



The Newsletter of the Delaware African Violet and Gesneriad Society

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November 2012

Krazy about Kohlerias

Claudia Bradley, Barbara Borleske and Mary Schaeffer treated members to a stimulating presentation on the genus *Kohleria* at the Society's October 9, 2012 meeting. In addition to Mary's beautifully illustrated PowerPoint® presentation, members each received a small plant of *Kohleria* 'An's Nagging Macaws' grown from tissue culture in a tube distributed at the Gesneriad Society's Convention in Seattle last July.



***Kohleria* 'An's Nagging Macaws'**

The first *Kohleria* was described in 1801 as *Gesneria tubiflora*. *Kohleria* did not become recognized as a separate genus until 1847 when Edouard August von Regel named it as a separate genus for Michael Kohler, a Swiss lecturer of natural history. Lars Peter Kvist and Larry Skog introduced a major revision of the genus in 1992.

These tropical herbs are native to Central and South America from Mexico to Peru and east to Surinam with the largest concentration in Columbia.

Superficially *Kohlerias* resemble *Smithianthas* which also are rhizomatous with similar upright growth, flower colors, spots and/or lines. However, while the flowers are born in a terminal raceme on which the flowers alternate in the genus *Smithiantha*, they are borne oppositely in the leaf axils in the genus *Kohleria*. Another notable difference is that *Kohlerias* can be kept in almost continuous growth with good culture; *Smithianthas* complete their growth cycle and then enter a period of marked dormancy.

Because of their colorful patterned flowers, as well as a general interest in the many tropical flowering plants, *Kohlerias* grew to very popular in England and Europe

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Little Shows Update

It was decided to hold Little Shows at the September, November, February and April meetings. Plants are entered from 7 – 7:15 p.m. and merit judging will be used by three judges. The forms provided by Karyn Cichocki of The Frelinghuysen Chapter are used and cash awards of \$50 for first place, \$30 for second place and \$20 for third place will be awarded to the growers accumulating the most points for winning entries during the year.

Our next meeting will have a Little Show and you are encouraged to bring plants. Members also are still invited to bring plants for Show and Tell at every meeting, and these will not be judged.

Here are the results from the Little Show in September:

Blue Ribbons:

- Julia Lynch –
Saintpaulia 'Wrangler's Cowboy Blues'
- Mary Schaeffer-
Aeschynanthus 'Tangerine'
- Quentin Schlieder-
Sinningia amambayensis
- Libby Behnke-
Sinningia 'Cherry Chips' Seedling
- Elizabeth Varley
Petrocosmea nervosa
Petrocosmea barbata
- Gary Hunter
Nematanthus 'Dibley's Gold'
X *Gloximannia* 'She's Dancing'
Sinningia 'Magic Moment'
Sinningia 'Thad's Party Dress'
Sinningia 'Lil Georgie'

Red Ribbon

- UDBG
Nematanthus 'Tropicana'



I think everyone will agree that the first Little Show was a great success. Thank you to Libby Behnke, Angie Celano and Terry Celano who judged the exhibits. Thank you also to the exhibitors who brought plants.

◀ Gary Hunter's entry of
Sinningia 'Lil Georgie'

...*Krazy about Kohlerias cont...*

in the 19th Century. Many species and hybrids were lavishly illustrated in horticultural magazines such as *Curtis's Botanical Magazine* as *Achimenes*, *Gesneria*, *Isoloma*, *Sciadocalyx*, and *Tydaea*. Many of these disappeared from cultivation early in the 20th Century, Kohleria "Longwood" a selection discovered growing in a Botanical Garden and reintroduced by Longwood Gardens is believed to be a relic of these old hybrids.

In the latter half of the 20th Century there was renewed interest in hybridizing Kohlerias which resulted in the introduction of cultivars like "Connecticut Belle" by Dr. Carl Clayberg as well as others by Frances Batcheller and Patrick Worley. Currently, Ian James of Canada who has developed the Peridots series, Ralph and Ma Robinson of New York who have developed the Bristol series, as well as John Boggan and Betty Cessna have been making crosses and introducing new hybrids. Internationally, HCY's, Ans, Designer series have been introduced by Dolly Yeh and Vivian Liu from Taiwan. Still other new introductions like 'Ingrid,' 'Borka' and 'Lilla Gubben' are coming from Swedish hybridizers.

Barb Borleske discussed growing Kohlerias noting they will do well in just about any bright light. They can be grown successfully under either T – 12 or T – 8 fluorescent lights and seem to want more light than African Violets. They also can be grown in natural light. She noted that some cultivars stay compact, even under T12's, but others get leggy unless given extra light. She emphasized that there is a great variation among the species and hybrids. Some, like 'Manchu,' will bloom under lights year round while 'Red Ryder' seems to bloom only in spring-summer.

