



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 12

December 2014

Welcome to the latest issue of **Gleanings**! This issue includes an article by Dale Martens about why you should invite new club members to your growing areas and Paul Susi's brief account of the Gesneritrek14 to China.

Hope you enjoy **Gleanings**!

Mel Grice, Editor

Happy Holidays!

Sinningia 'Merry Christmas' grown by Mel Grice



Invite Newbies to Visit

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I got an Email from someone named Bob who lives in my area. At one time Bob grew streptocarpus, sinningias, and achimenes, but became too busy with his work and life to continue. He was a member of The Gesneriad Society back when it was called AGGS. Bob said he's retired now and wants to get back into growing gesneriads. Since it's been such a long time away from the hobby he wanted some guidance for starting up again.

Because you, too, may be asked for advice, I thought I'd share what happened after Bob contacted me. I invited him over. My achimenes rhizomes were about to start sprouting, so I bagged up a dozen of those for him and was prepared to share other plants. Because I knew a few hours in my plant room would overwhelm anyone with all the information I planned to share, I printed some photos to show him stages of potting plants. In addition, I made up a list of things he would need to supply his plant room. When Bob arrived, I turned on my computer and showed him all the fantastic information he can find on the Society's web site. He was amazed at having the journal available online to members and was impressed with the numerous color photos in the journal. I showed him the 2014 Convention information, too.



Dale Martens photo

My basement plant room is 16' × 12', with a vinyl floor recently replacing carpet and a large window that gets no direct sun. Bob looked over the four different types of plant stands and studied the lights. Three of my stands have T-12 lights. A fourth stand is a homemade wooden stand with two sets of T-8 lights per shelf. I use the cheapest T-12 and T-8 lights I can get. The timers are set for 12 hours. I mentioned how important it is to have stands with wheels so one can pull and push them around for easy access for grooming and watering. We discussed the distances between the tubes and the plants. I pointed out that the lights on my wire-rack stands are too close to the shelf. These stands are good for the smaller sinningias, but they don't have enough headroom for streptocarpus and taller gesneriads.



