

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 8

August 2014

Welcome to the latest issue of **Gleanings**! This issue includes photos from the 58th annual Gesneriad Society Convention hosted by the Tennessee Gesneriad Society, an introduction to streptocarpus hybridizer Nancy Braun, and Alcie Maxwell's update about growing gesneriads outside in the ground.

Hope you enjoy **Gleanings**!

Mel Grice, Editor



Nancy Braun from Fitchburg, Wisconsin, USA sent these two photos of her streptocarpus hybrids: *Streptocarpus* 'Rosey Posey' (above) and *Streptocarpus* 'Exotica' (right). See more photos of Nancy, her growing areas, and some of her other new hybrids beginning on page 4.



Gesneriad Society 2014 Flower Show photos

Some of the special plants exhibited
(You are able to view photos of the award winners in each class on the
[Gesneriad Society's website](http://gesneriadsociety.org/))



Nautilocalyx bullatus
Paul Kroll

Convention videos can be accessed on YouTube by clicking on this link:

<http://bit.ly/gescon14>

The 4Q14 issue of *Gesneriads* will contain full coverage of the Convention, including the show and other events, with lots of photos of people and plants. The issue will be mailed October 1 so there is still time for you to join and have it be your first issue.

All photos courtesy of Mel Grice



Paliavana sp. "Sao Fidelis"
Barbara Stewart



Sinningia barbata 'Coaraci Vinho'
Dale Martens



Sinningia richii 'Itamaraju'
Dave Zaitlin



Sinningia 'Evergreen Firecracker'
Lan Jiun Wu



Kohleria allenii
Jonathan Ertelt



A Visit with Nancy Braun

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Fitchburg, Wisconsin, USA



Nancy Braun

Her hybrid — *Streptocarpus*
'Exotic Lady' (right)



Nancy writes, I do not have an exciting growing area – plant stands in three different rooms and I do all the repotting on top of my washer and dryer. Not exactly sophisticated but then it is a hobby rather than a business.

Many years ago, Kevin Degner gave a demonstration at our state African violet meeting on hybridizing AV's. I went right home and tried it. If the first seedpod hadn't matured, I probably wouldn't be into hybridizing. I have several registered AV's starting with the name Debon's.

My mother and aunt each had a basement full of African violets and would make regular trips to Lyndon Lyon's. I was not allowed to stay home alone so I had to go with them. I was never going to grow violets! That idea lasted many years until I spotted 'Optimara Harlequin' in a grocery store. After that I started taking my mother on yearly trips to Lyon's and would bring a couple home with me. Twenty some years ago I joined a local African violet club. I went from 40 African violets to 400 in no time. I think you have heard that story before.

I'm not sure when I became seriously interested in streptocarpus. I do remember bringing several of David Thompson's hybrids home from the Minneapolis AVSA convention. Someone I met there also sent me 20 leaves. When I saw *Streptocarpus* 'Silvia' I knew I had to try my hand at hybridizing. *Streptocarpus* 'Exotica' (page 1) was my first hybrid and it has been fun ever since. The cross of *Streptocarpus* 'Alabaster Rose' x *S.* 'Exotica' has given me several beautiful hybrids.

I guess the rest of the story is to be continued. I have really fallen in love with streptocarpus and there is still a lot of potential for hybridizing.



Streptocarpus 'Joy-Joy-Joy'



Streptocarpus 'Tutti Frutti'



Streptocarpus 'Johari'



Streptocarpus 'Venetian Glass'

All photos courtesy of Nancy Braun.

Nancy occasionally sells her hybrids on Ebay under the name "sarahclarinda."



Growing Gesneriads in the Ground

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In the April 2014 edition of *Gleanings*, I wrote an article on growing gesneriads in the ground. I took some of the advice that I received from the contributors of that article, and I planted some of my extra gesneriads in shady spots around my house.



Before

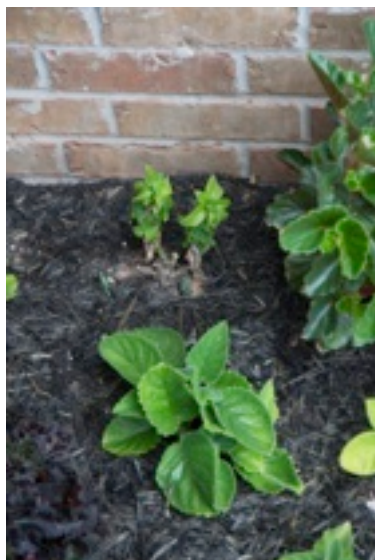


After

I grew the plants at the front entryway of my home. The area faces northeast, and it gets direct morning sun until about 11:00 a.m. Shade is provided by shrubs and other taller-growing plants like African marigolds and a couple of cane and thick-stemmed begonias.