Barb noted that Kohlerias like the same kind of soilless mix as African Violets. She recommended a peatlite mix like ProMix. She emphasized that they grow best in moist, not wet, growing mix which should not be allowed to dry out to the point the plant wilts.

Kohlerias root very quickly from stem cuttings with about three sets of leaves. She noted that nodes under the growing mix should be stripped of leaves. The growing mix should be barely moist, but never wet. Use a small pot for the cutting and enclose it in a plastic bag or put under humidity dome or clear sweater box. Return the covered cutting to the light stand. The cutting will be rooted within 2 weeks.

Another effective way to produce many young Kohleria plants identical to the parent is by removing the individual sales form the rhizome and sowing them like seed. The scales are actually modified leaves and will root. Make certain they are sown on the surface of

the growing mix so they get light. They should be kept moist, but again, not wet. Enclose them in a plastic bag humidity dome or sweater box to keep the humidity elevated and to avoid them drying out. In several weeks, small roots and leaves will form and they can be transplanted like seedlings when large enough to handle them without damaging them.

Kohlerias bloom on their crowns, and often a grower is confronted with the problem of dealing with a mature plant which is becoming leggy. There are two ways to handle this challenge. The first is to decapitate the plants and treat the crown as a large cutting. It should continue to bloom even during the rooting process if kept enclosed to provide sufficient humidity.

The second method is to allow the plant to dry out slightly and to roll the stem. Wind the bare portion of the stem around the root ball (as you would wind string) until you reach 1 inch below the top leaves. If the plant appears off-center, poke your thumb into the root ball and wiggle it around to adjust the roots so that the Kohleria is centered in the middle of the root ball. Place the stem-wrapped root ball on the soil in the new pot. Add or remove soil so that the Kohleria will be planted at the same depth as it has been growing. Finish filling the pot with soil, to within 1/2 inch of the rim. Water the plant slowly, until water drains from the bottom. Allow it to drain completely and then place the Kohleria in a well-lit area, out of direct sunlight. A good tutorial on rolling can be found at http://www.robsviolet.com/lessons/propagating_kohleria.htm



Kohleria 'Manchu' is one of the best Kohlerias for show.

Claudia brought a plant and discussed her experiences growing her Kohlerias outdoors in the summer. She noted that she had some damaged leaves, but overall her plants looked pretty good.

The presentation concluded with Mary continuing her PowerPoint® presentation with photographs of the many Kohlerias that she and the others were growing. She included interesting anecdotes about how they performed.

Kohlerias are very easy to grow and will reward you with beautiful velvety foliage and colorful flowers if given consistent care. Look for many of the varieties featured in the presentation on the Sales Table at monthly meetings, or if you're looking for a specific variety, let us know.

Ruth Seidel's Poppy Seed Chiffon Cake

Delia Schwartz provided the most delicious and tempting snacks at the September meeting, but one stood out from the others, her Poppy Seed Chiffon Cake. She is pretty sure the recipe is from an old *Woman's Day* Magazine featuring Ruth Seidel of South Dakota.

"It is not unusual for Ruth Seidel of Hutchinson County, South Dakota, to bake her tasty poppy seed cake and then drive a tractor in the field for several hours to help her husband with the farm work. Ruth frequently bakes this tall, handsome cake to serve a group of up to 16. Ruth likes to serve the cake, unfrosted, with ice cream and strawberries she picks from a large strawberry patch near her house. She uses fresh ones in season; frozen the rest of the year."

Bake at 325° for 1 hour and 10 minutes. Makes one 10-inch tube cake.

¾ cup boiling water	1 tsp salt
½ cup poppy seeds	½ cup vegetable oil
2 cups sifted all-purpose flour	7 egg yolks
1 ½ cups granulated sugar	2 teaspoons vanilla
3 tsp baking powder	1 cup egg whites (8)
½ tsp cream of tartar	

1. Pour boiling water over poppy seeds in a medium-size bowl; let stand 2 hours.
2. Sift flour, sugar, baking powder and salt into a large bowl. Make a well in the center and add, in order: oil, egg yolks, poppy seeds and remaining water in bowl, and vanilla; beat with a wooden spoon until smooth.
3. Beat egg whites and cream of tartar in a large bowl with electric mixer at high speed until egg whites stand in soft peaks.

4. Gradually pour egg yolk mixture over beaten egg whites, gently folding until no streaks of white remain. Pour into ungreased 10 x 4-inch angel cake tube pan.

5. Bake in a slow oven (325°) for 1 hour and 10 minutes or until top of cake springs back when lightly pressed with fingertip.

