

# Gleanings

a monthly newsletter from The Gesneriad Society, Inc.

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

Volume 5, Number 6

June 2014

Welcome to the latest issue of **Gleanings**! This issue includes photos from the African Violet Society of America show and Dale Martens' thoughts on creating intergeneric hybrids.

Hope you enjoy **Gleanings**!

Mel Grice, Editor



Jay Sespico of Valrico, Florida, USA sent these photos of *Sinningia* 'Diva', a hybrid created by another Floridian, Thad Scaggs. The calyx double flowers are reminiscent of those of Thad's hybrid, *Sinningia* 'Party Dress'.



# Gesneriads at the African Violet Society of America show in Nashville, Tennessee



*Primulina linearifolia*  
Elmer Godeny



*Saintpaulia* 'Precious Red'  
Debbie McInnis



*Saintpaulia* 5f clone  
*orbicularis* var.  
*purpurea*  
Sandy Skalski

Best in Show

Photos courtesy  
of Mel Grice

*Streptocarpus* 'German'  
Steve Turner

Best gesneriad  
commercial division





*Nautilocalyx glandulifer*  
Susan Arnao  
Best gesneriad



*Sinningia* 'Orange Zinger'  
Gary Dunlap



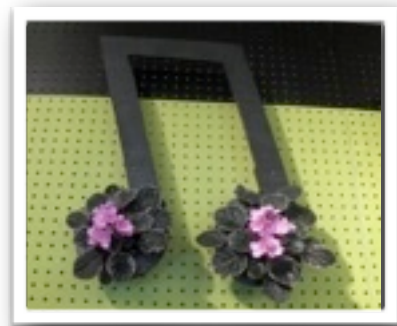
*Primulina* 'Hotei'  
Gary Dunlap



*Primulina* 'Destiny'  
Barbara Kelly



*Streptocarpus* 'Heartland's Baby Kisses'  
Louise McPherson



*Saintpaulia* 'Buckeye Cherry Topping'  
Sandy Skalski



*Saintpaulia* 'Jolly Orchid'  
Debbie McInnis

# Intergenerics

Dale Martens [dalemartens@mchsi.com](mailto:dalemartens@mchsi.com)  
Sherrard, Illinois, USA

An intergeneric hybrid is the offspring of a cross between two different genera (plural of genus). For example, if one crosses *Smithiantha* with *Achimenes*, the resulting hybrid is an intergeneric. In general, the name of a hybrid genus is a combination of the names of the two parent genera. The hybrid genus name is preceded by the × symbol (times sign, not the letter "x"). This symbol is not pronounced as part of the name. For example, the established name for the intergeneric between *Smithiantha* and *Achimenes*, no matter which was the seed (mother) parent is ×*Achimenantha*. In addition, if that new hybrid is used as a parent – either selfed (pollen placed on its own stigma) or crossed with *Smithiantha* or *Achimenes* – the result is still ×*Achimenantha*. Our show schedule has classes that include intergenerics, such as "Seemannia and its intergeneric hybrids."

Right now, intergeneric hybrids are the next big thing. Although some intergeneric hybrids date back a long time, there is currently a renewed interest in this type of cross. Many hybridizers are working with various intergeneric possibilities, some successful and others not, and they have recently released many new such hybrids.

Some established names of gesneriad intergenerics and their pronunciation include:

- ×*Achicodonia* (*Achimenes* × *Euclidonia*) "uh kick oh DOAN ee uh"
- ×*Achimenantha* (*Achimenes* × *Smithiantha*) "uh kim uh NAN tha"
- ×*Codonatanthus* (*Codonanthe* × *Nematanthus*) "code oh nah TAN thus"
- ×*Glokoheria* (*Gloxinia* × *Kohleria*) "glow ko LAIR ee uh"
- ×*Gloximannia* (*Gloxinia* × *Seemannia*) "glox ih MAN ee uh"
- ×*Heppimenes* (*Heppiella* × *Achimenes*) "hep IM uh neez"
- ×*Koellikohleria* (*Koellikeria* × *Kohleria*) "ko ell ih ko LAIR ee uh"
- ×*Niphimenes* (*Niphaea* × *Achimenes*) "nye FIM ih neez"
- ×*Phinastema* (*Phinaea* × *Diastema*) "fine uh STEAM uh"
- ×*Smithicodonia* (*Smithiantha* × *Euclidonia*) "smith ih co DOAN ee uh"



×*Achimenantha* 'Texas Blue Bayou'  
Dale Martens photo

## Why try to create intergenerics?

Sometimes it's simply a matter of curiosity as to whether the two genera will cross. That is often my motivation. I particularly like the ×*Achimenantha* and ×*Smithicodonia* crosses because the main stems on the new seedlings are sometimes thicker, stronger and shorter, thus making a more compact plant.

## So how does one go about creating an intergeneric?

Thirty years ago in my early days of hybridizing,

I put pollen from anything blooming onto different genera to see if they'd cross. Then I did some research and found that for successful hybridizing the chromosome numbers of the two parents need to be about the same. For example, *Smithiantha* and *Eucodonia* have the same chromosome number:  $2n = 24$ . Therefore, the odds of success in creating a hybrid between these genera are encouraging. But the number of chromosomes doesn't have to be exactly the same.



