



# Gleanings

a monthly newsletter from The Gesneriad Society, Inc.

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

Volume 2, Number 3

March 2011



Welcome to the latest issue of **Gleanings!** This issue includes photos from the Atlanta Botanical Garden, an article on Civil Engineering the Plant Room by Carol Ann Bonner, Dale Martens on Growing Plants from Rhizomes, and more Coming Events.

Hope you enjoy **Gleanings!**

Mel Grice, Editor



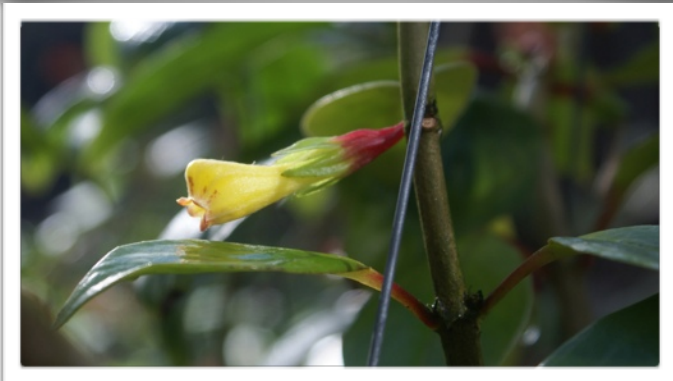
The photo on the right of *Episcia* 'Pink Smoke' was submitted by Gail McIntosh of Taft, Texas, USA. She said that she waited too many years to start growing gesneriads but has grown other plants all her life. This novice grower has never entered a show. Gail loves to propagate gesneriads.



# Gesneriads found in the Atlanta Botanical Garden, Atlanta, Georgia, USA



*Drymonia* sp. JLC 6467



*Nematanthus jolyanus*  
above

Photos courtesy  
of Mel Grice

*Columnea ornata*





*Columnnea polyantha* ABG 90-1587



*Drymonia affinis* ABG 92-0080



*Columnnea rubriacuta* ABG 92-0013



Paul Susi photographing *Columnnea angustifolia*





*Corytoplectus cutucuensis*



*Paradrymonia hypocyrta*



*Columnea brenneri* ABG 2009-0005  
fruit and flowers on left



*Columnea* sp. Costa Rica UNC-C ABG 93-1191

# Civil Engineering the Plant Room by the daughter of an engineer

Carol Ann Bonner <[cabonner@gmail.com](mailto:cabonner@gmail.com)>  
Nashville, Tennessee, USA

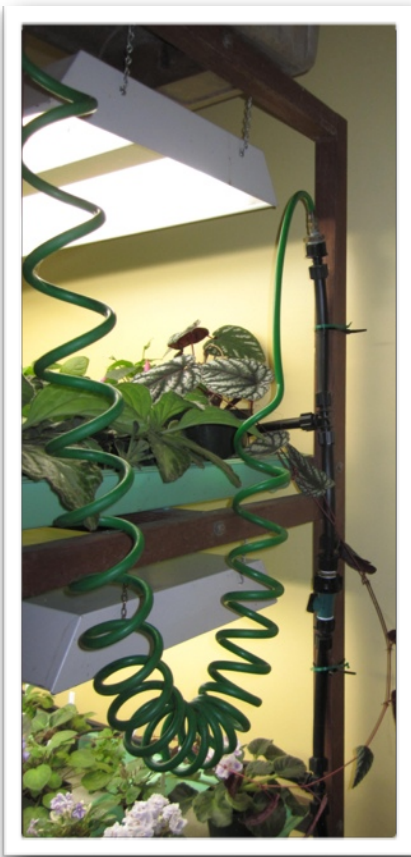
When I first started growing gesneriads, I got up every morning and checked each and every plant, watering each one as needed, and they repaid me by growing well which resulted in my wanting to raise even more gesneriads. Eventually, I had to move to a less time-consuming method: capillary matting. After excursions into wicking, I returned to matting in the greenhouse and the light stands.

In the greenhouse, I set up an automated system from the beginning, using Mister Landscape irrigation parts from Lowes to provide overhead misting and to fill the reservoirs for the matting (acrylic blankets, not actual capillary matting). The irrigation lines are hooked to a solenoid and timer from Rainbird (also purchased from Lowes). On hot, sunny days, the timer delivers just the right amount of water; on cool, cloudy days, the excess runs onto the floor. In the greenhouse, I don't worry about overflow or drips; everything just gets wet, and that's fine. But light stands in the house are another story.



Originally, I watered each light stand tray by hand. Four trays per shelf times seven shelves = 28 trays. Really not so onerous, but I also have dogs and birds and frogs to feed, and a job so I can earn money to buy food for the dogs and birds and frogs. I needed to make the job easier, more automated. Mister Landscape to the rescue!

Because my plant room is in my studio, and I don't have to live there, I chose to run the water supply from the bathroom shower rather than under the house through a hole in the floor. This means I can't close the bathroom door without disconnecting the hose, but since I live alone, that's not really a problem. The upside of using the shower to supply water is temperature control.