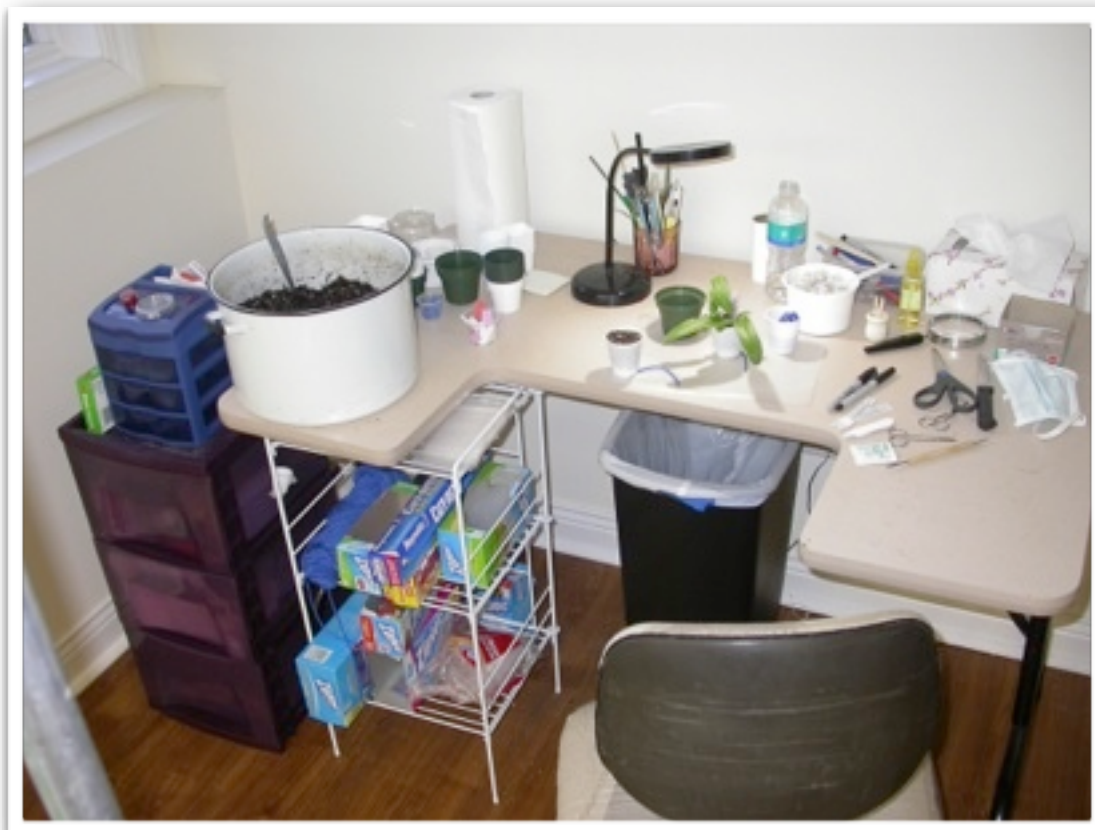
Dale Martens photo

We also chatted about growing media and the fertilizers I use. Bob wanted to make sure he understood how I make the soilless mix and how I pasteurize it. I use a canning pot for pasteurizing and storing the soil, so I opened the lid and had him stir around the mix to see what it looked like and how loose it was. Then I put some of the mix in a baggie so that when he made his own, it would have a similar consistency.

Bob was very curious about the wick reservoir watering method I use for nearly all my gesneriads. I showed him how I put a very wet, acrylic yarn wick into a Solo cup, then add about an inch of wet perlite before adding enough moist but not soaking-wet mix to just about 1-1/2 inches below the rim. Then I swirl around the wick material on top of the mix before adding more mix. The next step is to poke a hole in the middle of the soil with an old pen and then drop a rhizome or young seedling into the hole. I demonstrated how I use a sandwich baggie to line the reservoir before adding water. That way all I need to do in about 8 weeks is to dump the algae water, throw away the baggie and wash the lid. With this system there is no need to wash the reservoir.

I think what fascinated Bob the most was that I grew all of my miniature and micro-miniature sinningias outside of a terrarium. I have a clock with humidity and temperature gauges so he saw the room had 40% humidity. I pointed out the fan in the ceiling, which keeps the air moving.

I love my chair with wheels and my U-shaped work table – \$10 each at garage sales. I can scoot all over the room in my chair. I keep materials like wax paper handy on either side of the table. What’s really important to me is the bright LED desk lamp that I use on my table and another nearby for when I document plant-related activities with



Dale Martens photo

photography. I also have a two-drawer file with folders and materials related to gesneriads. I have a bright red two-level cart on which I put my gallons of water and my watering cans. The gallon jugs have labels on them describing what water I’m using (reverse osmosis vs. tap water). Before I go upstairs for the evening, I make sure each jug is full so the water is room temperature the next day. I also told Bob he needed to re-purpose all sorts of plastic food containers with lids. He could see my various containers that were giving temporary extra humidity to cuttings and seedlings.

I showed Bob how I am very cautious about wiping scissors and tools with alcohol swabs to prevent passing on disease or critters to other plants. I put down a new sheet of wax paper for each plant on which I work. I have a great magnifying glass that I use each and every time I bring a plant to the table for grooming or transplanting. I have a fine-



Dale Martens photo

Basic Tools for the Work Table

Several small scissors
Permanent markers
Plastic labels
LED light desk lamp
Cheap facial tissues
Isopropyl 70% alcohol swabs
Magnifying glass
Paper face mask
Toothpicks and "sucker pluckers"
Fine spray bottles
Roll of wax paper
Small sharp knife
Acrylic yarn

mist spray bottle filled with distilled or reverse osmosis water for misting seedlings and newly transplanted plants. I have another eight-ounce spray bottle filled with distilled water and 1/4 teaspoon of Neem oil, that I spray on top of the soil for fungus gnats or on leaves with powdery mildew. I hang blue or yellow insect sticky-traps on the stands to catch flying insects.

