

# Gleanings

a monthly newsletter from The Gesneriad Society, Inc.

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

Volume 9, Number 12

December 2018

Welcome to the latest issue of **Gleanings!** This issue includes photos of gesneriads in Jay Sespico's growing areas, Marilyn Heinrich's review of Carolyn Klein's talk on Container Gardens, the Annual Appeal, and 2019 convention photos.

Hope you enjoy **Gleanings!**

**Mel Grice**, Editor



Jim Roberts of Marriottsville, Maryland, USA sent these photos of *Lysionotus petelotii*. He said that he treated it very poorly and it still rewarded him with a few flowers.

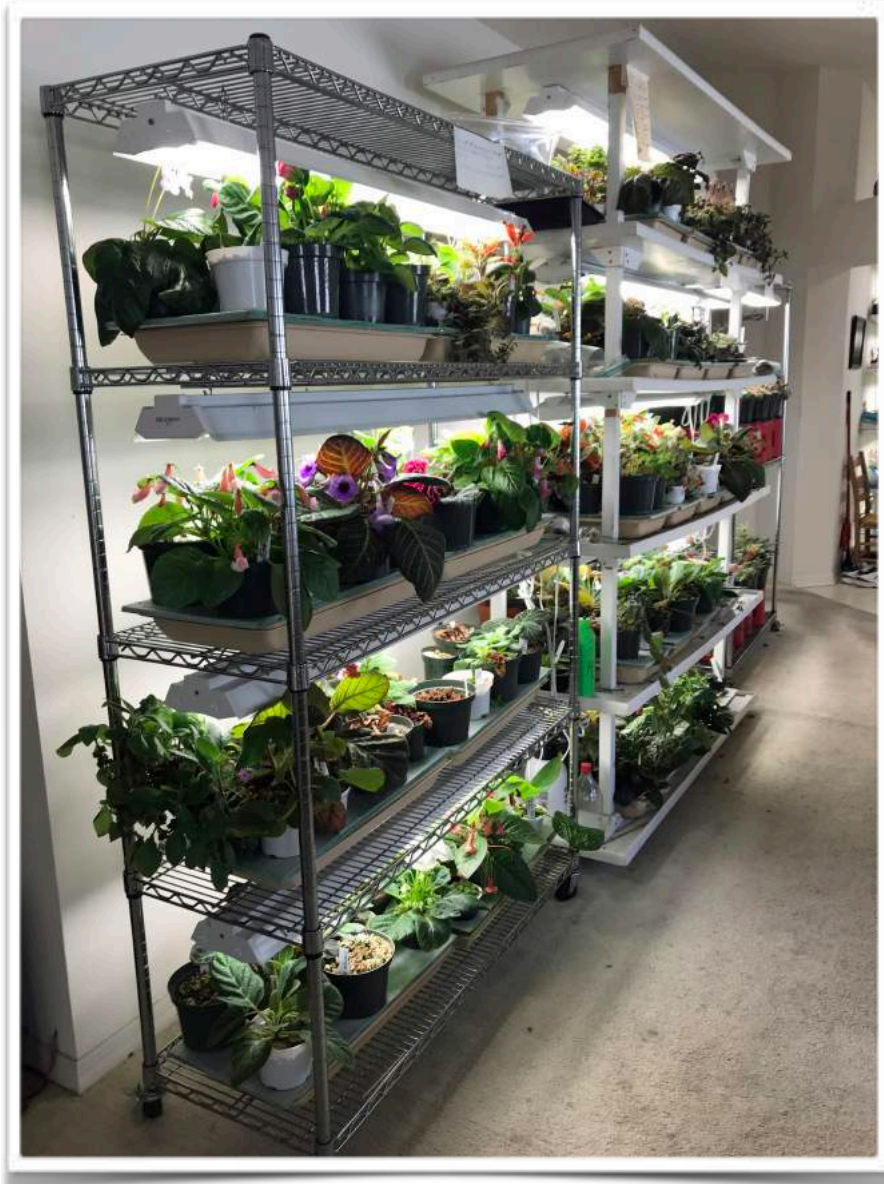
Jim Roberts photos





# A Visit to Jay Sespico's Growing Areas

Jay Sespico  
[jaysesp@gmail.com](mailto:jaysesp@gmail.com)  
Valrico, Florida, USA