Once the water reached the plant room, I had to compensate for gravity; otherwise, all the trays on the bottom shelves would be swimming pools while the ones on the top would be deserts. So I installed two shut-off valves that I only partially closed so that water flow was slowed a lot for the bottom shelves, less for the middle shelves, and not at all for the top shelves.

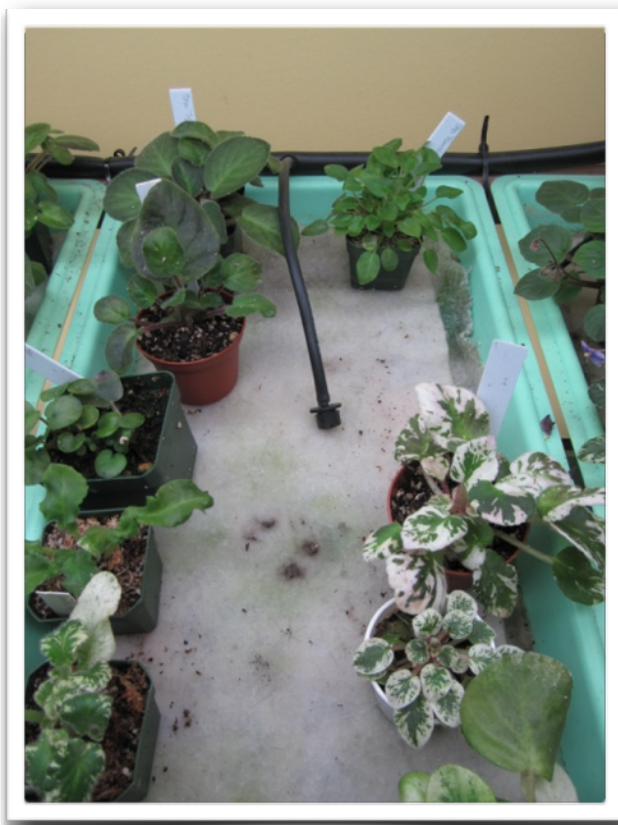
From the now-modulated supply line I teed off in three places to feed three levels of shelves. (I have one shelf without automatic watering because I use it primarily for propagation chambers.) From those lines I ran a piece of small flexible tubing to each of the trays.

But now I still had some trays getting a lot more water than others. I needed more control. Mister Landscape to the rescue again! They make an adjustable drip valve. Once those were installed on the ends of all the small tubes, the system worked pretty well. I still

have some fine adjustments to do on the drip valves (you simply twist them in one direction to deliver more water and the other

direction to deliver less), but I don't expect it to ever be perfect unless I can somehow magically ensure that each tray has the perfect balance of plants that uses exactly the same amount of water as another tray; that only happens when you're growing crops. Perhaps if I installed the adjustable valves first,

I wouldn't have needed the shutoff valves, but I'm not sure about that. Please note that the matting is sitting on  $\frac{3}{4}$ " (2 cm) styrofoam, so plants don't sit in water unless there's a major miscalculation on my part. And, no, I don't have that much room between my plants; plants have been removed for illustration purposes.



So now I can turn on the water and water six shelves – 24 trays – while I'm feeding the frogs and the birds. (I don't use a timer because a stuck solenoid would be disaster on wood floors.) It wasn't cheap! If I hadn't already had some of the parts, it probably would have cost \$90–\$100, but it was worth it to me to have my plants growing well in the limited amount of time I have for them. The only mechanical improvement I have made that has been as useful is a secure half-door to keep out the ferrets!

The photo below illustrates what happens when a couple of ferrets have their run of a plant room.



This article appeared in a slightly different form in **Gesneri-Eds**, Vol. 38, No. 2, February 2011, Julie Mavity-Hudson and Carol Ann Bonner, editors.

## Growing Plants From Rhizomes

Dale Martens <[dalemartens@mchsi.com](mailto:dalemartens@mchsi.com)>  
Sherrard, Illinois, USA

I often get letters saying that my *Kohleria* 'Texas Rainbow' when grown from whole rhizomes is solid green. It should have multicolored foliage that includes cream and burgundy. Dolly Yeh has a good photo of one blooming from the 2006 AGGS convention:

[http://www.dollyyeh.idv.tw/Kohleria\\_Texas\\_Rainbow\\_2006aggs.jpg](http://www.dollyyeh.idv.tw/Kohleria_Texas_Rainbow_2006aggs.jpg)

Using a whole rhizome often doesn't result in a *Kohleria* 'Texas Rainbow' with multicolored leaves, but if one breaks the rhizomes into scales, magically the cream, burgundy and other colors appear.

I gave a gesneriad presentation at the Texas Lone Star AV convention in November 2010 and someone told me they really enjoy growing *Kohleria* 'Texas Rainbow'. I said I no longer had the plant and would love to get it back. She drove home and brought back to me a side shoot she'd pulled out of her pot. It had solid colored leaves.



