



Gleanings

a monthly newsletter from The Gesneriad Society, Inc.

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

Volume 11, Number 1

January 2020



Welcome to the start of the 11th year of **Gleanings**! This issue includes photos of gesneriads growing at Terri Vicenzi's house and Hung Nguyen's article on *Aeschynanthus speciosus*.

Hope you enjoy **Gleanings**!

Mel Grice, Editor

Sinningia 'California Sunset', shown on the right, is a hybrid created by Dale Martens quite a few years ago. It is always a prolific bloomer for me. Too bad that there is not a show in January!

Mel

Mel Grice photo



A Visit to Terri Vicenzi's House

Terri Vicenzi
Bloomington, IN, USA



Streptocarpus 'Dale's Smokin' Hot'



Streptocarpus 'Bristol's Turkey Tracks' and *Streptocarpus* 'Kahinta'

Smithiantha canarina on the right was started with only one rhizome in the pot and grown about 16 inches under the lights.

Terri Vicenzi photos

Smithiantha canarina below was started with about six small rhizomes in a five-inch bulb pan pot. It was grown quite close to the lights.





Smithiantha zebrina and
Streptocarpus 'Heartland's
White Gold'

Terri Vicenzi photos



Seemannia sylvatica



Streptocarpus 'Steffano's Double Take'



×*Achimenes* 'Northwood's Sunburst'



Smithiantha 'An's Misty Twilight'

Read the article, "Streptocarpus Cultivation in Southern Indiana", by Terri Vicenzi and learn how she grows her beautiful plants in the new issue of *GESNERIADS* Vol. 70, No. 1, First Quarter 2020, Peter Shalit, editor. Read other interesting articles like this about gesneriads by becoming a member of The Gesneriad Society and receiving our quarterly 64-page journal.

Growing *Aeschynanthus speciosus*

Hung Nguyen
Santa Rosa, CA, USA

I got my start of *Aeschynanthus speciosus* from California Carnivores (Sebastopol, CA). Damon Collingsworth, owner and manager, told me that it had been collected in Sarawak (East Malaysia, on the island of Borneo) by Geoffrey Wong.

The cutting rooted easily, and five shoots grew out of the base of the plant after a year. *Aeschynanthus xsplendidus* is often mistaken as *A. speciosus* by gesneriad growers, but according to a paper published by D.J.Middleton, the key to identifying *Aeschynanthus speciosus* is simple: "Leaves in whorls of three or more" and "Corolla predominantly red and orange, 54–118 mm long; leaves ovate to elliptic, never linear, 2.3–6.1 times as long as wide."

I grew my plant in a 6" pot with soilless mix consisting of a 1:1:1 ratio of peat moss, perlite, and vermiculite. It received only natural light by a tall patio door facing the south. The stems grew up to 18" before the first bloom during July-August. It was a spectacular sight to see so many flowers in bloom at the same time on top of each stem. One stem had 15 flowers open at the same time. To my surprise, the flowers had only anthers full of pollen, but there were no pistils visible at all until the end of the bloom period, which lasted for more than two weeks.

The stem continued to grow from the center after the flowers dropped. Some stems reached up to five feet in length. I then potted the plant in a ceramic pot with bamboo branches as a trellis.



Leaves

Aeschynanthus speciosus

All photos by the author

Flower with mature pistil





Aeschynanthus speciosus

All photos by the author



Aeschynanthus speciosus



Whole plant

The second time it bloomed, the strong and thick pistils eventually appeared about ten days after the flower opened. I pollinated the flowers. At first it seemed the flowers did not take as they all drooped. The huge stigma shrank, then the flowers slid out of the pistil and the skinny purple seedpod pointed upward the next day. They eventually elongated to 8" long.

Give *Aeschynanthus speciosus* a try if you have room for it. It is very rewarding to see the magnificent bloom in person.



Flowers with mature anthers



Young seedpods



Mature seedpods



Open seedpods

This article appeared originally in *GESNERIADS* Vol. 69, No. 3, Third Quarter 2019, Peter Shalit, editor. Read other interesting articles like this about gesneriads by becoming a member of The Gesneriad Society and receiving our quarterly 64-page journal.



From the editor —

I am sure that, like me, many of you have beautiful plants blooming right now with no place to show them off. Send me photos and I will publish them.

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

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The Gesneriad Society Membership Secretary, Bob Clark,
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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, programs and seed fund. Membership begins upon receipt of dues.

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