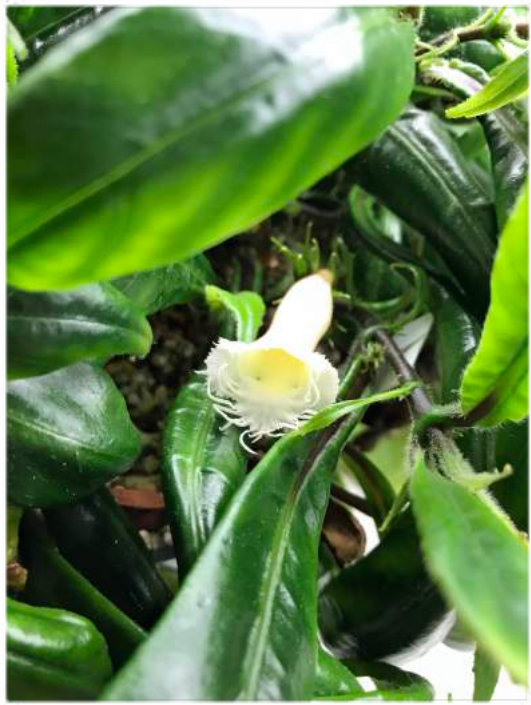


Mel Grice photos



Jay Sespico's home is filled with gesneriads. Plants on trays filled with water occupy each shelf on numerous light stands. Pots rest on foam insulation sheets that have strategically drilled holes so that the wicks from each pot can reach the water below. Jay also has green plastic squeeze bottles filled with water in numerous locations ready to spot water a plant that looks dry. The green bottles were originally sold as CLR (Calcium Lime Rust) remover – rinsed many times to eliminate any chemical residue.





*Paradyrmonia ciliosa* blooming on the bottom shelf (right)



Jay built the light stand above many years ago. The extended shelves on each end make a handy place to store labels, tools, fertilizer, etc., ready to grab when needed.



Left – Large pots of rhizomatous gesneriads sit atop large plastic containers that once held coffee. Things dry out fast in Florida from the air conditioning and hot weather so plants that are wick watered need large reservoirs for water.