Photo courtesy of Dolly Yeh



Photos courtesy of Dale Martens

So I broke down the rhizome into scales and the multicolored leaves appeared on the new, tiny plants. In my experience, the plants grown from scales continue to have many colors, but any new shoots sprouting from new rhizomes produced in the pot have solid green leaves.

To grow from scales, just take a rhizome and gently push off the individual scales. Put them in a small container with a lid that has your regular soil mix, moistened and not soaking wet. Put the lid on and wait two weeks. Then plant each small plant into a community pot so the scale is buried



and the plant sits nicely upright. Then in two more weeks the young plants will be large enough that you can remove the base two leaves and pot the plant past where those first leaves were and up to the next set of leaves. Yes, I know that's a fussy thing to go through, but the results seem



worth it to me when I see a magenta flowered, multicolored leaf *Kohleria* 'Texas Rainbow' in bloom.

You can get a mature, rhizomatous plant from scales in about four to five months in full bloom, but the plant will be smaller than one grown from a large rhizome. I've been doing this to *Smithianthas* to get show plants for the Spring shows by sowing scales around October for something in bloom around March.

A compilation of postings found on Gesneriphiles Internet Discussion Group. Visit the Gesneriphiles website for instructions about joining the list: <http://lists.ibiblio.org/mailman/listinfo/gesneriphiles>>



# Coming Events

**March 26 — Ontario, Canada** — Toronto Gesneriad Society annual show and sale "Gesneriads Love Classic TV", in the upstairs studios at the Toronto Botanical Garden, 777 Lawrence Avenue, East, Toronto. Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission \$2; parking free. Contact Doris Brownlie (905-270-6770) <[jtbrownlie@idirect.com](mailto:jtbrownlie@idirect.com)>.

**April 2 & 3 — California** — Capital City African Violet Society judged show and sale, Sacramento Garden & Arts Center, 3330 McKinley Blvd., Sacramento, CA 95816. Saturday 1 to 4 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Free admission and parking. Contact Lynn Lombard <[lynn\\_lombard@att.net](mailto:lynn_lombard@att.net)>.

**April 2 & 3 — New Jersey** — African Violet Club of Morris County show and sale "Violets Do Arts & Crafts" at Frelinghuysen Arboretum, 53 E. Hanover Avenue, Morristown, NJ. Saturday 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Contact Karyn Cichocki <[kdc05@ptd.net](mailto:kdc05@ptd.net)>.

**April 2 & 3 — New York** — Gesneriad-dicts of Western New York show and sale "Elemental Gesneriads" at Perinton Square Mall, Fairport, New York. Saturday 12 to 6 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Contact Laura Buckner <[lbuckner@brockport.edu](mailto:lbuckner@brockport.edu)>.

**April 9 & 10— Ohio** — Columbus African Violet Society show and sale "Violets Got Rhythm" at Franklin Park Conservatory, Columbus, Ohio. Saturday 12 to 5 p.m.; Sunday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Contact Donna Vogelpohl <[donna8452@columbus.rr.com](mailto:donna8452@columbus.rr.com)>.

**April 9 & 10— New York** — The Long Island Gesneriad Society judged show and sale, "Flowers and Sweets — Such Perfect Treats", in conjunction with the Saintpaulia Society of Long Island, Planting Fields Arboretum, Conference Center, Oyster Bay, New York. Saturday 1 to 4 p.m.; Sunday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Contact Ben Paternoster <[ben9@optonline.net](mailto:ben9@optonline.net)>.

**April 16— Delaware** — The Delaware African Violet and Gesneriad Society's show and sale at Boscov's Christiana Town Center Store Auditorium, Christiana, Delaware. Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Contact Quentin Schlieder <[qcsjr@comcast.net](mailto:qcsjr@comcast.net)>

**April 30 & May 1— New York** — African Violet and Gesneriad Society of WNY judged show and sale, "Travel Destinations" at Galleria Mall, Cheektowaga, New York. Saturday 12 to 6 p.m.; Sunday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Contact Paul Kroll <[pfkroll@roadrunner.com](mailto:pfkroll@roadrunner.com)>.

**April 30— Vancouver, BC, Canada** — The Vancouver African Violet and Gesneriad Society's show and sale at Floral Hall at VanDusen Botanical. Saturday 1 to 4 p.m. Admission: \$2.00. Contact Bill Price <[billprice@shaw.ca](mailto:billprice@shaw.ca)>

## Convention 2011

The Gesneriad Society's  
55th Annual Convention  
Loews Philadelphia Hotel  
1200 Market Street  
Philadelphia, PA, USA  
July 5-9, 2011  
Hosted by the Liberty Bell Chapter





**From the editor —**

I just returned from the Philadelphia Flower Show. Look for photos in the next issue.

See more Coming Events on the Society's website [www.gesneriadsociety.org](http://www.gesneriadsociety.org). 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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Paul Susi, Development Chairperson  
117-01 Park Lane South, Apt. C1A, Kew Gardens, NY 11418  
For additional information, contact: [<development@gesneriadsociety.org>](mailto: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>](mailto: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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