



Gleanings

a monthly newsletter from The Gesneriad Society, Inc.

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

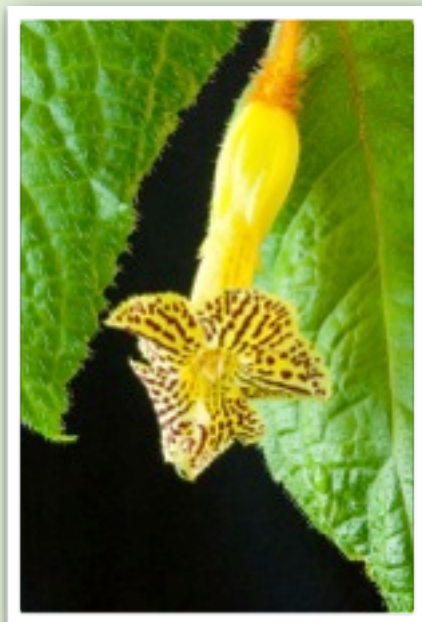
Volume 5, Number 9

September 2014

Welcome to the latest issue of **Gleanings**! This issue includes photos from the Twin Cities Area Chapter (Minnesota) Show, Dale Marten's article on Artistic Designs, and Coming Events.

Hope you enjoy **Gleanings**!

Mel Grice, Editor



Ruth Coulson from Australia sent these photos of *Solenophora tuxtensis*. The flowers are a great challenge to photograph because they hang down vertically. She grows it in an enclosed terrarium (see photo on next page).





Ruth Coulson grows *Solenophora tuxtlensis* in a totally enclosed terrarium. She says that this plant likes plenty of moisture. It doesn't mind being dripping wet most of the time.

Ruth Coulson photo

Minnesota Show photos

Jinean Schofield
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The Twin Cities Area Chapter (Minnesota) put on our **first** club display since sometime in the late 1970's or early 80's. We had many lovely gesneriads, some designs and some companion plants that our members also grow along with their gesneriads. Since this was a mixed display, we chose to put out the plants in a random fashion that allowed the public to browse and discover interesting things all along our show tables. There were also many informational displays and some

hands on materials and handouts, etc. I think the club had a lot of fun, introduced people to the Gesneriad family (we got enough questions on how to pronounce the name) and it was a success. Just thought I'd share!



All photos by
Jinean Schofield



Back to Basics: Artistic Designs

Dale Martens dalemartens@mchsi.com
Sherrard, Illinois, USA

While Artistic Design Entries seem intimidating to the viewer, they actually are a lot of fun to create, when you know the tricks of the trade. To inspire you to enter the Division II Artistic classes at convention or in your own local shows, I've invited some award-winning designers to share basic advice on creating arrangements. As someone who occasionally enters artistic designs, I know how much enjoyment there is among the designers while they are working on their designs.

Since the flower show schedule rarely specifies any particular flower arrangement style (crescent, S-curve, triangle, Japanese Ikebana, vertical, horizontal, etc.), a pleasant exercise in seeking inspiration is as easy as searching for examples of these and other styles on the Internet. Another source of inspiration (and eye candy) is viewing past winners on The Gesneriad Society website.

Barbara Festenstein

Barbara Festenstein's time management skills amaze many of us as she wins multiple awards for her arrangements in shows. Here is her advice:

"When traveling long distances to The Gesneriad Society's conventions, it takes some advance planning if you are doing entries in the Artistic sections. Since we have a limited time to work, I plan on one entry per hour. I have all my designs worked out in advance.

For my background, since the size of the niche is listed in the show schedule, I cut poster board to the listed size and cover it with material that I secure with masking tape. I pack these in the suitcase that I check with the airline. I use plastic boxes to pack my tools and items that I plan to use in my designs, plus dried line material. I pack live line material in heavy-duty plastic bags with wet paper towels. I pack all of this in a small suitcase that I carry with me on the plane.

I have to rely on plants that are available for sale at the convention. I email the person in charge of the Artistic Sections and let them know that I will need plants. The convention people are very cooperative about helping designers out. By the time I board the plane, I only have to hope my entries go together smoothly."

Karyn Cichocki

Karyn is another outstanding designer, and I particularly look forward to seeing her creative underwater designs at AVSA and Gesneriad Society shows. Here is her very practical, technical advice: she tests her materials; does a dry run on her mechanics; considers the pros and cons of her containers wisely; and uses neutral water to avoid trouble.



Barbara Festenstein's 2012 Best Arrangement of Growing Material, "Cowardly Lion"

Testing: "Anything that I use in my underwater arrangements has been tested in water for at least 24 hours to see how it reacts underwater. I will fill up a glass with tap water and place the wood, rock, shell, or plant material in the water to see if it will bleed out or fade too quickly. I find the color on darker flowers will



Karyn Cichocki's 2010 Best in Section underwater design, "Baby Beluga"

not fade as quickly. Flowers and leaves of nematanthus, kohleria, codonanthe and aeschynanthus all hold up well underwater. Grapevine is one of my favorite line materials, but keep in mind that fresh-cut grapevine may uncurl when it gets wet."

