others grow the same species. This column will focus on Karyn's efforts with *Columnea, Sinningia,* Saintpaulia, and a very rare *Epithema* species.

Sinningia barbata 'Coaraci Vinho' flower.
Photo: Dale Martens

Karyn: "Through trial and error I've discovered that the upright woody-stemmed species of *Columnea* grow better in my cool basement growing area than those that have thinner stems and a hanging growth habit. When I was in Ecuador I saw many of these up in trees where they were growing in either tree moss or leaf matter that had collected where a branch joined the tree trunk. This made me think that possibly these plants would grow better in some type of medium other than my regular soil mix, so I started experimenting with different media, namely rock wool cubes in Oyama pots and long-fiber sphagnum moss in a bird suet feeder. In both cases I left the existing soil that was already around the roots and planted in either

Sinningia barbata 'Coaraci Vinho' seed pods.
Photo: Dale Martens

Above & Below: *Columnea sanguinea* 'Gigantea' at the Atlanta Botanical Gardens. Photo: Dale Martens

the rock wool cubes or sphagnum moss. I cut a square section out of the front of the suet feeder, filled it with the moss, and then placed the plant through that hole and put more moss around it. The suet feeder works great but is a problem to keep watered as the moss dries out quickly. This would be great to use in a greenhouse setting where water on the floor isn't a problem, but it doesn't work well in my basement growing area. You could also try surrounding the root ball with sphagnum moss, then place it on a piece of cork or tree fern bark and secure it with fishing line filament.

"I've seen several photos of different *Sinningia* species in their natural habitat, one being *Sinningia pusilla* growing on a mossy rock. I decided it would be fun to recreate those conditions. I took a piece of slate and placed some peat moss on it and then covered it with sphagnum moss. I took some *Sinningia muscicola* tubers and planted them in the moss. The slate was then placed in a shallow plastic tray that I kept filled with water that the slate absorbed. I exhibited this at the Rochester Convention and top-dressed the sphagnum moss with moss from my yard. As you can see from the photo, the plants grew

quite well, flowered, set seed, and even re-seeded themselves. Look closely to see the small plants coming up.

"I have a tuber of *Sinningia stapelioides* (was sp "Pancas") growing on a piece of tufa rock that is sitting in perlite in an Oyama pot, and I have two other tubers planted in hydroponic rocks, also in Oyama pots. Mauro Peixoto

Sinningia muscicola. Photo: Karyn Cichocki

Sinningia stapelioides. Photo: Karyn Cichocki

has this species mounted on a piece of bark so it appears to not need any soil.

"After seeing a program on Saintpaulia species and photos of several species growing on mossy rocks, I thought that it might be interesting to see how they would grow on rocks. My first experiment was taking a piece of tufa rock, putting a hole in it and then planting a small plant in the hole with a bit of my soil mix. I used S. grotei 'Silvert' for this as it has a trailing habit and I thought that possibly this species might grow on rocks. I set the rock in a four-inch Oyama pot that I had partially filled with perlite, so that the rock could absorb water from the moist perlite. I was happy when the plant started to thrive and then bloomed. The rock was about eight inches tall. I was quite amazed when I lifted it out of the perlite only to discover that the roots had grown through the rock and were now growing into the perlite.

Saintpaulia *grotei* 'Silvert'. Photo: Karyn Cichocki

"I'm now experimenting with growing several species in hydroponic rock. I have one planted in the rock in an Oyama pot and two others that are in a normal pot with a wick wound throughout the rocks. They have been in there about six months and it appears that the plants in the regular pot with the wick are doing better than those in the Oyama pot. I would suggest finding out where the species grow and depending on that decide which method to experiment with.

"Growing *Epithema saxatile* is the perfect example of why it is so important to learn where gesneriads grow. I had tried germinating seed of this species several times without success and finally asked Leong Tuck Lock for some suggestions. He said that the plants grow on mossy rocks and in rock ledges and crevices and that I might try sowing the seed on a rock. So I took a small rock, sprayed it with water, sprinkled some peat moss on it and then sprinkled the seed on the rock. The rock was then nestled in a layer of wet perlite that I placed in a clear plastic container with a lid. It took about two weeks for the seed to germinate. Once the plants got big enough to handle, I

transplanted some into my regular soil mix in a pot that was wicked and was disappointed that these plants didn't last very long. I decided to try growing them on a piece of tufa rock, which I had sitting in a layer of perlite in a large pan pot. This was then placed in a clear plastic pot with a dome top to keep the humidity high. The plants started to bloom after a year and a half. Although the leaves of this species can get quite large, the largest of mine is only two inches in length. I have the container growing alongside a plant stand that has two-tube, T-8 fixtures so I don't know if more light would make the plants grow larger or if it is my cooler growing conditions that are keeping them smaller."

Epithema saxatile seed sowing.
Photo: Karyn Cichocki

Epithema saxatile seedlings.
Photo: Karyn Cichocki

Epithema saxatile – mature plants.
Photo: Karyn Cichocki

From the editor —

Thanks to all those who contributed articles and photos. Keep them coming please!

If you have suggestions, comments, or items for possible inclusion in future issues, please feel free to contact me at melsgrice@gmail.com

Mel

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