



# Gleanings

a monthly newsletter from The Gesneriad Society, Inc.

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

Volume 3, Number 8

August 2012

Welcome to the latest issue of **Gleanings**! This issue includes photos from Kartuz Greenhouses, photos from the 56th annual Gesneriad Society Convention in Seattle hosted by the Puget Sound Chapter, and Dale Martens chatting about pots.

Hope you enjoy **Gleanings**!

Mel Grice, Editor



*Achimenes mexicana* is blooming for the first time on my light stand. The violet blossoms, measuring about two inches (5 cm), are quite large in comparison to the velvety leaves. The blossoms resemble those of *Sinningia speciosa* more than a typical *Achimenes* blossom. Thanks to a good friend in Canada for giving me the rhizomes!

Mel



# Kartuz Greenhouses

Vista, California, USA



*Sinningia striata*



*Achimenes* 'Yellow Queen'



*Aeschynanthus boschianus*



*Henckelia walkerae*



*Sinningia sellovii*



*Sinningia eumorpha*



Michael Kartuz posted some of these photos on Gesneriphiles Internet Discussion Group. Other greenhouse photos were supplied by Michael on request. Visit the Gesneriphiles website for instructions about joining the list: <http://lists.ibiblio.org/mailman/listinfo/gesneriphiles>>





*Columnnea* 'Campfire'



*Streptocarpus* 'Titan's Robe'

"For over 50 years, Kartuz Greenhouses has been offering distinctive varieties of rare and exotic plants. Begonias, gesneriads, hoyas and passion flowers comprise their key specialties. Among the many listings in these plant families are promising new introductions and excellent miniature varieties. In addition to their own hybrids, they also list the finest new varieties from other leading hybridizers." <http://www.kartuz.com>



# Gesneriad Society 2012 Flower Show photos

Some of the special plants exhibited

(Go to [www.gesneriadsociety.org](http://www.gesneriadsociety.org) to view photos of the award winners in each class)



Photos courtesy of Mel Grice



*Sinningia macrostachya*  
Peter Shalit



*Sinningia* 'Apricot Bouquet'  
Paulo Castello da Costa



*Sinningia speciosa* 'Regina'  
Bob Clark



*Diastema vexans*  
John Wrightson



*Kohleria 'Manchu'*  
Hung Nguyen

## Artistic and the Arts



"Wicked Witch"  
Pat Shandrow

# Back to Basics: Pots

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

Those who plan on showing plants at the July 2012 Convention might think of repotting Episcias, Primulinas (ex-Chiritas), and Streptocarpus in early February or March. It seems I get more flowers when my show plants are slightly rootbound, so I plant them in their show pots at least five months ahead of the show.



There are several pot types and these are just a few: plastic, glazed ceramic, self-watering ceramic, self-watering plastic (including Oyama), and the unglazed clay/terracotta. Each has its advantages and disadvantages. Let's start with plastic. Plastic is lightweight, less expensive, easy to clean, and minimizes evaporation. Over the years, plastic pots get brittle and white ones turn yellowish. Due to the nature of plastic, if the pot is over-watered then the soil stays soggy a long time. If that happens on a mature plant, I usually remove the root ball and squeeze it with paper towels before putting it back in the pot. Therefore, a plastic-potted plant needs a well-drained soil.

Glazed ceramic pots also need well-drained soil. I often use glazed bonsai pots in which to grow a grouping of miniature or micro-miniature Sinningias. Since I wick water, the soil needs to be about half perlite to keep the soil from becoming too soggy in the glazed pot. Glazed pots are often brightly colored or have a design on them. When potting a plant for show, neutral colored pots are less likely to be distracting for a show entry. Keep in mind that ceramic pots can be quite heavy and break if dropped. I do like a heavy pot for Streps, Smithianthas, Seemannias, and Kohlerias, otherwise they tend to topple over when the leaves become large. Self-watering ceramic pots come in two pieces. The top pot has an unglazed bottom portion that absorbs water from a bottom container. Neither the top nor bottom container has a drainage hole. The plant and soil go into the top pot. You fill the

