



Gleanings

a monthly newsletter from The Gesneriad Society, Inc.

(articles and photos selected from chapter newsletters, our journal *Gesneriads*, and original sources)

Volume 8, Number 5

May 2017



Welcome to the latest issue of **Gleanings**! This issue includes photos from the Toronto Gesneriad Society Flower Show, Paul Susi's article about growing gesneriads under artificial lights, and information about the next Gesneriad Society webinar.

Hope you enjoy **Gleanings**!

Mel Grice, Editor



Alan LaVergne from Palo Alto, California, USA sent these photos of *Nematanthus strigillosus*. *Nematanthus strigillosus* is a fairly bland species with (so far) a small number of flowers. The flowers have the common nematanthus pouch shape, but with a yellow "halo" around the constricted corolla opening. There is some uncertainty about the identification of this plant. What's your conclusion?



Gesneriads at the Toronto Gesneriad Society Flower Show

Mel Grice
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Primulina 'Cynthia' - Best in Show
Beverley Williams



Episcia 'Jim's Pineapple'
Jackie Mills



Primulina collection - 2nd Best in Show
Beverley Williams



Kohleria 'An's Busy Bee'
Doris Brownlie



Streptocarpella 'White Butterflies'
Emma Bygott



Streptocarpus 'Dale's Dancing Fairies'
Bruce Williams



Mel Grice photos



Primulina glandulosa var.
yangshouensis
Julie Thompson

More show photos from Toronto



Sinningia 'Deep Purple Dreaming'
Deanna Belli



Corytoplectus cutucuensis
Bill Price



Primulina guilinensis
Beverley Williams



Episcia 'Red Gator'
Steve Kerr

Gesneriad Society on the Radio

Betsy Gottshall (Gesneriad Society Development Chair) and Mary Schaeffer (Society Treasurer) were guests on Mike McGrath's **You Bet Your Garden** radio program recently on WHYY in Philadelphia. The portion of the program featuring Betsy and Mary starts at about minute 14. They talked about African violets, sinningias and streps. Scroll down to **All About Violets** after you click on <https://soundcloud.com/whyy-public-media>



Primulina sclerophylla
Beverley Williams



Sinningia speciosa 'Pedra Lisa'
Arleen Dewell



"Nibbles" design
Steve Kerr



Streptocarpus 'Anna Sui'
Irina Firer



"Memories" design
Judy Zinni



Streptocarpus 'DS-Aliye Parusa'
Alla Kotova



"Big Splash" design
Marina De Souza

Mel Grice photos



"Big Splash" design
Deanna Belli



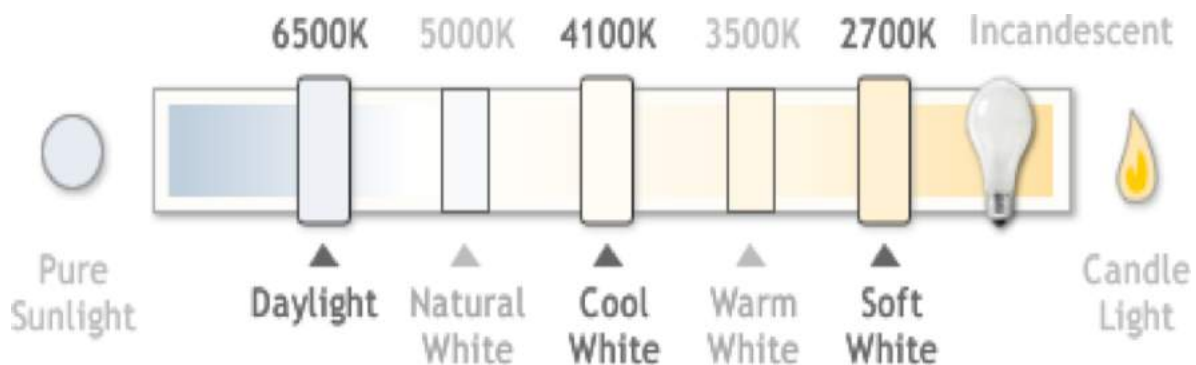
"Memories" design
Steve Kerr

Growing Gesneriads Under Artificial Lights

Paul Susi
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Eric Strauss and Paul Susi presented a program that gave us all a lot of information on using artificial lights to grow our gesneriads. As one of the presenters, I focused on the more traditional use of fluorescent tubes while Eric discussed the emerging field of LED lighting for plants.

Fluorescent tubes used to come in three varieties (T12, T8, and T5) but in 2012 the production of T12s ceased since they were determined to be of low energy efficiency. Nonetheless, all three types of tubes (and LED lights) provide excellent light for growing gesneriads, which require both the blue and red/yellow spectrums of light. The sun produces light in the blue spectrum (at or higher than 6000K), which encourages good vegetative growth, while the light in the red/yellow spectrum (under 3000K) encourages bloom (note that the K stands for degrees Kelvin and is a relative measure of the color, not the temperature, of the light). In the world of fluorescent tubes, cool white tubes provide a good balance of these spectra.