Mel Grice photos



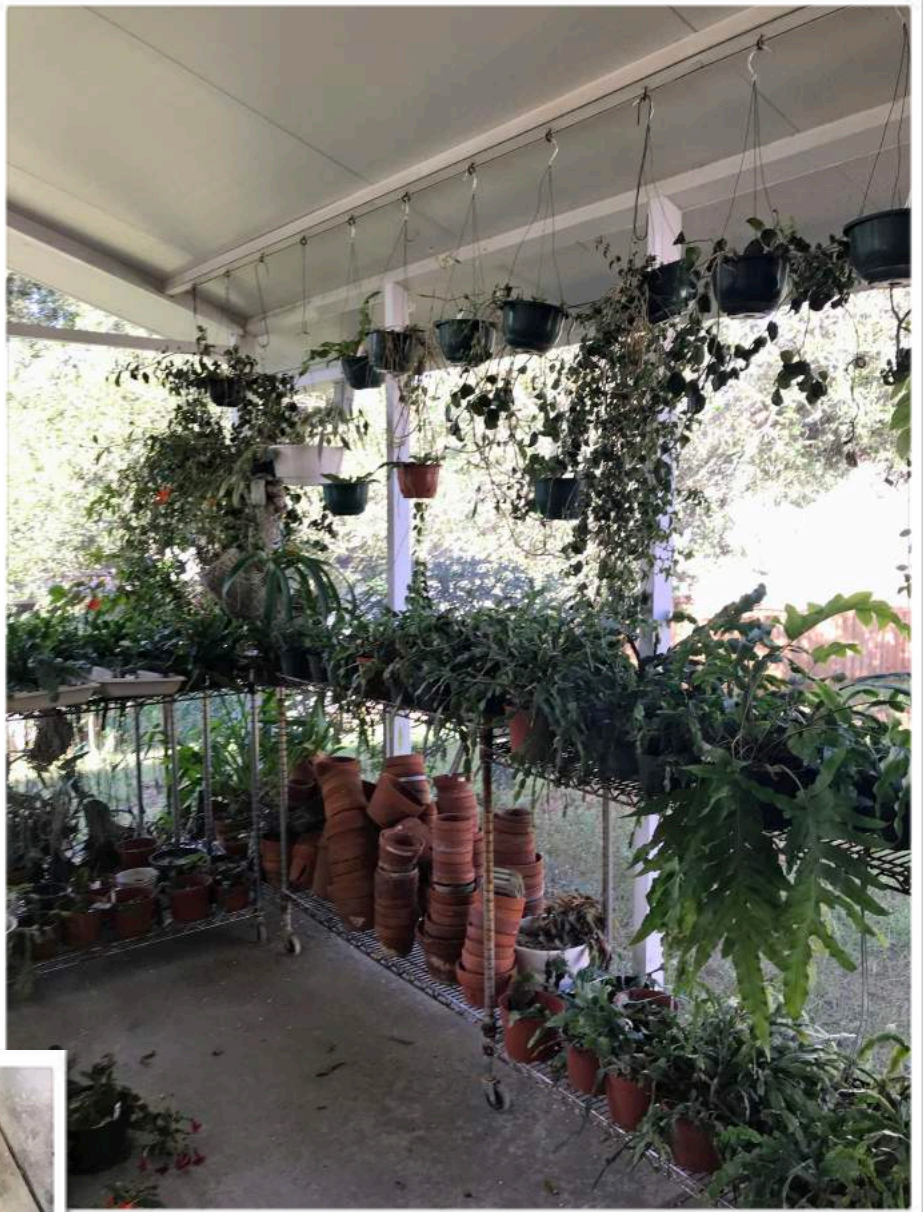


Jay also grows many gesneriads on his large screened-in porch. (He has glass windows that he installs in the winter months.)

Above — *Aeschynanthus x splendidus* blooming in a hanging basket.

Lower left — Pots of *Sinningia* plants in various stages of growth sitting on the concrete floor.

Lower right — *Sinningia* 'Peridots Pink Pipettes' in bloom.



Mel Grice photos





Mel Grice photos



Above — *Kohleria* species 'Selby' growing outside on Jay's front porch.

Below — A *Sinningia leucotricha* hybrid with a large tuber filling the pot.



*Sinningia* 'Prima Donna'



# Container Gardens

Marilyn Heinrich

Reprinted from

*Gesneriad News*, the newsletter of the Long Island Gesneriad Society, Volume 50, no. 4, December 2018, Mel Grice, editor.

November 2018 Program: “Container Gardens by Carolyn Klein”

At the November meeting, Carolyn Klein gave a wonderful talk on creating terrariums, dish gardens, and natural gardens. She is well-known for her own garden creations and won the “2018 Designer of the Year” award given by the New York State African Violet Society. Carolyn is also a teacher and knows how to engage her audience. She had us laughing at her wood and moss collecting misadventures as she gathered materials near and far for her creations.

With dish gardens, she starts by selecting a suitable container with an eye to line, balance and color. The color should be muted and neutral – black, grey, brown or dark green are best. The container should be flat, like a bonsai container, although there is no need for holes in the bottom. Terra cotta and ceramic planters work. Carolyn prefers to use pieces of wood collected by the roadside to create her natural gardens.

Carolyn found that she was spending up to \$100 per show to purchase small plants for her gardens, so she now tries to propagate as many of her own as possible. For her garden “trees” she finds that aralia and ficus cuttings are easy to root – just cut and put them in soil kept moist (keep in high humidity). Of course, for gesneriad shows, gesneriads must predominate and that means most, if not all, the plants in the gardens have to be gesneriads. The plants need to have small leaves to maintain the proper scale for the garden, so large leaves need to be removed. The goal is to have the plants look like they would if they were growing outside in nature. There should be variation in height and size. Variegation and the colors of the plants must be balanced and harmonious. Flowering plants should be miniatures in keeping with the size of the rest of the garden. Rocks and driftwood can be used in the landscape, and it is very important to have varying heights at ground level to give the illusion of a natural scene. Buried flower pots can be used to aid in building height in the container. Even though the gardens are supposed to be viewed by the judges from the front only, Carolyn recommends finishing the backs using pieces of bark to hold the soil in place. As for soil, Carolyn uses Miracle-Gro potting mix because of its low perlite content. Perlite should not be visible on the soil surface because its stark white color is a distraction. Cover the soil with bark chips and moss to finish the garden. In nature, something covers everything, so there is no plain soil. Ground covers can include turkey grit, small gravel, and orchid bark.