bottom container with water with added fertilizer. Place the top pot inside the bottom container where it has contact with the water. The first blue-ribbon- winning show plant I ever saw at a Gesneriad Society convention using the ceramic self-watering pot was *Streptocarpus* 'Summer Parfait' entered by Carol Hamelink at the 2009 Convention. I asked her about her soil mix. She uses half Pro-mix and half perlite and adds horticultural charcoal when she can find it. Carol says her soil is evenly mixed and there is no layer of perlite on the bottom. She says the soil in the top pot must already be wet for the wicking to begin. If the soil is too dry, then carefully add water, keeping in mind there is no drainage hole. The photo above shows Carol's plant and the hole in the bottom pot where she adds water.



*Streptocarpus* 'Summer Parfait'

It's a challenge to describe a self-watering plastic pot. It has two pieces. The base of the top pot has slits that allow airflow for the roots and also allows water to drain when you leach the pot. That top pot's base also has a cylinder that goes to the bottom of the base/reservoir and it also has slits at the cylinder's base. The idea is to fill the cylinder and part of the base of the top pot with perlite that acts like a wick since it sits in the water. Most of these types of pots have lines that guide the grower for the amount of perlite, soil, and water. Unless you overfill with water, your plant has less chance of root-rot. Another advantage to this type of pot is that one could go on a vacation and not worry about the pot drying out. If I remove flowers and disbud the plant plus fill the base pot with water to the recommended level, I can usually go on a ten-day vacation without the plant drying out. Another advantage is that a saucer or slip potting isn't needed to show the entry. Also, I like this type of pot because it sits higher on the shelf, keeping leaves from touching the shelf. For that reason, it's a great show pot for Streps. A disadvantage is that one cannot see how much water there is in the bottom pot if it's not a clear base. In order to replenish the water, you have to lift up the pot with the plant and pour water into the base pot. This can be a challenge if the plant is a trailer or has stolons. Also, to leach the pot you have to hold the top pot with the plant in one hand and water with the other hand because the plant can't easily sit on its cylinder especially if roots are emerging from the base of the cylinder. You have to hold the pot while it drains. I used to grow very large Streps and Primulinas in five-inch self-watering pots. Each had a base pot that was clear so I could easily see how much water was left in the reservoir and also had a hole in the top area to add water so I didn't have to lift the plant out of the base.

My mother-in-law always grew Episcias and African violets in unglazed clay/terracotta pots with drainage holes in the bottom. She'd put broken pieces of pottery in the base of the pot. Since the pots are porous, her very heavy soil, which was mostly gotten from the back yard or from rich, black topsoil from nearby onion fields, didn't stay soggy if she over-watered. She'd pour water into the pots and let the pot sit on a saucer that held the excess water. I



was amazed that her plants were so healthy and full of flowers. She'd done this since the 1950's, so who was I to try and change her way? There are some disadvantages to clay pots including the crusty layers of mineral salt build-up on the base and the rim of the pot that can be cleaned with a firm bristle brush and plenty of water. Often the leaf petioles that rest on the rim of the pot can be scarred or damaged due to the salt build-up on the clay pot rim. I've known some to dip the rims of clay pots in wax. There are products one can use to "paint" the insides of the pots to prevent the salts from staining the pot.

What pot size is best? It is usually suggested that a rosette-shaped gesneriad grow in a pot one-third the size of the diameter of the plant. I prefer the squatty (azalea or bulb) pots for rosette-shaped gesneriads like *Petrocosmeas* and *Primulinas* since their roots tend to grow horizontally rather than deeply. The squatty pot's diameter is three-quarters the height of the pot. I use taller pots for rhizomatous plants like *Kohlerias* and *Smithianthas* because I replot from 2-1/2 inch pots into standard 3- or 4-inch pots. I remove the bottom two to four leaves and place the plants quite a bit deeper in the soil. When I am growing seedlings, I like to fill a tray with 2-1/2 inch square pots that don't tip over as easily as round ones.

