

Gesneri-Eds

Volume 35

The Newsletter of the Tennessee Gesneriad Society

Issue 1

Next meeting
Sunday, Jan 8
2:00
Vanderbilt
Greenhouses
See page 4 for
map and
directions

A Message from the President

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2006 to all in our Tennessee Gesneriad Society.

This is my first "message from the President" having been recycled and voted president 2006-2007 of TGS (or are we now TnGS due to the name change of AGGS to TGS 'The Gesneriad Society').

I am thinking back over my over 30 years as a member of TGS...

I have trouble with dates--but here goes!! In 1973 the Schneiders, Molly, Rickey, Claire (3yrs), Deborah (6mo), moved to Nashville and our present house on Hillwood drive. Moving from Boston area, we had several house plants for our new home--a jade that is still growing, begonias from my mother and spider plants. Before leaving we attended the Boston flower show, seeing the Kartuz greenhouse exhibit which was fantastic with huge begonias and probably Gesneriads. Rickey moonlighted near the greenhouses north of Boston so we visited, obtaining his hybrid begonias, I still have, and his first orchid. At the show the Indoor Light Gardening also had an exhibit so we had a light set-up made for our transported plants in the play room.

After settling in, I met a TGS member while bowling who talked about a flower show with Michael Kartuz as speaker. So we attended "Exotic Gesneriads



for Tennessee Homes and Gardens" November 1974 in Botanic Hall Cheekwood and joined TGS! Ben Channell organized an outstanding display I will never forget.

I am looking back at our Gesneri-Eds newsletters to refresh events and dates that follow. Ben started the newsletter January 1973 printed bimonthly. I have been keeping a complete copy as historian--we should recycle articles too! In 1978 I became president after being Vice President under Pam Braun. We have come full circle with Pam as VP now. Other officers were Elsie Quarterman my VP, Carol Ann Bonner Recording Secretary, Gladys Stewart Membership Secretary, mailing the newsletter. Mary Louise Fitzhugh became my editor using up-to-date graphics and Gesneri-eds looked very professional for its era - no computers like today. So now 28 years later I am writing a presidents message; back then it was called "Notes from the President", in a slightly different format. The first article in the newsletter each meeting was about the meetings program by the vice president or member in charge.

January meeting 2006 will be at the Vandy Greenhouse as in other years, partly because Cheekwood is closed.

SEE YOU ALL THERE JAN 8th! *Molly*

From the (co-) editor

Julie Mavity-Hudson

Well, it's another year already - hardly seems possible. The weather feels more like spring than winter. This will be a good month to see the Vandy Greenhouses. There will be directions in the newsletter on how we will get together. This is one meeting you HAVE to be on time for or you will miss it entirely.

One of our member families, Chuck and Diane Fisher 's home in Gilbertsville was badly damaged by the tornado that hit close to Moore's Camp Ground. Diane was not there at the time, but Chuck was. He was not hurt, thankfully. It hit on the side facing the water, blowing all of their trees down, smashing their

smaller boat, and blew their pontoon boat up to the deck, tore up the deck, their dock, and blew out ALL of the windows on that side of their house. That was the sun room and basement windows. Diane said it threw all of her plants all over inside the house, throwing pots, plants, and soil everywhere! Their front windows were completely blown out, embedding glass in practically everything in the house and devastating the many plants that lived there, also depositing dirt throughout the house. They also lost many large trees, but thankfully none hit the house. Sure hope things are starting to get back to normal. She lost a lot of plants, and I know that you all will help her restock once she is able to start growing there again.

Another member family, Carra and Robert O'Daniel have moved to Florida. Their new phone number is

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Tennessee Gesneriad Society 2006 Schedule

(corrected and now with dates!)

| Program | Refreshments |
|---|--------------|
| January 8 ---Greenhouse tour at Vanderbilt -- | Carol Ann |
| February 12 ---Dog Show. | Julie |
| March 2-5 --Lawn & Garden Show "Jazz It Up" | Audrey L. |
| April 9 --Propagation workshop | Molly |
| May 21 -- Hardy gesneriads for the garden - Meet at Jonathan's | Jonathan |
| June 11 --Meet at Pam's in Lieper's Fork | Pam |
| July 16 (subject to change) --AGGS National Convention Report | Richard |
| August 13 --Tour Carol Ann's greenhouses | Carol Ann |
| September 15--17(subject to change) --The Annual TGS Show and Sale | Pam |
| October 8 --Tour Julie's greenhouse and light gardens | Julie |
| November 12 --Slide program from Gesneriad Society library | Audrey L. |
| December 10 --Holiday Party | |

Gardening

I had a very pleasant note passed along to me yesterday. It was a note in response to a photograph a friend had taken of one of my garden plants this past fall. A fairly close shot of *Hemiboea subcapitata* C.B. Clarke, a Chinese member of the African violet family, prompted the question of where the photo had been taken - surely in a botanic garden? Perhaps needless to say, the fellow was impressed when he found out that the shot was from my back yard, among other things, apparently, because the garden looked so neat and tidy. Well, that's really not too hard to do with a square foot shot - a wider angle image would not have conveyed the same sense of tidiness.

