



# Gleanings

a monthly newsletter from The Gesneriad Society, Inc.

(articles and photos selected from Chapter newsletters, our journal GESNERIADS, and original sources)

Volume 1, Number 8

November 2010

The World Gesneriad Research Conference 2010 (WGRC 2010) was an international meeting of the world's Gesneriaceae researchers, students and lay enthusiasts who came together with the goal of understanding and promoting knowledge of the plant family Gesneriaceae. The conference was held at the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens in Sarasota, Florida, USA from 13-15 October 2010 with a judged flower show and sale sponsored by the Tampa Bay and Suncoast Chapters of The Gesneriad Society 16-17 October 2010.

Dr. John R. Clark is Director of the Gesneriad Research Center at the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens. Since 1997, he has participated in and coordinated numerous expeditions to the tropics including trips to Trinidad, Costa Rica, Samoa, Fiji, Hawaii and the Solomon Islands. As a Director of The Gesneriad Society, John has been working with other Society members to develop and implement a gesneriad conservation initiative within the Society.

Welcome to the latest issue of **Gleanings!** This issue includes photos from the World Gesneriad Research Conference 2010, an article from Paul Susi about his experiences at the WGRC 2010, and an article about growing *Primulina tabacum* from Nancy Kast.

Hope you enjoy **Gleanings!**

**Mel Grice**, Editor



# The World Gesneriad Research Conference 2010 (WGRC 2010)



Conference room photo courtesy of Bruce Holst



Photo of Dale Martens  
courtesy of Alan LaVergne.

Other photos courtesy of  
Mel Grice



"The presentation room was decorated, so to speak, by a large *Drymonia macrantha* with bare stems and a clump of flowers. Here is Dale Martens trying to get a good picture of one of the flowers using her ring flash." — Alan LaVergne

# The World Gesneriad Research Conference 2010

Paul Susi <[ps117@earthlink.net](mailto:ps117@earthlink.net)>  
Kew Gardens, New York, USA

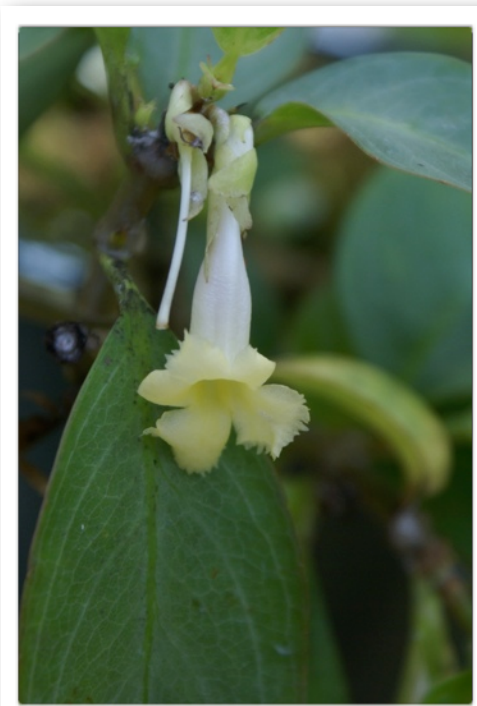
When I read about this conference several months ago, my first thought was that it was strictly for scientists. How would I be able to understand researchers discussing the latest discoveries or the latest gene sequencing? However, as we got closer to the date of the conference, and I found out that a number of Long Island Chapter members were going, not to mention members from other areas of the country and Canada, I decided to register. I was not disappointed.



The two days of the conference, held at the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens in Sarasota, Florida, were packed with 33 talks across five sections: phylogeny and taxonomy, biogeography, floristics, development and reproduction, and education and conservation. Researchers presented papers on such topics as an overview of the last 40 years of gesneriad research, an insightful look at the genus *Moussonia* (found from Mexico to Panama) and various first looks as possible reclassifications for the genera *Sinningia*, *Paradrymonia* and

*Columnea*. Several talks on the genus *Cyrtandra* (the largest genus, with over 600 species) explored the wide distribution of this genus – from Malaysia to the Hawaiian Islands. We learned that the genus *Chirita* is being seriously considered for an overhaul – some species may be moved to *Primulina*, others to *Henckelia*. There was a fascinating talk about the conservation of *Saintpaulia* species using in vitro methods (tissue culture). We learned more about gesneriads in Cuba, in Mexico, in South America, in Southeast Asia, and in China. We also heard a discussion of “splash dispersal” among neotropical Gesneriaceae. This is a strategy whereby seeds are dispersed when drops of water hit the dried fruit, scattering the seeds. Another talk focused on the question of bee versus hummingbird pollinated flowers, and the advantages of each.

After the formal conference was concluded, there was a judged show and sale, jointly sponsored by the Tampa Bay and Suncoast Chapters. There were also opportunities to



*Drymonia stenophylla* in the Selby greenhouse

explore the herbarium collection at Selby Gardens, visit the “back” greenhouses and take an eco-boat tour in Sarasota Bay. Another treat offered to attendees was a visit to the home of Nancy Kast, who happened to win Best in Show. Nancy’s modest home is filled with gesneriads. Believe it or not, growing many of the gesneriad genera in Florida is a challenge. Florida summers are not kind to humans, who need air conditioning. Unfortunately, air conditioning lowers relative humidity, making life difficult for many gesneriads. Nancy, and a number of other Florida growers, have learned how to create microclimates for gesneriads with differing cultural requirements.