While creating your garden, don’t take the plants out of their pots to start with – this makes it easier try different placements. Gradually walk away and come back to get different perspectives. Don’t put variegated plants next to each other. Take a photograph of the garden – often you will see different things in the photo that can improve the design. Build in ponds, paths, valleys, hills, or a waterfall. Subtle features, such as a winding path that disappears into the rear of the garden, can make for unending interest;



it creates a depth of field so you want to look around the corner. A pond can be suggested by rocks on sand, covered by a piece of glass. Wood can be whitened by soaking it in bleach. Wood can be placed at the top of a hill for plants to cascade over. Carolyn has glued pieces of slate together to form walls and caves. If accessories, such as small ceramic animals, are used, they must blend in, but it may be better to leave them out. When placing the plants, don't jostle them to avoid stressing them and be sure to use moist soil since it may not be possible to wet it later.

If you will be using all gesneriads in your garden, you will be tempted to make the garden smaller. Just be aware that smaller gardens are harder to do because of the issues of scale. Carolyn suggests looking at show entry pictures on the internet for inspiration; at shows, look at judges comments; go to conventions.

When bringing your entry to the show, bring along extra materials in case of an accident. Bring extra rocks, dirt and moss. If you don't have a blooming plant for your garden, you can buy one from plant sales. Final grooming should include looking for bad leaves, brushing away dirt, and making sure the container is clean. The garden should be covered overnight and misted to keep up the humidity. Display the garden at an angle to add depth – it almost always looks better that way.

A container garden can be created a month or a week before the show. After the show, a garden can last for months with careful watering, or it can be taken apart right away. If you don't do well with plants as horticultural entries, Carolyn encourages you to try entering a container garden design.



Terrarium created by Carolyn Klein

Mel Grice photo

# The Gesneriad Society Annual Appeal

The [Annual Appeal](#) helps support gesneriad research, education, and conservation by ensuring that grant money is available for eligible applicants. The target fund for 2018 is **The Nellie D. Sleeth Scholarship Endowment Fund**. This fund provides scholarships to interested and deserving students of botany and horticulture. One or more scholarship awards are made each year to students currently enrolled in college or university who seek a better understanding of anatomy, ecology, physiology, relationships, distribution, growth and development, horticultural uses or the pests and diseases of gesneriads. Awards may be used for a variety of specific purposes, such as travel during fieldwork to gather specimens or observe pollinators, or travel to examine specimens in herbaria or botanical gardens. Donate now! You may make a donation online by using the link above.

The Gesneriad Society, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) U.S. tax-exempt corporation.  
The full amount of a donation is tax deductible for U.S. members.

In time for the holidays, use Amazon and donate to The Gesneriad Society.

When you use [Amazon Smile](#), Amazon will donate .5% of each purchase to The Gesneriad Society. There is no extra cost to you, and you will be supporting the work of The Gesneriad Society in research, education, and conservation. Give it a try!

The URL for the hyperlink is <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/22-6059828>

Betsy Gottshall  
Development Chairperson  
The Gesneriad Society, Inc.  
[gottshb@verizon.net](mailto:gottshb@verizon.net)

## Happy Holidays!

John Beaulieu created this holiday tree originally in black and white and Stan Sudol added the color a few years later.

