



The Newsletter of the Delaware African Violet and Gesneriad Society

Volume XVI, No. 8

April 2014

Final Days to Show and Sale

The Delaware African Violet and Gesneriad Society's Annual Show and Sale, "*Casting a Violet Spell*" will be held on the second floor at the Christiana Town Center Boscov's (near the Candy Department). Here are some important dates and times to remember:

Tuesday, April 8th - submit pre-entry forms to Barb Borleske if you can. List all potential entries on the sheets which are enclosed with this newsletter. Barb points out that it is easier to modify or delete items than it is to enter new ones. If you are entering designs, please let Bobbie LaFashia know at the meeting.

Important Dates & Times to Remember

Friday, April 11th – Set Up

10:00 a.m. - Arrive for set up of show and plant sale. Plants may be purchased only after pricing has been completed!

10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. – Entries -Please have your plants groomed and named before you get to Boscov's

Saturday, April 12th – Arrangements, Late Entries, Show is Judged and Opens to Public

7:00 a.m. – Members can enter Boscov's - you must enter through the back loading entrance and sign in. Old timers know this drill pretty well!

7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. – Late Entries only *by prior arrangement and approval by Barb Borleske*

10:00 a.m. – Judges arrive, get instructions and enjoy refreshments

10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. – Judging commences

Noon – Lunch for judges at Bertucci's

2:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. – Judging (continues if necessary/special awards)

10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. – Show & Plant Sale open to public. The Show and Sale close at 4:00 p.m. and there are **NO** Sunday hours!

5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. - Cleanup.

Hopefully members have been propagating plants for the sale. we will discuss the commission paid to members who provide plants for the sale. Remember to package cuttings, tubers and rhizomes too! It is particularly desirable to have plants featured in the show also in the sale.

Special Sale on tap for April Meeting



There will be a very special sale featured at the April 2014 meeting. Stephanie Griffith is bringing a nice selection of miniature Optimara Violets in full bloom and bud. These will be available at only \$5.00 each. these can be used in completing desing entries for the show on Saturday.

Andrew Norris and Jim Roberts havealso provided an incredible selection of Gesneriads for the sale. Many of these are larger plants and are very choice slections. They will be priced by size and conditon, but will be offered for under \$10.00 each. Many of these have never been avaiabel in our Chapter before! So bring cash and give yourself an early Easter present!

Some Tips on Packing your Plants for the Show

Nancy Kast, who will be a featured speaker at the MAAVS Convention in Delaware this November, responded to an inquiry I received from an attendee at the 2012 Regional Meeting at the University of Delaware about how she packed and transported her show. If you recall, Nancy had packed and transported an incredible number of award winning entries ranging from African Violets to a collection of *Gasteranthus*. With our show coming up shortly, I thought I should share her response to give some ideas to our members on how to pack and transport their entries to minimize damage.

Nancy wrote "When we were carrying approx. 26 or more violet to a show, and they were large violets, we found large boxes to transport them in. (Mostly from dumpsters of department stores.) You can cut handle holes near the top of the boxes to help carry them. In the box, we have another box about 3-4 inch tall, the approx. size of 16X16, with a hole cut in the center

just slight of the size of the pot your plant is in. Turn box upside down and put the plant securely in hole. We leave the ring on the violets to hold the leaves to help prevent damage. The pot basically sits in the inner box. This helps to hold the plant in place to prevent the leaves touching the outside of the box. You could use any size in the bottom. If the inner box is much smaller than the box you are using to carry your plant, then stuff newspaper around the outside of the inner box to hold it in place. In order to hold the blossoms from jiggling around too much, we loosely wrap toliet paper around the outside of all the blossoms together to hold them upright, to help keep the stems strong and from rubbing on the leaves."

"After we stopped growing and showing so many violets, we started getting empty paint boxes from Home Depot, turned upside down. Cut a hole in the bottom to set plant in, just a slight smaller than the pot, so as to hold it more secure. Leave ring on the violet. Basics are the same except the violet isn't put inside another box. Use 2x4 pieces or anything that you can to sit between the plant boxes to keep the leaves from touching the plant next to it. The plants are more exposed this way, but for a short route to the show, this is all you need. When I sell a plants, the inside box goes with them to give people something to set the plant in on their way home."

"When we were traveling with so many plants, we had to box them to stack them in the van. We have traveled long distances with plants and this seemed to work."

"If you have several small plants, you can do the same by cutting more holes in the inner box. Banana boxes from stores work well for the outside box for this. Another way to carry semi plants, is to put lots of shredded paper in a box and set the plants in. If you have enough shredded paper, the plants won't move much, and will rest their leaves on the shredded paper. This works well, but you will need a brush to remove some of the paper dust from your plants, but it does keep the plants in good condition."