I told Bob I was going to base my column on his visit. He said to be sure to include where people can find suppliers of plants and pots. So those of you who aren't aware of it, the advertisers in this journal are very helpful. There's also a list of suppliers and local chapters on the Society's website, <http://gesneriadsociety.org>.

Please do consider inviting someone new in your club to your house to see how you grow gesneriads. In my case I don't worry too much what people think about the algae in the reservoirs, the spent flowers on the floor, or the spilled mix that I keep meaning to sweep up. They are not there to judge my housekeeping, but to learn the basics.

This article appeared originally in GESNERIADS Vol. 64, No. 3, Third 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 Gesneriad Society Convention DVD (available soon) with images of all the flower show winners plus dozens of other high-scoring entries like this one.

Streptocarpus 'Dale's Polar Canary'
Best in Show - 2014 Gesneriad
Society Convention
grown & hybridized by Dale Martens

Mel Grice photo

Gesneritrek 14 - More Than Enough Gesneriads!

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Late in 2013, Stephen Maciejewski began planning what was to become the first expedition of members of The Gesneriad Society to China. The slots filled quickly and thirteen members were ready to go. Unfortunately, Jeanne Katzenstein was unable to go at the last minute for personal reasons. That left Carol Ann Bonner, Bob Clark, Gussie Farrice, Mike Horton, Lena Klintberg, Stephen Maciejewski, Julie Mavity-Hudson, Irina Nicholson, Bill Price, Leonard Re, Carolyn Ripps, and me.



Primulina longicalyx
Wen Fang photo

of *Primulina tabacum*. We also visited the type location (i.e., where the species was discovered) of *P. tabacum* at the Lianzhou Underground River Scenic Spot. At the Yianglingshan National Reserve we saw a recently discovered paraboea (*Paraboea sp. nova*), *Petrocodon dealbatus* and *Hemiboea follicularis*. On our way to the reserve we saw a new primulina species, which might be named in honor of its discoverer, Stephen Maciejewski. Outside Wuzhou City, in a small valley, we saw a large, flowering population of *Oreocharis dayashaoshanioides*. The

Carolyn, Mike, Gussie, Julie, Carol Ann and I met up in Detroit on March 19 for the 13-hour flight on Delta to Beijing where, after a six-hour layover, we boarded our connecting flight to Guilin. We arrived just after midnight on Friday, March 21, and were met at the airport by three of our hosts: Wen Fang, Fu and Hong Xin. After one day for jet-lag relief, we were on the road from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. each day.

One of the notable aspects of the trip was that gesneriads were found not only growing in the countryside and along the road, but also in city parks and national scenic areas. On our first day out we saw four gesneriad species, including *Primulina eburnea* and *Primulina longicalyx*, in the Seven Star Scenic Area, just outside Guilin. Later on, in Ling Fong Square Park in Hezhou City, we saw a large clump



Primulina tabacum - Paul Susi photo



Primulina maciejewskii sp. nov.
Wen Fang photo

valley is protected by the local government and any type of collecting, even of seeds, is prohibited. Why? This is the only known location of this species. At the Green Lion Reservoir we discovered a new population of *Oreocharis xiangguiensis* and at the Li River Gudong Scenic Area we saw a large stand of *Hemiboea cavaleriei*.

Along the roadside, and at the mouths of limestone caves (all facing north) during the trip we saw *Primulina medica*, *Petrocodon hancei*, *Primulina lutea*, *Henckelia anachoreta*, *Oreocharis sinohenryi*, *Paraboea disctyoneura*, *Oreocharis benthamii*, *Petrocodon multiflorus*, *Primulina congwuensis* sp. nova, *Primulina glandulosa* var. *yangshuoensis*, and *Primulina cordata*, among others.

