



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 9

December 2010



Welcome to the latest issue of **Gleanings!** This issue includes photos from the Flower Show at the World Gesneriad Research Conference 2010, Matt Herper on *Negria rhabdothamnoides*, Karyn Cichocki on Harvesting *Sinningia* Seeds, and Ruth Coulson on *Columnnea* 'Cascading Beauty'.

Hope you enjoy **Gleanings!**

Mel Grice, Editor



Thad Scaggs and his *Chirita* 'Patina'



"Gesneriads Around the World" was the theme of the flower show presented by the Tampa Bay & Suncoast Chapters of The Gesneriad Society at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, Sarasota, Florida, USA – October 16 and 17, 2010. Many of those who had participated in The World Gesneriad Research Conference 2010 remained after the conference concluded to judge and/or admire the wide range of gesneriads exhibited.

The World Gesneriad Research Conference 2010 Flower Show presented by the Tampa Bay & Suncoast Chapters of The Gesneriad Society



Chirita 'Diane Marie' exhibited by Jay Sespico



Gesneria citrina (?) exhibited by Nancy Kast



Diastema vexans exhibited by Nancy Kast

Photos courtesy of Mel Grice



Episcia 'Cleopatra' Canadian clone exhibited by Mary Lou Harden



Columnnea 'Miami Sunrise' exhibited by Beverly Promersberger



x*Sinvana* 'Mount Magazine' exhibited by Jay Sespico

Underwater design — "Solomon Islands"
exhibited by Jay Sespico



Streptocarpus 'Snow Crystal' exhibited by Thad Scaggs



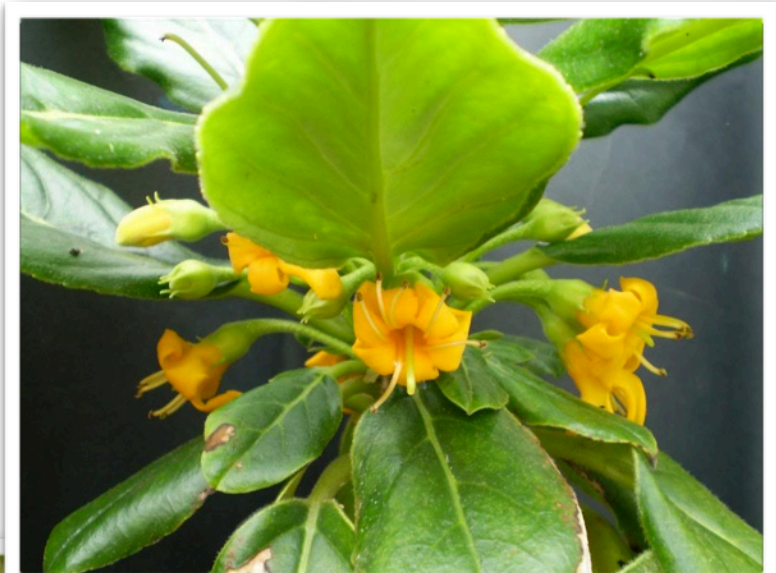
Pearcea rhodotricha exhibited by Kelly Ates

Negria rhabdothamnoides

Matt Herper <xylomelum@gmail.com>
Sydney, Australia

Photos courtesy of M. Bollinger

"I have been growing *Negria rhabdothamnoides* for over 7 years in Sydney, Australia. The plant has tolerated temperatures from 50°C+ (122°F+) to 4°C (39.2°F). It requires constant moisture and good light. I grow it sitting in a saucer kept constantly full of water and water it from above. It responds well to fertilizer. I have selfed it for seed a number of times but the seed so far has been sterile. I have not been successful with leaf cuttings, and stem cuttings require extremely high temperatures to initiate roots (40°C+)(104°F+). Air-layering seems to be the best way to propagate it. The plant is susceptible to a fungal rot that travels its branches and stops at nodes. If a branch is cut, the rot travels down that stem to the original node and rots off. I have tried a variety of fungicides but nothing stops it until it reaches the node or abscission point on the plant. Once established, the plant seems to grow a large tuberous base which sends out new growths en masse when conditions are favorable. Some of these new growths turn into flowering branches while others die off."



