



Gleanings

a monthly newsletter from **The Gesneriad Society, Inc.**

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

Volume 15, Number 1

January 2024



This issue includes photos of gesneriads blooming now, Jonathan Ertelt's article about advertising gesneriads on T-shirts, and Carel J. Fourie's photos of *Streptocarpus dunnii* growing in South Africa.

Hope you enjoy **Gleanings!**

Mel Grice, Editor



Streptocarpus 'DEM-Tokyo' grown by Terri Vicenzi from Bloomington, Indiana. "An infrequent bloomer, but worth it to see this once a year!"

Terri Vicenzi photo



Blooming now...

×*Achimenes* 'Northwoods Sunburst'



Mel Grice photos



Sinningia calcaria



Saintpaulia 'Buckeye Northern Lights'
Terri Vicenzi

Streptocarpus 'PK-Colette'
Terri Vicenzi



Terri Vicenzi photos

One Never Knows...

Jonathan Ertelt

One of my fond plant-related memories from the relatively recent past in Nashville involves a ride on the local bus. Shortly after I got on one morning, riding on the #7 down 21st street, I had a question being thrown at me from a fellow-passenger about the plant on my shirt (given that I was predominantly the greenhouse manager, I justified my wearing of t-shirts to work better than 95% of the time due to the fact that they were educational, the vast majority featuring plants, while others had pollinators or ecological themes). My shirt that day was one of better than a half dozen that I had at the time from The Gesneriad Society. To be honest, I couldn't say which one it was, though my first guesses would include *Drymonia decora*, *Sinningia helleri*, or *Columnea erythrophaea*. You might ask fellow grower and strong club member Sally Miller – she was the one who noticed my shirt advertising of both the plant and the society, and engaged me in conversation about both, leading to her coming to the next meeting and joining our Middle Tennessee chapter.

Until last week I would have said that this was perhaps the only clearly productive wearing of one of these shirts, though of course I've answered the occasional question from time to time – but not anymore. A few days back now I was looking through the collection of over 400 anecdotal responses that accompanied the over 1200 signatures on the student-instigated petition against the greenhouse closing by my last



Mel Grice photo

employer. I received this collection of “Greenhouse Petition Responses” from one of my former volunteers who started the petition, thinking that I might appreciate seeing the comments. Indeed I did, and I would have sworn that I read every one (certainly more than once) within the first couple of months of my leaving. Which is why the following anecdote caught me completely by surprise when I was reading through a few the other day:

"I love going to the greenhouse so much. I was talking to Jonathan Ertelt once and thought he was wearing such a cool shirt! After some dedicated research, my friend and I found The Gesneriad Society. The society is an all-volunteer international society devoted to the identification, culture, propagation, and conservation of gesneriads. We ended up ordering matching shirts to support the society and now I get so many questions about it! The greenhouses inspire learning and curiosity and honestly that out-of-classroom excitement is what college is about."

I don't recall ever seeing other Gesneriad Society shirts on campus, except perhaps when Julie occasionally came up to the greenhouse. But I thought that this was a pretty special comment to read and thought that it might form the basis of a good little article as well. I do still hear from several of my students about plants they received over the years. One recently noted to me with some excitement about a new stem coming up from the tuber base of her plant of a *Sinningia* 'Black Hills' hybrid, the excitement stemming from the fact that this newest stem had whorls of three leaves at each nodal area rather than the usual pair. Other recent posts from this same student let me know that she'd purchased three different *Sinningia* tubers as well as some other plants – and she's propagating them so that she can send me starts!