As for food during the trip, all the meals were



Oreocharis dayaoshanioides
Wen Fang photo



Li River cruise - Lena Klintberg photo

exceptional. Breakfast Chinese style was a new experience for all of us – steamed cabbage, corn on the cob, rice noodles, fresh fruit, in addition to rice congee. Lunch and dinner were satisfying, with hardly a dish repeated in all the meals we ate. We had a Chinese barbeque lunch (again, probably a first for most of us), where you select your own food and cook it at your table. The most recognizable meals, at least to this writer, were the dishes at the two dim sum breakfasts we had.

April 1 was the occasion of the ribbon cutting for the Gesneriad Conservation Center of China (GCCC), on the grounds of the Guilin Botanical Garden. The work of the GCCC was recently supported by The Gesneriad Society through a three-year grant.

That night we said farewell to our hosts at a dinner held in a cave restaurant. The next day, April 2, we were all (except for Stephen) on our way home. For some of us, this was the trip of a lifetime - not only because of the opportunity to see so many gesneriads in their natural habitat, but also because of the delicious food we ate every day, the incredible sites we saw and the care of our hosts in seeing that we all had a great time.



Primulina medica
Wen Fang photo



China dinner
Stephen Maciejewski photo

Petrocodon multiflorus
Wen Fang photo



This article appeared originally in ***Gesneriad News***, The Newsletter of the Long Island Gesneriad Society, Vol. 46, No. 4, December 2014, Mel Grice, editor.

A longer version of this article will appear in a future issue of **GESNERIADS**. Read other interesting articles like this about gesneriads by becoming a member of The Gesneriad Society and receiving our quarterly 56-page journal.

Join today at <http://gesneriadsociety.org/>

The Gesneriad Society Annual Appeal 2014

The Annual Appeal helps support gesneriad research and education by ensuring that grant money is available for students and researchers. The target fund for 2014 is The Nellie D. Sleeth Endowment Fund (NDSSEF), which supports the education of students interested in the Gesneriaceae. Gabriel Emiliano Ferreira from Brazil was the Sleeth Scholar for 2014. The Sleeth Scholarship Fund is supported solely by donations. Your donation will ensure that this fund remains healthy and growing as we continue to award scholarships to deserving students. [Donate online](#) or send your donation to Paul Susi, Development Chairperson, 2 Rushmore Street, South Huntington, NY 11746 USA.

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Previous recipients of research, scholarship and convention grants from The Gesneriad Society include Oscar Humberto Marin Gómez, Melissa Johnson, Cassandra Coleman, Lacie Schulte, Laura Frost, John L. Clark, Ph.D., Marcela Mora, John R. Clark, Ph.D., Jeremy Keene, Ph.D., Vincent Woo, Eric Roalson, and Bruce Holst.

Gesneriads 2015 Wall Calendar



Our full-color 2015 Gesneriad Wall Calendar will brighten each month with a photograph of a different award-winner from the 2013 Convention Flower Show. There's plenty of room for your appointments, and the 2015 Convention is already conveniently highlighted. Perfect for gifts. \$14 each or 5 for \$60; outside North America add \$3 per calendar for additional postage. Order now — supplies are very limited!

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From the editor —

This is such a busy time of year. Please remember to take good care of your plants so that we have lots of wonderful show plants for the 2015 plant shows!

Plan on ordering the 2014 Gesneriad Society Convention DVD (available soon) with images of all the flower show winners plus dozens of other high-scoring entries. It should be great!

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

Happy Holidays!

Mel

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2 Rushmore Street, South Huntington, NY 11746
For additional information, contact: <development@gesneriadsociety.org>.

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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 received with each copy 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, programs and seed fund. Membership begins upon receipt of dues.

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