All-in-all, it was a busy but very satisfying four days!



This article appeared in a slightly different form in **Gesneriad News**, Vol. 42, No. 3, November 2010, Mel Grice, editor.





Example from Selby Gardens herbarium collection of dried, pressed specimens. Note how the flowers maintain their color.



*Columnnea arguta* in display greenhouse

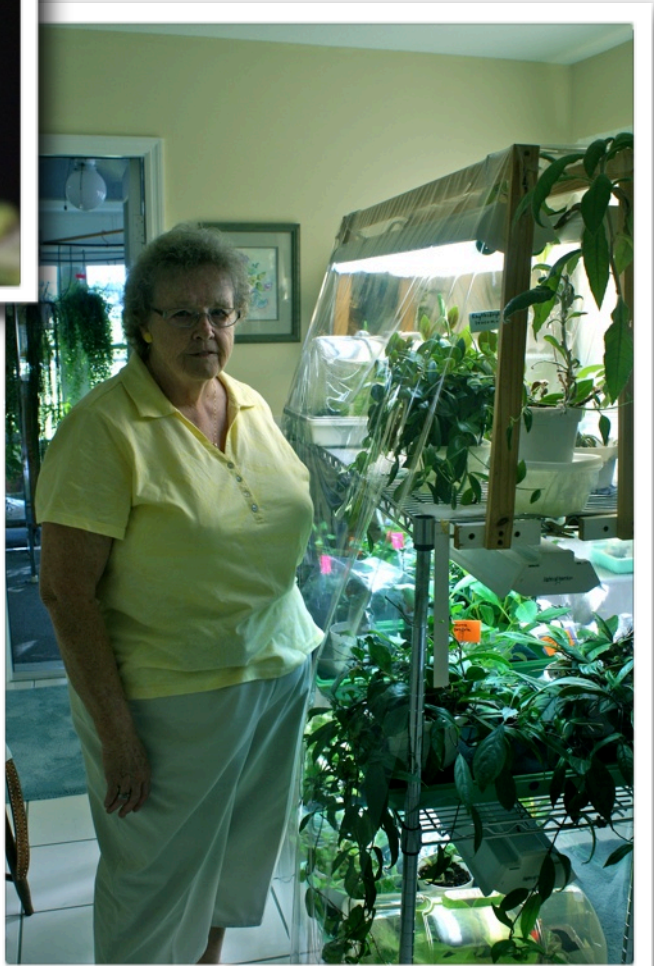


*Raphiocarpus petelotii* in the "back" greenhouse





Nancy Kast grew *Napeanthus costaricensis* in a terrarium. It has "fugitive" flowers that remain open for a short period of time.



*Boea hemsleyana* — Best in Show grown by Nancy Kast

# How I Grow *Primulina tabacum*

Nancy Kast <jnkast@aol.com>  
San Antonio, Florida, USA

*Primulina tabacum* is a critically endangered perennial herb endemic to limestone areas of southern China. When its leaves are touched or crushed, they have the odor of tobacco. *Primulina tabacum* can make a great show specimen as it grows into a nice rounded shape with many beautiful star-shaped purple blossoms.

I enjoy having this unusual, easy-to-grow plant in my collection. It sits in the center of the top shelf of a light stand about 6 inches under four T12 fluorescent tubes. The lights are on about nine hours per day. My plant is wick-watered using filtered water with 1/4 tsp. per gallon of any fertilizer I have available, switching with each watering, but I use DynaGro the most. My soil mix consists of (using a 1 qt. can) 4 parts ProMix BX, 3.5 parts perlite, 2 parts vermiculite, 1 part Baccto, 1 cup charcoal, and 1 tablespoon lime. Sometimes I add more perlite and charcoal.

The plant rewards you with an explosion of bloom when it is repotted at regular intervals. The leaves tend to be a little sticky, so you need to watch the blossom stems to make sure they don't get stuck under the leaves. I started *Primulina tabacum* from a leaf. My plant is now about two years old and is planted in an eight-inch pot. It has grown to more than two feet in width and has been blooming continually for three months.



Seeds of *Primulina tabacum* and other gesneriad species as well as hybrids are available from our Seed Fund — one of the benefits of membership in the Society.

This article appeared originally in GESNERIADS Vol. 60, No. 3, Third Quarter 2010, Jeanne Katzenstein, editor. Read other interesting articles like this about gesneriads by becoming a member of The Gesneriad Society and receiving our quarterly 56-page journal.

## From the editor —

As a lay enthusiast, I was privileged to attend the World Gesneriad Research Conference 2010 at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens in Sarasota, Florida. Special thanks go to Dr. John R. Clark, Jeanne Katzenstein, and the staff at Selby Gardens for providing such an awesome experience for all who participated.

This issue of **Gleanings** was a general introduction to the conference. Future issues will offer more in-depth coverage of the events that took place. Please continue sending photos and articles. If you have suggestions, comments, or items for possible inclusion in future issues, please feel free to contact me at [editor.gleanings@gesneriadsociety.org](mailto:editor.gleanings@gesneriadsociety.org).

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For additional information, contact: [<development@gesneriadsociety.org>](mailto:development@gesneriadsociety.org).

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1122 East Pike Street, PMB 637, Seattle, WA 98122-3916 USA

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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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