Mechanics: "I use pin holders for my designs and find the 1/2 inch size works in almost all my containers. I use a hot glue gun to keep the line and plant material in place. A rock, shell or several leaves are glued to the front of the holder so it is not visible when viewed from the front."

Containers: "Round containers will distort your design and make it look bigger once water is added. A design in a straight-sided container will look the same in water as it did out, which is why I would recommend a new underwater designer use this type of container. Your container is your niche and, like other artistic class rules, the design should not touch the sides of the container. With some containers, especially those that are rounded, the design might appear to be touching even though it doesn't – and points will be deducted. Unless written in the schedule, the design shouldn't come out of the water."

Water: "Using distilled water will assure that nothing in the water will react with your design material. It will cause fewer bubbles, and give you a clear viewing of your design. I leave bubbles that appear on the design alone, but gently remove those on the glass."

Bob Clark

Bob Clark, an outstanding designer, is fearless in creating fun kinetic arrangements. Here's what he has to say:

"Kinetic arrangements can be the most difficult and the most rewarding designs to do. I'll discuss mostly mobiles, since they are primarily the type of kinetic arrangement I prefer.

"Mobiles are a challenge because you don't have to guess about balance; the design will fail otherwise! They can also be the most time demanding to construct because tying



Bob's 2012 kinetic arrangement, "Flying Monkeys"

each piece to the cross bars, and then balancing them, takes a LOT of time and patience. I use fishing thread, which is very thin and, with the right background, can barely be detected. Thus, the pieces of the design appear to be floating and moving in air. You also want to construct it so that the pieces don't hit each other as they move.

"In designing the actual arrangement segments with plant parts, keep it VERY simple! Bear in mind that the more you put into the arrangement segments, the more it will weigh, and, once again, that affects the balance. I tend to use one flower, a bit of greenery and perhaps a bit of a transition or filler material, and that's it!

"I use a hot glue gun to keep the fishing line in place once the entire arrangement has been balanced so it will stay that way. Remember to

clean up after your glue threads, as they can be conspicuous against a dark background. Also take into account the amount of space your design has been allotted. A small mobile with one cross bar may appear dwarfed in a large niche. Conversely, a large five cross bar mobile could be too much even for a large niche. Try your hand at it. It may be frustrating at times, but stick with it and enjoy the results!"

The Challenge Class at a Gesneriad Society convention is a unique, exciting, and fun design class. In this class, all materials are provided, while the exhibitors bring the mechanics, container, and tools. To keep the playing field equal, the title of the class is only announced the morning of entries. For example, when I entered that class in 2006, we had access to pebbles and a mirror, as well as a blooming plant of *Sinningia* 'Danielle' and some stems of nematanthus. The instructions included the requirement that the design be reflected in the mirror.

Jill Fischer

Jill, who has often received many a blue ribbon for this class, has offered to share her experiences.

"All of the plant materials are provided, so there is no need to stress about what kind of gesneriad material to pull off your plant shelves.

"For starters, I only need to pack a minimum of design materials, which is a plus, especially when traveling by air. I always pack the following basics: a glue gun and glue sticks, a pair of small scissors, some small tweezers, stickum, and a ruler, as well as a few small containers from which to choose a base (depending on the theme), a tiny pin cushion, some tiny tube containers (for live flowers), and some kind of syringe or eye dropper (to fill the flower-holding tube with water). I also include a few sheets of newspaper for my work area, an electrical extension cord, and any other design supplies I regularly use.

"Bring an open mind, relax, and just remember that you will not know the theme until you receive your bag of design material 'goodies' at the show. Be sure to carefully read



Jill Fischer's 2013 challenge class winner, "Secret Rendezvous" and 2007 challenge class entry, "Moon Over Miami"

and follow any specific design instructions and niche measurements. You do not have to use all the material provided. Remember, all designers in this class will be in the same boat. Have fun with it!"

Judy Zinni

Because I think Judy's creative thinking is amazing, I asked her how she comes up with such unique designs. Judy told me:

"Creativity is a unique process for everyone, so I can only describe how I approach it. I consider the design creative process to be two pronged: 1) drawing inspiration from the class title and show theme, and 2) presenting the idea (design) in a creative fashion.

"On the first point, I start by reviewing the schedule – taking note of the show theme and class titles – searching for inspiration for interpretation. Usually a few class titles will peak my interest. Next, I'll jot down whatever ideas, words, colors, feelings, etc., that immediately come to mind. Then comes research: I'll type in key words from the title into an Internet search engine, look up words from the class title in the dictionary, listen to the melody and lyrics of a piece of music/read literature or poetry/look at artwork if these are noted in the title or specified in the description. It's worth noting that interpretation is just that, interpreting the title. The judges will be less impressed if a design interprets the title too literally.