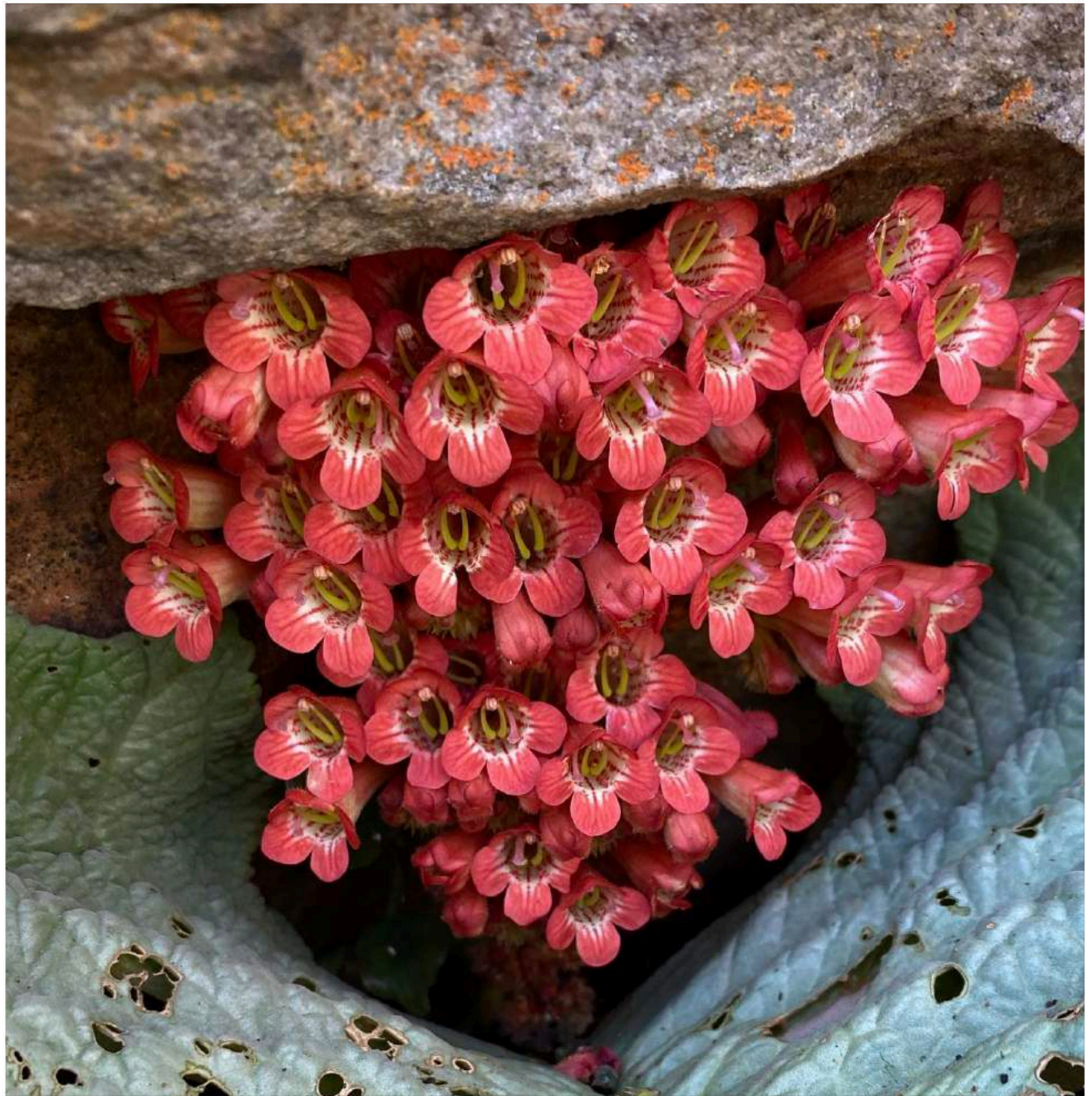
I do miss my students, but here I'm working on more of a community outreach. Since the greenhouse is predominantly student managed, I'm doing a bit to help out, but the students in charge are doing various outreach to fellow students. The local community, on the other hand, would benefit from more access to the greenhouse, maybe even some workshops on down the road. But now I've wandered from my main point – you just never know who you may touch, or how. Some days it's sharing a plant, or some information – other days it may just be wearing a cool shirt. Good Growing all!

Reprinted from *Gesneri-Eds*, the newsletter of the Tennessee chapter of The Gesneriad Society, Volume 51, issue 10, October 2023, Julie Mavity-Hudson, editor.

Streptocarpus dunnii

Carel J. Fourie

"The first in a series of streptocarpus posts, the stunning *Streptocarpus dunnii*, an amazing unifoliate species found in the Mpumalanga and Limpopo provinces of South Africa as well as Eswatini. Most populations grow, flower once and die. However populations near the border of Swaziland in the greater Barberton area are plurifoliate. Meaning they make more leaves after flowering. This species is pollinated by sunbirds."