Harvesting Sinningia Seeds

Karyn Cichocki <kdc05@ptd.net>
Lafayette, New Jersey, USA

Recently, I took my *Sinningia brasiliensis* to our chapter show. When I arrived there, I noticed that two of the seed pods on it were just starting to split and I wanted to harvest them before they completely split open. I grabbed what I thought would be a good container, a styrofoam cup, and clipped the seed pods so that they fell into the cup. This was a bad idea. The seeds flew to the sides of the cup (photos 1 & 2). Although they were all contained inside the cup, getting all the seeds out of the cup is as difficult as putting seed pods into a plastic bag and trying to get all the seeds off the inside of the plastic bag.

This got me thinking that it might be a good idea to explain the way I usually harvest *Sinningia* seeds.

The process I use creates very little chaff in the seeds, so I don't have to spend a great deal of time cleaning the seeds.

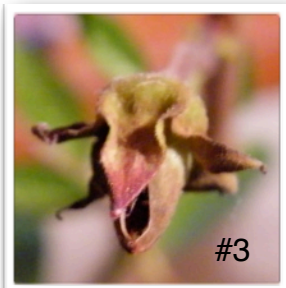


Photo 3 shows the *Sinningia* seed pod just starting to split. Some pods will do this when they have turned brown, but many start to split when they are still partly green. To maximize the amount of seeds you can retrieve, it is at this time that you want to cut the seed pod from the plant. I use a small juice glass as my collecting container, photo 4, and cut the pods so that they fall into the glass. I put the glass in a cupboard where it is safe from being knocked over and allow the seed pods to dry.

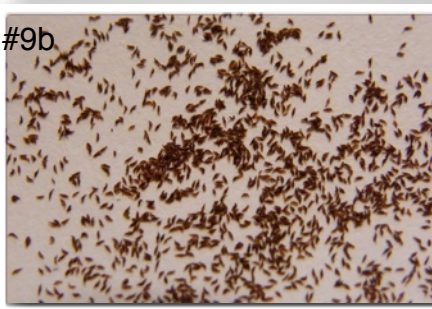
As you can see, the pods in the glass are all brown and quite a few of the seeds have already fallen out.



I let the seed pods dry out for a couple of days, and then place them and the seeds onto a paper plate. You can use plain paper, but I like to use a paper plate because it has a raised edge and contains the seeds more readily. Photo 5 shows the dried stigma at the end of the seed pod (ovary). I take tweezers and snap this off, which allows you to open the pod



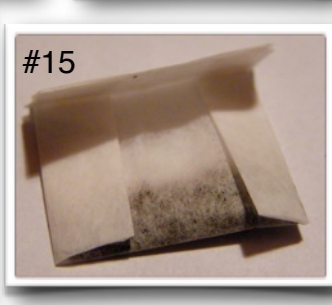
easily. Photo 6 shows the stigma removed from the pod. Then, depending on the size of the seed pod, I either insert the tweezers into the split and open the pod more, allowing the seed to come out, photos 7 & 8, or I take the pod and hold it from the sides and gently squeeze it so it opens and lets the seeds fall out, photo 9.



If the seed is for my own use, then I really don't worry about cleaning it. But if I'm sending it to the Gesneriad Society Seed Fund, then I move it around on the paper plate to allow me to see any chaff or parts of the seed pod, photos 9a & 9b. (NOTE: the more you manipulate the seed pod to get the seeds out, the more likely you will get parts of the pod and chaff from inside mixed in with your seeds.) I also have a couple of tea strainers that I use as sifters. Gesneriad seeds are very small and separating them from the chaff can be a tedious task.