I do love plants - there is no question about it. I guess that my gardens do convey more of a sense of a botanic garden than many others might - certainly there is a wide range of diversity, of families, of morphological characters, of plants one might not typically expect to see in a Nashville garden. There are several palms and one banana relative that have grown outside now through four or five winters, planted in the ground. Around the base of these plants, a bit closer to the front walk, are more than half a dozen other representatives

of the African violet family. A couple of hybrids but more species, these hail originally from Brazil rather than China. Here the cold of our winter is substitute for the equally challenging tropical dry season. Both call for the *Sinningia* species and hybrids to go dormant back to underground tubers. So far the ones I've planted aren't bothered by the wetness of our winter season. The tubers simply wait until the sun starts warming the soil enough that new growth starts.

Along with the outdoors slowing down, the indoors eases back as well. I do have signs of new growth already starting on several of my indoor plants, but at this point I have only two plants in bloom. One is a *Columnea* species of the *Pentadenia* type, an unknown from Ecuador, it has two buds right now, one about to pop open into a longish tubular orange bloom. The other plant putting on an impressive floral display is my holiday gift from Julie, *Saintpaulia* 'Monet.' Either it really likes where I've put it, or Julie pulled a serious practical joke and gave me a silk plant - but that can't be, because there are even more flowers on it now. Quite honestly, I've never had much luck with a.v.'s, go figure. But now I have three, and they all seem to be growing well.

Jonathan

Co-editor continued from page 1

386-860-7929 and their address is 1441 Broken Pine Road, Deltona, Florida 32725. They plan to stay members and will get their newsletter by email. We will miss them.

have a number of things blooming at my house, including a number of African Violets which are going to town. I will have a number of young plants which I hope will be starting to bloom for sale at the Lawn and Garden Fair. I also have some seedlings I need to pot up. Don't forget to be propagating for this, our biggest sale and money maker of the year.

See you at the meeting!

Julie

Boea hemsleyana

by Robert Hall

Editor's note: The following article is from the Toronto Gesneriad Society, Volume 29 Number 9, November 2005, Editor Stan Sudol.

Boea hemsleyana holds a special place in my "plant heart". I had only been growing gesneriads for a year or so when I got some seeds of *Boea hemsleyana* from AGGS seed fund. I grew the seed and I eventually had a three inch pot containing three plants. In 1999 I went off to my first AGGS convention (Nashville) with two boxes of plants and I won Best in Show with the *Boea* as well as sweepstakes in horticulture.

Boea is a genus that is found in Malaysia, Indonesia and Queensland, Australia. There is not much information available on the genus *Boea* and even then, only two *Boea* species are commonly grown by gesneriad enthusiasts; both are from Australia. The first is *Boea hygroskopica*. This is a small rosette with slightly hairy leaves and light blue flowers. If it dries out even once, it's dead. Hence the name *hygroskopica*; it needs constant moisture. I have terrible luck growing the species and presently have a 1.5 cm (0.6 inch) plant tenuously hanging on to life.

The other species is *Boea hemsleyana*. I lost my prize plant for reasons I am not sure. Perhaps old age? In any case, recently I was able to get more seeds and I was again able to grow the plant. This time my growing conditions are quite different from 1999 and yet the plant is doing well. Let me tell you what I know about the plant's requirements. I intend to propagate some plants for sale at our annual show next year. Perhaps you may wish to grow the plant. *Boea hemsleyana* is not as demanding as *Boea hygroskopica*. In 1999 I



grew the plant on the warm sunny third floor of a house when I lived in the Beaches [Toronto]. Day temperatures were up to 30°C (86°F) and night temperatures were about 18° C (64° F). I always grew it wicked in a very light mixture (lots of vermiculite and perlite, less milled peat moss) and either under a skylight or four light tubes. It thrived. It did dry out a couple of times but, unlike *Boea hygroskopica*, it perked up after watering. The *Boea hygroskopica* would have been toast after such treatment whilst *Boea hemsleyana* took such maltreatment in its stride.