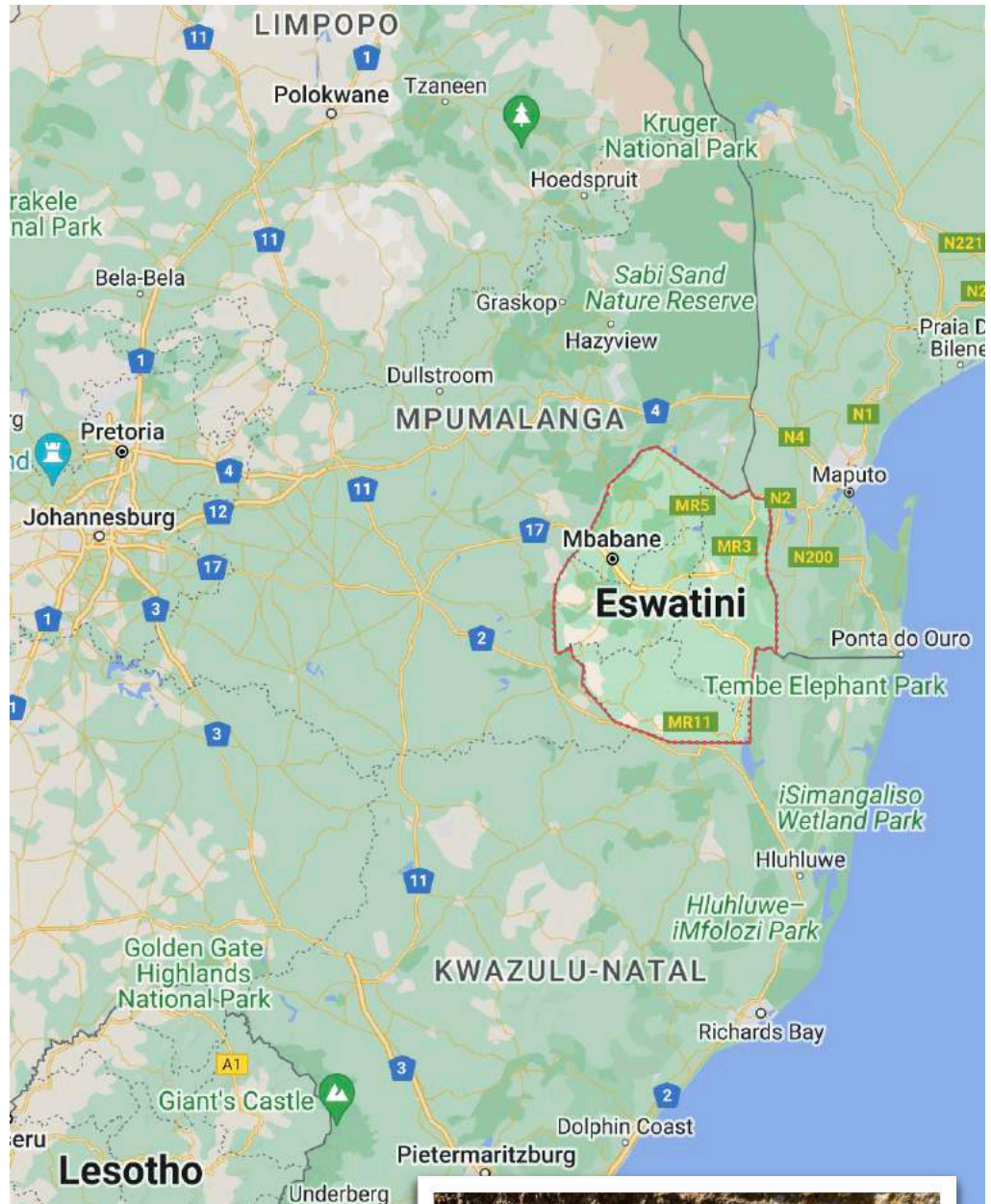
Carel J. Fourie photo



Carel J. Fourie photos

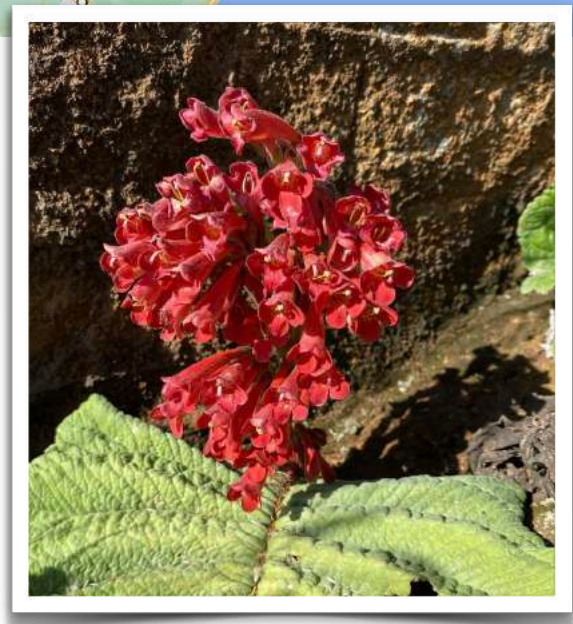
Here is a map of Mpumalanga and Limpopo provinces of South Africa as well as Eswatini.

Eswatini, officially the Kingdom of Eswatini and also known by its former official name Swaziland, is a landlocked country in Southern Africa. It is bordered by Mozambique to its northeast and South Africa to its north, west, south, and southeast



From Google maps

Carel J. Fourie photo



Blooming now...

Streptocarpus 'DS-Female Logic'
Terri Vicenzi



Streptocarpus 'Morning Edition'
Terri Vicenzi





From the editor —

Keep those photos coming! Write some short articles about your favorite plant please.

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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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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