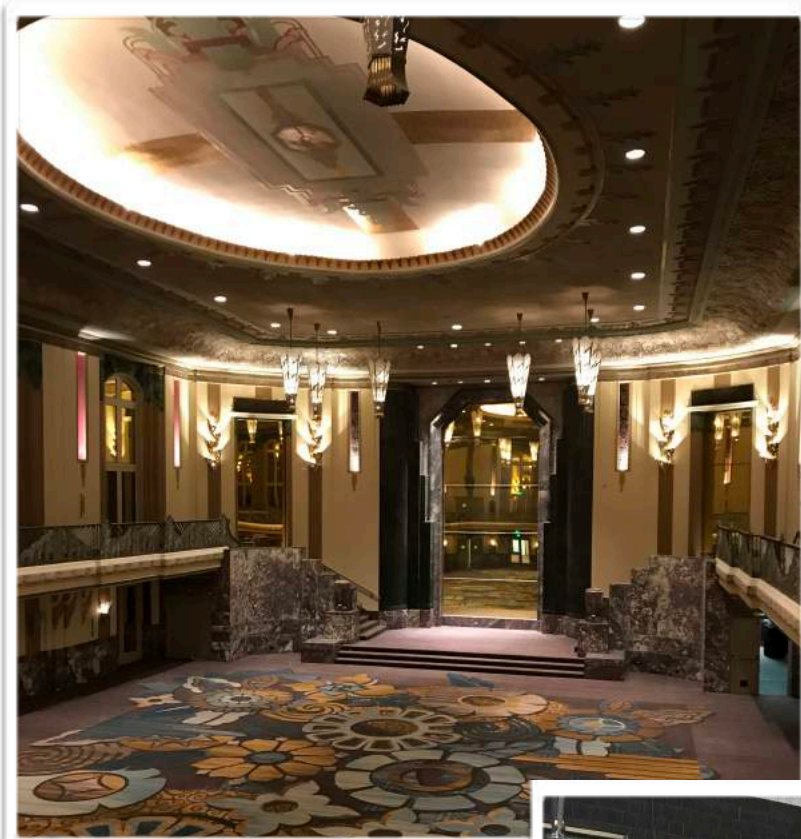
Thanks to both for sharing!





# The 63rd Annual Convention of The Gesneriad Society July 1 to July 6, 2019

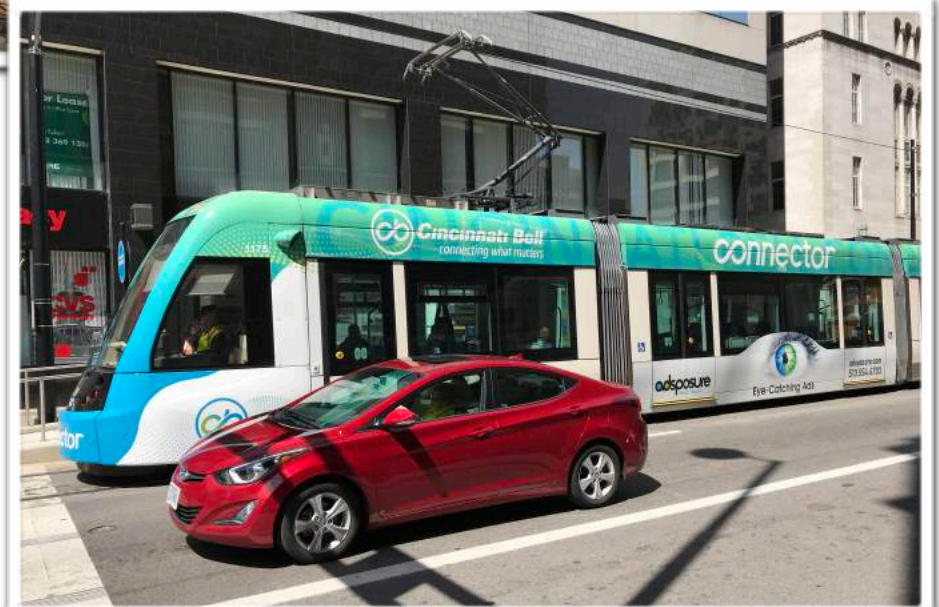
**Online Registration Opens on  
or around January 1, 2019!**



The beautiful Hilton Netherland Plaza Hotel, a masterpiece of 1930's French art deco design, will be our home base in Cincinnati for the convention.

Cincinnati is located within 500 miles of 60% of the nation's population. A one day's drive for many people. The electric trolley on the right, Cincinnati Bell Connector, makes it easy to visit most of the sights you will want to see in the city.

The Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport (CVG) offers numerous non-stop flights daily and is only a fifteen minute drive to the hotel.



Mel Grice photos



## 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:

Betsy Gottshall, Development Chairperson  
108 Godshall Road, Collegeville, PA 19426  
For additional information, contact: [gottshb@verizon.net](mailto: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.



From the editor —

Happy Holidays to all!

Looking forward to seeing you all in 2019 at the 63rd Annual Gesneriad Society Convention in Cincinnati, Ohio!

If you have suggestions, comments, or items for possible inclusion in future issues, please feel free to contact me at [melsgrice@gmail.com](mailto:melsgrice@gmail.com)

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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, programs and seed fund. Membership begins upon receipt of dues.

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

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