The value of T8 tubes is that they are 30% more efficient than T12 tubes and have a life expectancy of 36,000 hours. Over time the price of these tubes has dropped so that now they can be purchased for about \$3 each in a ten-pack. T5 tubes, while about 10% more efficient than T8s, cost about twice what a T8 costs and may not necessarily be a good choice for growing at this time. Unfortunately, neither T8 nor T5 tubes can be used in an old T12 fixtures successfully, since the T12 ballast is electromagnetic while the T8 and T5 ballasts are electronic. It was mentioned at the meeting that a member has successfully used T8 tubes in a T12 fixture. Research that I have done since the meeting indicates that this will most likely shorten the life of the ballast and is not recommended. One would either have to replace the old ballasts (the T8 tubes will fit in T12 fixtures, but the T5 tubes will not) or purchase new fixtures.

There are two other points to keep in mind about artificial light: lumens and the CRI. The former is a measure of light intensity (how bright the light is) and the latter is the color rendition index – the ability of the tube to render colors accurately (the sun has a CRI of 100). With energy-efficient T8 tubes, you can choose ones with higher lumens

and not spend more on energy.

Eric's presentation moved us one step closer to the "endless" light bulb. It is estimated that an LED bulb will last up to 50,000 hours when on 12 hours a day! The downside with LEDs is that they are currently expensive and, although they are about 30% more energy efficient than standard fluorescent tubes, the high initial cost offsets any energy savings over time. However, as the cost of LEDs drops, they will be the least expensive way to light your plants.

The major decision to be made regarding LED lights is how to upgrade from either T12 or T8 fixtures. Eric presented four options, from the "no brainer" to one which would require more work on the grower's part.

- **Universal (T8 Electronic or T12 Magnetic) ballast compatible LED fluorescent replacement tubes** are the newest, most costly but also easiest to install. These LED tubes will work with any type of existing technology – T8 (Electronic Ballast) or T12 (Magnetic Ballast). The install is as simple as taking out the old fluorescent tube and



Photo of Eric's growing area

installing the LED tube. The downside is that you are still dealing with the old ballast and the accompanying energy use. This is the method Eric has been using.

- **T8 Electronic Ballast Compatible LED Fluorescent Replacement Tubes** are a relatively new option. As their name might suggest, they are meant to work with electronic ballast installations and therefore will not function with magnetic ballasts (T12). Industry data suggest that this combination alone accounts for over 1.2 billion tube lights; thus they are perpetually growing in popularity.

- **Hybrid (T8 electronic ballast compatible/T8 or T12 ballast bypass LED) fluorescent replacement tubes** work with Electronic Ballasts (T8) or have the ability to bypass ballasts when the ballast no longer works. This has given rise to a new category, the hybrid tube light. Hybrid tubes work with T8 electronic ballasts but can also be wired directly like a ballast bypass tube light (for T12 fixtures).

- **Ballast bypass or direct wire LED fluorescent replacement tubes** are the oldest, least expensive and most widely installed option. Instead of building expensive circuitry inside to enable the function with a ballast, this option allows the user to bypass the ballast entirely and run directly off of the line voltage at the installation.

Eric recommended that anyone interested in purchasing LED lights should visit this website for a very good overview of all things LED: <https://www.earthled.com>.

Reprinted from **Gesneriad News**, the newsletter of the Long Island Gesneriad Society, April 2017, Volume 48, No. 8, Mel Grice, editor.

Next Gesneriad Society Webinar

“An Eye on Artistic Design Arrangements, Gesneriad Style” was created at the request of the webinar team and the results are much more than we had even dared to hope for.

Mel Grice’s webinar premieres May 16, 2017, at 9:00 p.m. EDT.

Hear Mel talk about the elements and principles of design demonstrating each point with real life examples from award winning designs from past shows – many of which are his own. You’ll see many beautiful examples as you listen to Mel.

He closes with a quote from his good friend, Paul Kroll, “Growing plants is great, but designers have the most fun.” Just listening to Mel for this information-packed hour might be even more fun. If you can’t make the live presentation, you can sign up for the Anytime version and watch it at your convenience for as many times as you’d like. This is a great program for clubs looking to have a talk on design. For additional information or to register for the live or Anytime version go to <https://the-gesneriad-society.myshopify.com/collections/webinars/products/webinar-an-eye-on-artistic-design-arrangements-gesneriad-style>

Designers, both experienced and novice, are in for a real treat.

The Webinar Team

Dale Martens, Paul Susi, Alcie Maxwell and Mary Schaeffer



An Eye on Artistic Design Arrangements, Gesneriad Style



Webinars

Another webinar download is now available: **Growing and Showing Achimenes** by Julie Mavity-Hudson. You can order this and other webinars in the Gesneriad Society Shop - <https://the-gesneriad-society.myshopify.com/collections/webinars>



From the editor —

May has been an even busier month for me than April was. My plants have been sorely neglected. Hope that you will get a chance to see one or more of the webinars.

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

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 For additional information, contact: gottshb@verizon.net

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 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.

New Member Date _____

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