



Gleanings

a monthly newsletter from The Gesneriad Society, Inc.

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

Volume 12, Number 4

April 2021



This issue includes photos of gesneriads blooming now, Paul Susi's article on growing gesneriads in the desert, and information about the Gesneriad Society's Virtual Flower Show and Convention.

Hope you enjoy **Gleanings!**

Mel Grice, Editor



Here is a young plant of *Sinningia richii* 'Robson Lopes' blooming for the first time at my house. I love the bright yellow flowers!

Mel

Mel Grice photo



Gesneriads Blooming Now

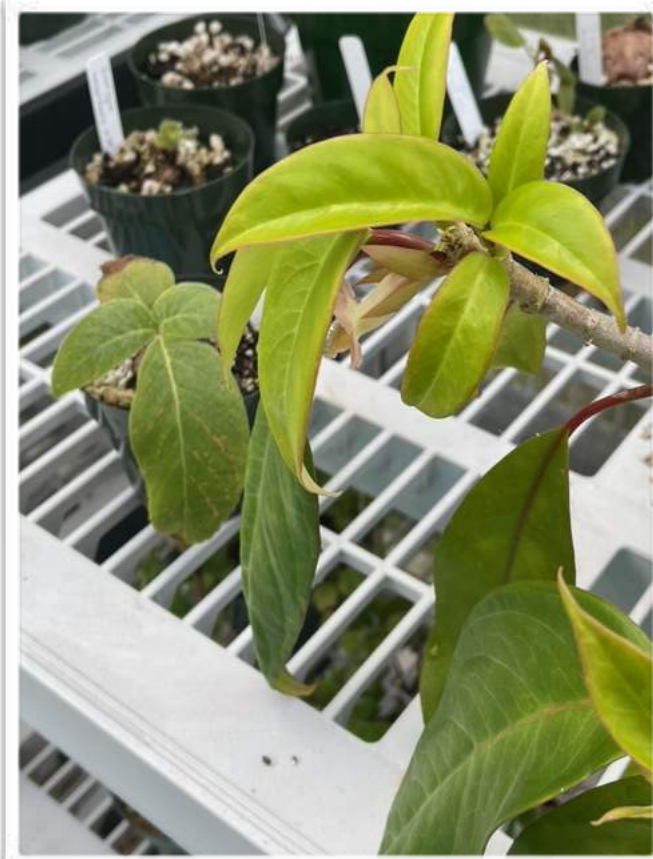


Jim Roberts photos



Drymonia 'First Peach' really loving the hot days and humidity on the lanai in Florida.

Jim Roberts





Primulina macrorhiza
Karyn Cichocki



Streptocarpus denticulatus
Karyn Cichocki



Sinningia sp. 'Coromandel'
Dennis Kramb



Streptocarpus 'Dale's Gingersnaps'
Ron Myhr

Ron Myhr photos



Sinningia minima closeup



Sinningia minima and *Sinningia pusilla* - Ron Myhr

Growing Gesneriads in the Desert

Paul Susi

One of the major decisions I had to make when we moved from South Huntington, NY to Palm Springs in December of 2019 had to do with my plants, plant stands and light fixtures. I decided that I would offer the stands and fixtures to whomever in the chapter wanted them and Barbara Hanft and Kathy Do quickly snatched them up (I hope that they are enjoying them). I also decided that I did not want to have to worry about transporting plants cross country – we were flying and I didn't think it wise to try and ship plants in the month of December. So, with the exception of two tubers (*Sinningia leucotricha* 'Telemaco Borba' MP0016 and *S.* 'Kevin Garnett') and a few achimenes rhizomes, all the plants in my collection were either given to friends or brought to a meeting for the raffle and sales tables.

By mid-fall of 2020 I started thinking about setting up a light stand. I knew that I would use LED fixtures and, based on the advice given by several Gesneriad Society members in convention talks (both Gesneriad Society live and AVSA virtual), I purchased four 48" LED 4200K fixtures with 4000 lumens online direct from Sunco. While the fixtures seem to have two fluorescent tubes in them,

these are really plastic coverings for the diodes which produce the light. I also purchased metro shelving (to which I added wheels) with four adjustable shelves – less expensive than standard grow carts.



My original intent was to use all four shelves for growing gesneriads. However, because of the intensity of the LEDs, I had to position the two shelves with gesneriads farther away from the lights than I had intended and will use the other two shelves for storage and succulents. Several chapter members offered to send me plants and cuttings to kickstart my new collection and, as a result of the generosity of Mel Grice and Levente Hajdu, I now have twenty-three healthy primulinas, with four in flower and another two or three showing buds, plus the two aforementioned sinningias and three orchids. I am still experimenting with



plant placement, but it doesn't seem that any of the gesneriads are suffering, burning, or otherwise headed to plant heaven.