What color is best? White light reflects heat, so if you grow in a bright, sunny window, then white is preferable to dark colors. White shows dirt. I like to write on my pots not only the name of the plant, but also when I trans-planted it. In addition, I often write the name of the person who hybridized the plant or who gave it to me and the date they gave it to me. Therefore, white is best for me. Yet when it comes to showing a plant for competition, I use green or another neutral color because I want the attention of the judges to be on my plant and not the pot.

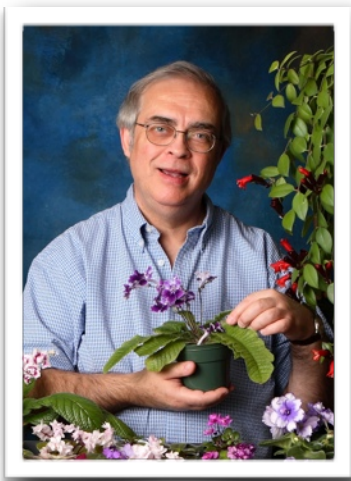
My plant room has a large, walk-in closet and it is stocked with hundreds of pots of various sizes and types. Even with all those choices, it's sometimes a challenge to decide which to use.

This article appeared originally in *GESNERIADS* Vol. 62, No. 1, First Quarter 2012, 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.



Leonard Re from Fountain Valley, California, USA sent this photo of a young plant of *Primulina* 'Vertigo'. He says that it has been growing under a dome and that is why the flower stalks are a bit twisted. This plant was hybridized by Peter Shalit of Seattle, Washington, USA.





**From the editor —**

Hope you enjoy the photos from our Gesneriad Society Convention in Seattle. Thanks to Michael Kartuz and Leonard Re for sharing their photos.

Please continue sending 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).

Mel

Consultants Peter Shalit  
Jeanne Katzenstein

Internet Julie Mavity-Hudson  
Communications Paul Susi

Newsletter Mel Grice  
Editor 2019 Crosswind Ct.  
Englewood, OH  
45322 USA

[editor.gleanings@gesneriadsociety.org](mailto:editor.gleanings@gesneriadsociety.org)

Permission to reprint from **Gleanings** is granted, provided that credit is given to the author and the publication.

**Donations**

The Gesneriad Society, Inc. is a tax-exempt organization with an IRS section 501 (c)(3) status for donations. You can make your donations online at [www.gesneriadsociety.org](http://www.gesneriadsociety.org). You may also send your donation (check payable to The Gesneriad Society) to:

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

**New Member** Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Renewal** Membership # \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
FAMILY NAME GIVEN NAME MIDDLE INITIAL

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
STREET

\_\_\_\_\_ CITY STATE ZIP CODE COUNTRY

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

(Rates in US\$)	Mailing in US 1 year	Mailing in US 3 years	Mailing outside US 1 year	Mailing outside US 3 years
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Individual</b>	\$25	\$70	\$30	\$85
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Joint</b>	\$26	\$73	\$31	\$88
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Life/Joint Life</b>	Mailing in US \$375/\$390		Mailing outside US \$450/\$465	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Green Option</b>	Electronic copy of the journal, no print copy: \$20 per year anywhere in the world			

**I wish to make a tax-deductible contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

Elvin McDonald Research Endowment Fund     Nellie D. Sleeth Scholarship Endowment Fund

Frances Batcheller Endowment Fund     Gesneriad Research Center Fund

Students and Speakers Convention Fund

In Honor     Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks or money orders payable in US\$ on a US bank to: **The Gesneriad Society**

Or, charge my  VISA, or  MasterCard

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: **The Gesneriad Society Membership Secretary, Bob Clark,  
1122 East Pike St., PMB 637, Seattle, WA 98122-3916 USA**

For application online: [www.gesneriadsociety.org](http://www.gesneriadsociety.org)