Presently, I live in an old drafty country house and *Boea hemsleyana* is growing just as well under two tubes in a cool basement with 45 to 50% humidity. Maximum and minimum temperatures are 23° and 15° C (59° and 17° F). It is grown wicked in a light soil mixture and it's thriving. I add the usual fertilizer (which means the fertilizer that is closest to hand) and, as my well water is very alkaline, I acidify the water with 4 to 5 cc (1 tspn) vinegar per liter (quart) of well water. Though it grows relatively well in my cool basement with the two tube light fixture, I would say that it grew better in the warmer temperatures of the house in the Beaches where the light was stronger.

I have always grown the plant from seed and I'm finding that it does not easily grow from stem or leaf cuttings. Even though the plant looks like a tall *Saintpaulia*, the leaves that I put down tend to rot or just languish with nary a sign of plantlets. A similar situation occurs with tip cuttings that I have put down. *Boea hemsleyana*, on the other hand, easily grows from leaf cuttings.

In summary, *Boea hemsleyana* is a small plant that is easily grown under cool to warm conditions with moderate to high light and with adequate moisture. It is never out of bloom, yielding small pretty blue *Petrocosmea*-like flowers. It's definitely is a plant worth growing.

Dues are due! We voted to raise dues after not having raised them for many years. There are now two types of membership:
 Type I \$10 Individuals, \$12 Family – receive printed newsletter
 Type II \$5 Individuals, \$6 Family – receive newsletter by email only
 This covers the cost of mailing the newsletter as we were losing money.

Officers of TNGS:

| | | |
|--|---|----------|
| President: Molly Schneider..... | 608 Hillwood Blvd Nashville, TN 37205..... | 356-9655 |
| Vice-president: Pam Braun | 5528 Pinewood Road, Franklin, TN 37064..... | 794-3553 |
| Recording Secretary: Julie Mavity-Hudson | 1015 Park Lane, Joelton, TN 37080..... | 746-3532 |
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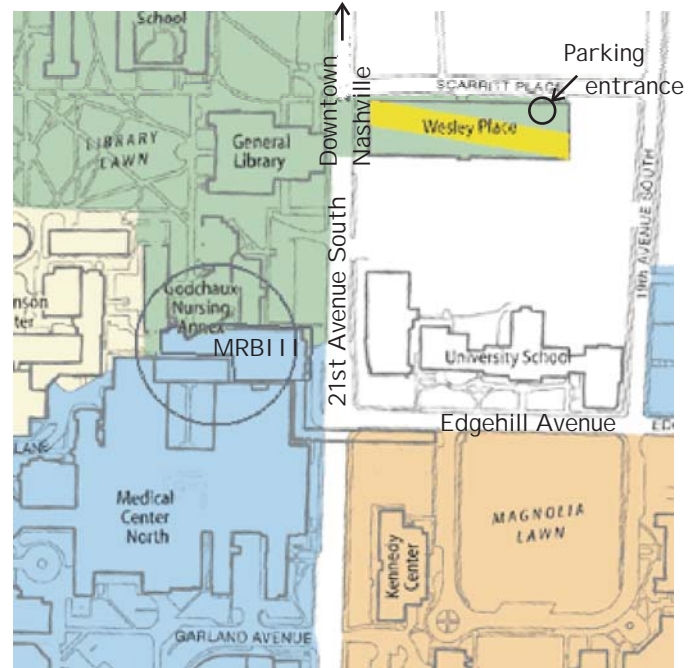
Sunday's meeting -the Logistics

Parking close to where you want to be at Vanderbilt University can be problematic to say the least. We think that we have made a difficult situation a little easier by making the following arrangements.

We will be allowed to park in the Wesley Place Garage after the reserved spaces stop and zone 2 parking begins. Turn off of 21st onto Wesley Place (Alpine Bagel on one side of the street, Ben and Jerry's on the other) and go down to the second entrance to the garage on the right side of the street. Pull on in and up the ramp to the right, and keep going around until you're just on your way to the fourth level. We'll be parking

and meeting there from 2 -2:20. At 2:20 promptly, we'll load everyone into the two or at most three largest vehicles and drive over to the loading dock where those vehicles will park for the duration of our meeting. This will provide us easy access to an elevator up to the seventh floor. Arriving after 2:20 means you're on your own trying to figure out how to get up to the greenhouses, i.e. don't be late. If you need a contact person that day you can call Julie's cell phone, (615) 364-8459. Given this driving arrangement, don't bring more than you can hold in your lap for a short trip.

Jonathan



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Nashville, TN 37211