Once the seeds have been cleaned, it is time to put them into something for storage or send them to the Seed Fund. You can use a plain piece of paper, but I find that the papers used for wrapping

hair around rollers used for permanents work the best and are inexpensive, photo 10. They can be purchased at either a beauty supply store, or stores such as Harmon Drug that carries hair products. Whatever type of paper you use, you want to fold it in half, photo 11, and then you want to fold one side over twice so that it closed one side of the paper, photo 12, then it is ready to pour the seeds into the paper, photo 13. Once you have all the seeds in the paper, then you fold over the other side twice to close it off, photo 14. Then you fold over the top open end twice so that you now have a little packet, photo 15. The folded packet will stay together and doesn't need to be taped shut (taping your seed packets can lead to difficulty in opening the packet and having the seeds get stuck to the tape). Put the folded packet into a small envelope.



Then of course, remember to label the envelope you put the seeds in. If you are sending seed to the Seed Fund, include the date the seed was harvested, as well as the plant name. If there is a collection number following the name of your plant, include that as well.

Any seeds that I want to store, I place the envelope

of seeds into a zip-lock plastic bag and place that in the vegetable drawer of my refrigerator. I have kept seeds this way that have remained viable for several years. The shelf life of gesneriad seeds differs from genus to genus, with some seeds germinating successfully after several years of proper storage.

Although the above harvesting instructions are for *Sinningia*, the cleaning, packaging and storing directions can be used for many gesneriad seeds.

Happy harvesting!

SEED FUND DONATIONS

Donations mailed from anywhere in the United States should be sent to:

Karyn Cichocki
79 Beaver Run Road
Lafayette, NJ 07848

Donations from outside the USA (Canada and other international locations) should be sent to:

Marilyn Allen
8 Brackenridge Place
Port Moody, BC, Canada V3H 4G4

The Annual Appeal

The Gesneriad Society's Annual Appeal needs your help. A donation to the Elvin McDonald Research Endowment Fund will help fund the continued research of gesneriads, while a donation to the Nellie D. Sleeth Scholarship Endowment Fund will help a deserving student continue his or her studies involving gesneriads. Go to <http://www.gesneriadsociety.org/Donate/donatespecial.htm> to learn more.



Presenters at the World Gesneriad Research Conference 2010

photo courtesy of Bruce Holst

Columnnea 'Cascading Beauty'

Ruth Coulson <mrcoulson@iprimus.com.au>
Balcolyn, Australia

I have been growing this plant for some time, with indifferent success until the last few years.

I was told that it needed a lot of light, even sunshine, for maximum variegation in the leaves. To provide this, and also because it had grown so big that I couldn't accommodate it elsewhere, I selected it as one of the fifteen or so plants to hang on the fence. In this position, overhung a little by several tall trees, they receive very bright light indeed and for some part of the day, direct sun.

Because plants in the direct outside sun lose water very quickly, each one is planted in a large self-watering pot with a reasonable size reservoir of water. I give granular slow-release fertiliser once or twice per year. Since planting *Columnnea* 'Cascading Beauty' in this way, it has just powered ahead. In fact, it is now rather overdue for some repotting.

Some stems come out with all-green leaves. I don't know whether they would produce variegation if they received more light, or whether they are permanently plain green. To be on the safe side, I remove those plain stems when I see them.

The flowers only come in the spring. Just one glorious rush of flowers, all at once. It is absolutely spectacular at that time, but of course that phase doesn't last for long. The variegated foliage does compensate for the lack of flowers during the rest of the year.

I don't grow many *Columnneas*. The temperatures in winter here are perhaps just a little too cool for the really heat-loving ones and I tend to get some leaf drop. As the bare stringy stems are rather ugly, I have chosen to dispense with those that can't handle my conditions.

Columnnea 'Cascading Beauty' continues to shine, however.





Chirita sinensis 'Betty'
exhibited by Jay Sespico

From the editor —

Future issues of **Gleanings** will offer more in-depth coverage of the events that took place at the World Gesneriad Research Conference 2010. 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.

Happy Holidays to all!

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Paul Susi, Development Chairperson
117-01 Park Lane South, Apt. C1A, Kew Gardens, NY 11418
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 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.

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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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