"Creatively presenting the design, and being innovative in technique and materials, speaks to the second point. Perhaps a new or little-used technique, or a new product, could be used to help creatively interpret the design. An example of technique could be

using silica gel to dry gesneriad blossoms. (Karyn Cichocki has done this.) An example of newer products/mechanics could be 'glue dots', colored aluminum wire, or cable ties (as Deanna Belli has done). Using unusual gesneriad material or using it in a different fashion can also up the creativity factor. Examples are removing leaves from an *aeschynanthus* stem and using that stem as flexible line material (Dale Martens did this) or using the strikingly patterned leaves of *Drymonia chiribogana* (as Paul Kroll has done). When you see a creative idea, take a picture or make note of it so that you may use the idea yourself in its original or an adapted form. Flower shows of all stripes are fresh ground, with ideas ripe for the picking, be they gesneriad, local garden club or horticultural society, or national flower shows.

"So, let me take you through my process in creating a design for the July 2013 convention show class, 'Preservation Committee Meeting'. The class specified using dried material. The title got me thinking about what a committee of this sort would do – I had a mental picture of pressing plant material for herbarium specimens, in a hot southern climate. The image of pressing material between sheets of paper, led me to the style 'modern layer design' (an international style seen in many garden club shows). I collected gesneriad materials over many months (cutting some material to dry and also saving expired plants) and chose items for their form and scale; decided which pieces should be painted to evoke the 'warm climate'; and glued some materials together to contrive different forms. For the layers, I purchased heavy paper at the art store and ripped the edges to make interesting shapes and provide textural contrast. The container was one that I already had. Its leaf impressions fit the theme, and the diagonal edges gave me the diagonal placement for the plant material. Materials used were *Nematanthus fluminensis* (cut between the veins and allowed to dry into a contorted shape – red underside is maintained when dry), *N. wettsteinii* (bare stems), *Aeschynanthus lobbianus* (dried leaves and blossoms), *Sinningia bullata* (great texture in the hairy stems), *S. douglasii*, *Streptocarpus thompsonii* (painted seedpods), *Petrocosmea minor* (entire crown-painted), *Saintpaulia* hybrid, and *Columnea* hybrid. I really enjoyed doing a completely dried design, as it was a wonderful challenge and I didn't have to worry about maintaining fresh plant material!"

In conclusion, remember that gesneriads must predominate in the arrangement and the use of diverse gesneriad material is encouraged. No artificial plant material such as plastic or silk can be used, but dried and non-gesneriad materials are allowed if the flower show schedule permits it. See the rules in the schedule for niche size limits and whether or not it's necessary to reserve a slot in the class (often required due to space limitations). Read the class descriptions in the first quarter issue of *Gesneriads* and be inspired to try designing at least one!

All photos by Dale Martens taken at various convention shows, with the exception of "Baby Beluga", which was taken by Winston Goretsky.



This article appeared originally in GESNERIADS Vol. 64, No. 2, Second 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.

Plan on ordering the 2014 Convention DVD (available later this year) with images of all the flower show winners plus dozens of other high-scoring entries.

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.

Coming Events

September 20-21 — Boylston, MA

New England Chapter, The Gesneriad Society Annual Combined Societies'

Judged Show and Sale with Buxton Branch, American Begonia Society

Tower Hill Botanic Garden, 11 French Drive, Boylston, MA

September 20 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

September 21 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Admission: \$12.00 adults, \$9.00 seniors and \$7.00 youth (6-18)

Contact: Sharon Rosenzweig srosenzw.sr@gmail.com

September 26-27 — Kansas City, MO

Heart of America Gesneriad Society Show and Plant Sale

Loose Park Garden Center Building, 5200 Pennsylvania Ave., Kansas City, MO

September 26 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Plant sale only open to public)

September 27 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (Show and sale open to public)

Contact : Susan Grose sagro@aol.com

September 28 — Edmonton, AB, Canada

Edmonton African Violet & Gesneriad Society Plant Sale

Muttart Conservatory

9626 - 96A Street, Edmonton, AB, Canada

September 28 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

October 4-5 — Beltsville, MD

National Capital Area Show and Plant Sale

Behnkes Nurseries, 11300 Baltimore Ave., Beltsville MD

October 4 from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

October 5 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Contact : Jim Roberts jim.roberts@wildblue.net

October 5 — Morristown, NJ

Frelinghuysen Arboretum Gesneriad Society Show and Plant Sale

353 E. Hanover Ave., Morristown, NJ

October 5 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Contact : Karyn Cichocki kdc05@ptd.net 973-579-7914

See the Gesneriad Society website for more coming events



From the editor —

The fall shows are coming. I have been asked to speak at some of them and also will be speaking at some chapter meetings. I hope to see some of you at one or more of them. Please make sure that you come by and introduce yourselves to me if I don't already know you.

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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Paul Susi, Development Chairperson
2 Rushmore Street, South Huntington, NY 11746
For additional information, contact: <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> 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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