6. Invert pan, placing tube over funnel or quart-size bottle; let cake cool completely. When cool, loosen cake around outside edge and tube and down sides with a spatula. Remove from pan. Garnish with strawberries and/or grapes.

Plant Supplies Available

November will be the last opportunity this year to purchase plant supplies at our meetings since December will be our Holiday Party. Barb Borleske who Chairs the Supply Sales notes that she has have plenty of Plant Marvel, Physan, Marathon, and pots (we are low on 3" and 3 1/2" but she plans on ordering more soon). Plan ahead and contact Barb by email at bborleske@yahoo.com or by telephone at (302) 691-8487 if you would like to purchase supplies or have requests for items you would like to order. Also remember that you can greatly reduce your shipping cost on items from Cape Cod Violetry if you place your order through Barb.

Holiday Dinner and Auction

This year's Holiday Dinner and Auction will present some logistical challenges which need to be addressed at the November meeting. For the past several years Carol Callaghan and Linda McGregor have welcomed the members and guests to their lovely homes complete with kitchens!

This year since the Society will hold the event in the Brandywine Room at Rockland Place, and there will be no stove and very limited facilities. So except for a few out lets for crock pots, it will not be possible to heat or keep entrées and side dishes warm. Also, members must plan to bring everything they need for the dish they plan on bringing including severing utensils, since there are no utensils available at Rockland Place for our use.

The issues of set up and clean up also must be discussed, along with disposing of waste. It is imperative that the Brandywine Room be left in the condition it was in when members arrive, and it will require more than one or two members to accomplish that goal.

We will discuss the December meeting more in November meeting and will be circulating a sign up sheet.

Upcoming DAVS Meetings...

Tuesday, November 13, 2012 – 7:30 p.m.

Rockland Place, 1519 Rockland Rd, Wilmington, DE 19803

Hosts: Snacks - Nancy Murray
Beverages – Bobbie LaFashia

Program: “The Violet Gallery Comes to DAVS” - Brenda and Mahlon Petry from **The Violet Gallery** will present a program on African violets and bring an assortment of their violets for sale. They will present a PowerPoint® program about their business detailing who they are, how they grow, and the advantages of bringing new members to be a part of the AVSA. She will discuss about the show winners and Tally Time, so be ready for some great tips on growing those award winning plants! This will be one of the last opportunities to acquire choice named violets that can be shown at the Chapter’s March show, and they will accept credit cards.

Tuesday, December 11, 2012 – 6:30 p.m. Note earlier time! Holiday Dinner and Auction This year we will celebrate in the Brandywine Room at Rockland Place

Tuesday, January 8, 2013 – 7:30 p.m.

Rockland Place, 1519 Rockland Rd, Wilmington, DE 19803

Hosts: Snacks - Terry Celano
Beverages – Elizabeth Varley

Program: “Advice from DAVS Own Best-in-Show African Violet Growers” - Libby Behnke, Nancy Murray and Bobbie LaFashia, some of the Chapter’s very best growers will discuss how they get their plants in tip top shape. Members are encouraged to bring violet leaves for a leaf exchange.

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c/o Quentin Schlieder, Editor
36 South Main Street
Smyrna, DE 19977-1431

Upcoming Shows and Sales...

November 8th to 12th, 2012

The 2012 MAAVS Convention is being held at The Sheraton Richmond Park South Hotel, 9901 Midlothian Turnpike in Richmond, Virginia 23235. The theme is “South Sea Violets.” The Show is open Friday, November 9th, 1 - 5:00 pm and Saturday, November 10th, 9 - 4:00 p.m. Sales are open Thursday, November 8th, 3 - 5:00 pm, Friday, November 9th, 9 - 5:00 pm, and Saturday, November 10th, 9 - 4:00 pm. For more information: http://maavs.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=97&Itemid=126

Friday, March 22 & Saturday, March 23, 2012

The DAVS 2013 Annual Show and Sale with the theme “Golden Jubilee – DAVS Celebrates 50 Years” will be held at Boscov’s Christiana Town Center, Delaware Route 273 in Christiana, Delaware. The Plant Sale will be open on Friday from 1-5 p.m. and on Saturday from 10a.m. – 4 p.m. The Show will be open on Saturday from 10a.m. – 4 p.m. More details will be posted on the Chapter’s website In January.

April 13th-14th, 2013

The Long Island Gesneriad Society judged show and plant sale, “Going Green”, in conjunction with the Saintpaulia Society of Long Island, at Planting Fields Arboretum, Conference Center, Oyster Bay. Saturday, April 13, 1:00 to 4:00 pm; Sunday, April 14, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. For more information, contact Ben Pasternoster at ben9@optonline.net. Gesneriad Society judges interested in receiving an invitation to judge the show should contact Paul Susi at ps117@earthlink.net.

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