Mel Grice photo



$\times$ *Achimenantha* 'Golden Jubilee' (above photo) is a selfing of  $\times$ *Achimenantha* 'Inferno' (left)

There seem to be quite a few  $\times$ *Achimenantha* hybrids, which is interesting, since the chromosome number for *Achimenes* is  $2n=22$ , while that of *Smithiantha* is  $2n=24$ . This demonstrates that an intergeneric hybrid can be created even if the numbers are not exactly identical. Surprisingly, many of these *Achimenes*  $\times$  *Smithiantha* hybrids are fertile. Another interesting thing about  $\times$ *Achimenantha* is the flowers of modern-day cultivars tend to look more like the flowers of *Achimenes* and not like the flowers of *Smithiantha*.

I have also crossed *Gloxinia perennis* with a *Seemannia* hybrid cross of *S. gymnostoma*  $\times$  *S. purpurascens*. Note that both *Gloxinia* and *Seemannia* have a chromosome number of  $2n = 26$ . The resulting hybrid was named  $\times$ *Gloximannia* 'She's Dancing'. Currently John Boggan is growing it outdoors on the East Coast, while Thad Scaggs grows it outdoors in Florida. It's a very tall plant, easily growing to three feet or more.

Even within the same genus, it is not always possible to cross one species with another (an interspecific cross). Therefore, to go outside the genus is quite a challenge. For example, *Nautilocalyx* and *Episcia* share a chromosome number:  $2n=18$ , but all efforts I've made to cross those two different genera have been failures.

A great source to find gesneriad chromosome numbers is this web site: The Genera of Gesneriaceae, by Anton Weber and Laurence E. Skog (2007): <http://www.genera-gesneriaceae.at>

Here are some other tips for those who want to try creating intergeneric hybrids. I've attempted a lot of intergeneric crosses, with a number of successes, and I've discovered



*Gloxinia perennis* (left);  $\times$ *Gloximannia* 'She's Dancing' (right) and its father, which is *Seemannia gymnostoma*  $\times$  *S. purpurascens*  
Dale Martens photos

that the plant used as the seed parent must be overwhelmed with pollen from the "foreign" genus. When each stigma is receptive, I pollinate every single open flower with pollen from the other genus. It is not unusual when making intergeneric pollination attempts to see the collapse of the pedicel (the small stalk bearing the flower). This can occur anywhere from within one hour of pollination to the next day. Often the seedpod (or fruit) is not nearly as plump as it would be if the plant were pollinated within its own genus. So don't be discouraged.

To be successful, all it takes is for one seed to mature. One caution is to give the seed lots of time to sprout. My *Phinaea albolineata*  $\times$  *Diastema comiferum* cross took several months to sprout and I got just three seedlings. Often the



$\times$ *Phinastema* 'California Dreaming'  
Dale Martens photo



seedlings in an intergeneric cross will look very much alike. Because there are often slight differences, should you decide to give the cross a name, just select one of the seedlings to name and propagate.

It was once thought that all intergeneric hybrids were themselves sterile, and in most cases that is true. Usually they will not accept pollen from either parent, nor will they self. In addition, the intergeneric seedling's pollen will not be accepted by either parent. But there are some successes, which is a good enough reason to give it a try. I selfed *×Achimenantha* 'Inferno' and the result was one single seedling that I eventually named, *×Achimenantha* 'Golden Jubilee' because it was created at the time that the Society was celebrating its 50th anniversary.

This article appeared originally in GESNERIADS Vol. 64, No. 1, First Quarter 2014, Peter Shalit, editor. Read other interesting articles like this about gesneriads by becoming a member of The Gesneriad Society and receiving our quarterly 56-page journal. You can join at [www.gesneriadsociety.org](http://www.gesneriadsociety.org)

## Convention Plant Sales

Mel Grice [melsgrice@earthlink.net](mailto:melsgrice@earthlink.net)  
Englewood, Ohio, USA

Numerous vendors have been propagating gesneriads for plant sales at the upcoming convention in Nashville, Tennessee. I am sure that there will be many plants offered to tempt both novice and experienced growers. This year in addition to plant material we will be selling an assortment of plastic pots, 11" x 22" trays, tall humidity domes, and terrariums.

We will be selling the terrarium/propagation units as shown on the right. A large plant needing high humidity fits nicely inside. Gesneriad Society Board members saw these used to propagate and grow begonias when visiting the Fort Worth Botanical Gardens in February. The top domes are 10" high with a nice adjustable vent that can be closed completely if desired. When added to the bottom unit you have a 15" high terrarium that would be nice enough to enter a plant in a show. Cost will be \$20.00 for each set of top and bottom.

Not driving to convention or not attending? Have someone who is driving purchase one or more for you. It is just as easy to bring home ten of these as it is to bring home one since they stack easily.

Please let me know how many you might be interested in purchasing at the email address above. The plant sales committee needs some idea of how many to bring so as not to disappoint anyone.





**From the editor —**

The AVSA convention in Nashville was an outstanding event. You will all love Nashville as much as I did. See you there for the Gesneriad Society Convention!

If you have suggestions, comments, or items for possible inclusion in future issues, please feel free to contact me at [melsgrice@earthlink.net](mailto:melsgrice@earthlink.net)

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**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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