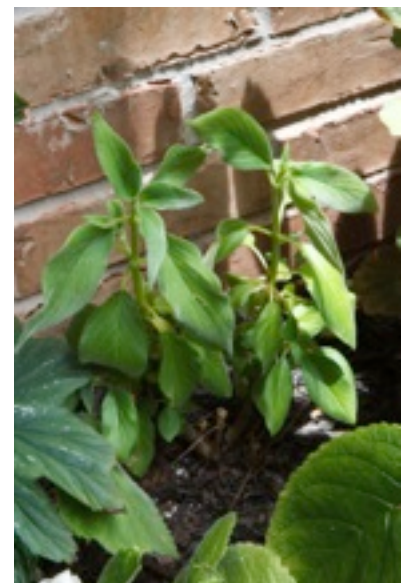
The climate in my area has temperatures in the range of 94°F (34°C) to 36°F (2°C) in the warmest and coldest months of the year. On average, I get about 1 inch of snow per year.

I planted the gesneriads around March 30, 2014. The March date was about two weeks



Henckelia 'Moon Walker' coming back after hard freeze (in back)

before the last frost date in my area, but I succumbed to the warmer weather at the time and planted the gesneriads anyway instead of waiting until **after** the last frost date. Of course, a late freeze occurred, and one of my episcia hybrids became the first casualty of the season. I lost a great deal of leaves from *Henckelia* 'Moon Walker', and I believed the plant would not survive. After several weeks, it has bounced back quite nicely.



Henckelia 'Moon Walker' now

The cold weather combined with the spring rain caused me to lose plants of *Kohleria hirsuta*, some smithiantha hybrids, and a young *Sinningia macrostachya* hybrid due to rotted rhizomes and tubers.

The best performers were a nematanthus hybrid (*N. wettsteinii* x *N. hirtellus*) and my primulinas (*P. dryas* 'Latifolia' dwarf, *P. dryas* 'Hisako', and *P. 'Stardust'*). These plants withstood variable temperatures, rain, and the drought period of early summer. None of the plants have been as floriferous as they were when grown indoors.



Nematanthus hybrid



Primulinas and African violet - shaded by *Begonia* 'Gryphon' and moonflower vine

I had mixed results with the sinningias. I lost *Sinningia macrostachya* and *Sinningia bullata* early on in the growing season due to rain and variable temperatures. I had hybrids of *Sinningia globulosa*, and they got off to a slow start but eventually bounced back. They bloomed for the first time in late spring/early summer.



Sinningia globulosa hybrids

Sinningia conspicua excelled in the yard. It tripled in size compared to another plant that was the same age that I was growing on an indoor light stand. I think the success from the *Sinningia conspicua* was because it received nice shade from a nearby *Begonia fischeri* plant and because its tuber was placed outside before the plant had a chance to emerge from dormancy. The *Sinningia conspicua* was exposed to the elements immediately, unlike the other

sinningias that had all been growing inside before being planted in the ground.



Sinningia conspicua

Gary Meltzer from Hilo, Hawaii, USA, suggested that I plant some African violets in the ground. I planted a *Saintpaulia confusa* hybrid in the front yard near the primulinas. (You can see it at the right side of the picture on page 7.) I planted two other *S. confusa* hybrids in my backyard under some sunflowers. They haven't burnt to a crisp just yet, but they're definitely on their way. Once the sunflowers die off, those plants are goners.

Next year I'll try some of the more cold-hardy plants like *Sinningia warmingii*, *Sinningia tubiflora*, seemannias, and *Titanotrichum oldhamii*.



African violets newly planted under sunflowers



Hong Xin's Gesneriad Adventures in the USA

Follow this blog as Hong Xin travels, studies, does research and sees how we approach gesneriads and conservation in America.

New photos and comments have been added.

<http://hongxintrip.tumblr.com>





From the editor —

I hope that you enjoy the photos from the Gesneriad Society Convention in Nashville. Additional photos and articles about the plants and people of the 2014 convention will be published in the 4Q14 issue of *Gesneriads*. Hundreds more photos can be found on the Gesneriad Society website.

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