What is the big deal you may ask – everything seems to be going well. The big deal is humidity – right now, it's 11% in the condo. The A/C is not on, the heat isn't on – it's just the desert. So, I had to make a few decisions. At first the cuttings and small plants were put under domes. However, I realized that I would have to enclose the light stand because these plants would soon outgrow the plastic domes. I also would have to change how I water my plants. I have always grown on capillary matting but I didn't think that would work here. The mats would most likely dry out rather quickly and they really wouldn't

substantially add to the ambient humidity. The solution was to switch to growing almost everything on wicks. I had never done this before and didn't want to have little plastic containers that I would have to fill with water periodically. I also didn't want to have to deal with baggies of water in each container. So, I decided to use egg crate cut to fit on top of the black plastic trays that I fill halfway with water. Each pot (which is filled with a very light mix) has a wick and the wick sits in the community water source – and all the primulinas are loving it. In fact, I am getting better growth and more bloom from many of them, especially *P. petrocosmeoides*. I think I hear a few “no no no” comments now – aren't you afraid of spreading bugs?!?! Actually, not overly so. I will start using

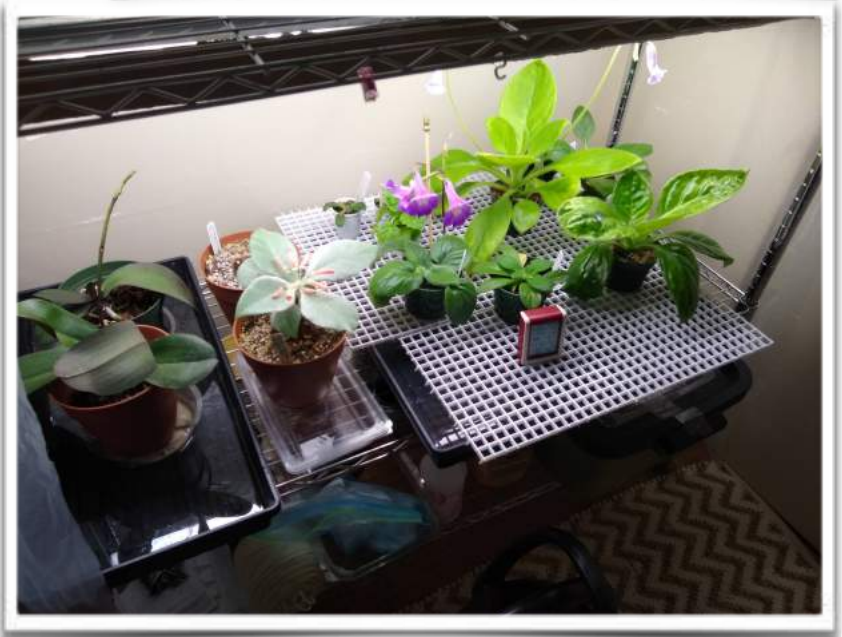


a systemic insecticide (imidacloprid, sold as Marathon*) as a prophylaxis in each pot and, should the dreaded mealybugs strike, propagation is only a leaf cutting away. The only exceptions to wicking are the sinningias and the orchids. I have them sitting in saucers in one of the trays and fill the tray with water about halfway up the side of the saucers. One orchid is in bloom and another in spike, so they seem to be enjoying the environment, where they have been growing for over three months.

Here are my growing basics:

- Commercial, off the shelf potting mix with equal parts of perlite (1:1)
- Lights are on ten hours a day
- Plants are either 11" or 13" from the lights (top of the pot to the lights)
- Humidity in the enclosed light unit ranges from 50% - 65% and the temperature from 65° - 80°F
- I add water to the trays once a week, mixed with full-strength tomato fertilizer

*sale or use is restricted in several states



Paul Susi photos

This article appeared in **Gesneriad News**, the newsletter of The Long Island Gesneriad Society, Vol. 52, No. 8, April 2021, Paul Susi, editor.

Gesneriads at Home around the World Virtual Convention and Flower Show 2021 June 29 to July 3, 2021

This year's Virtual Convention will focus on the international nature of gesneriads and the Society by having virtual presentations from various growers and researchers from around the world. A great deal of special planning is going into this virtual convention program and we hope that many of our members and friends will be able to participate. You don't have to be a member of The Gesneriad Society to participate in the virtual convention!

Plans at this time include lectures by international speakers, student presentations, meetings/programs from the Gesneriad Hybridizers Association and Conservation Committee, and our Annual Meeting ... in addition to the 2021 Virtual Flower Show viewing, which will open on Friday, July 2. Here are the Virtual Flower Show [Schedule](#) and [Rules](#). Note that submission of photos for the Virtual Flower Show is open only to members of The Gesneriad Society. Anyone around the world will be able to view the Flower Show.

Convention registration will be open in early May and will be announced on the [website](#) and on social media. Additional information will also be published in the May issue of *Gleanings*.



Have you seen the new Gesneriad Society 2021 Virtual convention T-shirt with the “Gesneriads at Home around the World” theme!? It comes in women’s and men’s small to 2XL sizes and most are cotton, but check the ad closely if cotton is the only material you’ll wear.

<https://shop.gesneriadsociety.org/collections/apparel/products/virtual-convention-2021-womens-short-sleeve-t-shirt>

<https://shop.gesneriadsociety.org/collections/apparel/products/virtual-convention-2021-men-short-sleeve-t-shirt>

I love the variety of flowers including primulinas, streps, African violets, columneas, sinningias and more. We thank Hung Nguyen again for his creativity.

There are lots of colors from which to choose so take a look!

Dale Martens





From the editor –
 Hope that you are all taking photos of your plants for the Virtual Flower Show!

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

Mel

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Austin Grevious
 4932 - 88th Avenue West, University Place, WA 98467 USA
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Membership and Changes of Address

The Gesneriad Society Membership Secretary, Bob Clark,
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Changes of Address — Send changes of address to the Membership Secretary [<gesneriadsocietymembership@gmail.com>](mailto:gesneriadsocietymembership@gmail.com) 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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