"Of course we use many glass containers now to carry and show our Gesneriads in that need 100% humidity. Other Gesneriads that don't need the humidity, we do the same as with the violets."

I have found that using heay duty tapr to secure a pot the same size as the pot in which your entry is growing also works well, and without the use of packing material like Styrofoam peanuts which are a nuisance. If you have favorite ways to pack you entries to transport to the show, share them at our April meeting.

Proposed 2014-15 Officers

The following Slate of Officers for 2014-15 is proposed by the Nominating Committee for election at the April meeting:

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|------------------|-----------------|
| ▪ President | Mary Schaeffer |
| ▪ Vice President | Julia Lynch |
| ▪ Secretary | Terry Celano |
| ▪ Treasurer | Bobbie LaFashia |

Nominations also can be offered from the floor. The installation of officers will be held at the June meeting. The nominating Committee was chaired by Gary Hunter, with Quentin Schlieder, Ray Ruger and Libby Behnke serving on the Committee.

Happy Birthday Conrad Gessner

Adapted from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

In 2016,the Gesneriad Society Annual Convention will be held in Delaware on the 500th anniversary of the birth of Conrad Gessner, for whom the family Gesneriaceae is named. It seems appropriate to review the life of this remarkable man. Conrad Gessner, who also was known as Konrad Gesner, Conrad Geffner, Conrad von Gesner, Conradus Gesnerus, Conrad Gesnerwas, was a noted Swiss naturalist and bibliographer.



Gessner was born on March 26, 1516 in Zürich, Switzer-land, he was the son of Ursus Gessner, a Zürich furrier. Gessner's father realized he was very bright and sent him to live with a great uncle, who grew and collected medicinal herbs for a living.

Here Gessner became familiar with many plants and their medicinal purposes which led to a lifelong interest in the field of natural history. Gessner first attended the Carolinum, then he entered the Fraümunster seminary. There he studied Latin classics. In school, he impressed his teachers so much that a few of them helped sponsor him so he could further his education at universities such as Strassburg and Bourges (1532–1533). One even acted as a foster father to him after the death of his father at the Battle of Kappel (1531).

After the passing of his father he left Zürich and traveled to Strasbourg. Here he broadened his knowledge of ancient languages by studying Hebrew at the Strasbourg Academy. In 1535, religious unrest drove him back to Zürich, where he made an imprudent marriage. His friends again came to his aid and enabled him to study at Basel (1536). Throughout his life Gessner was interested in biology and collected specimens and descriptions of wildlife through travel and extensive correlation with other friends and scholars. His approach to research consisted of four main components: observation, dissection, travel to distant lands, and accurate description. This rising observational approach was new to Renaissance scholars because people usually relied completely upon Classical writers for their research.

His great zoological work, *Historiae animalium* 4,500-page encyclopedia of animals that appeared in four vols. (quadrupeds, amphibians birds, fishes) folio, 1551–1558, at Zürich, a fifth (snakes) being issued in 1587 (there is a German translation, entitled Thierbuch, of the first 4 vols., Zürich, 1563). This book was considered to be the first modern zoological work. It built a bridge between ancient, medieval and modern science. He combines data from old sources, such as the Old Testament, Aristotle, Pliny, folklore and medieval bestiaries and he also adds his own observations. He created a new, comprehensive description of the Animal Kingdom. This was the first attempt by anyone to describe many animals accurately. The book unlike many works of its time was illustrated with hand-colored woodcuts drawn from personal observations by Gessner and his colleagues.

There was extreme religious tension at the time *Historiae animalium* came out. Under Pope Paul IV it was felt that the religious convictions of an author contaminated all his writings, Since Gessner was Protestant it was added to the Roman Catholic Church's list of prohibited books. Even though religious tensions were high Gesner maintained friendships on both sides of the Catholic-Protestant divide. In fact, Catholic booksellers in Venice protested the Inquisition's blanket ban on Gesner's books, and some of his work was eventually allowed after it had been "cleansed" of its doctrinal errors.

To his contemporaries he was best known as a botanist. Gessner wrote a similarly comprehensive survey to *Historiae animalium* about plant life, but his notes and about 1,500 wood engravings of plants and their important flowers and seeds were used by other authors for two centuries after his death. Although his botanical manuscripts were not published (in

Nuremberg, 1751–1771, 2 vols. folio) until long after his death.

Gessner was known for his love of mountains for botanizing and exercise and to enjoy the restorative value of these surroundings.

Despite his extensive travels and the job of maintaining his own gardens, Gessner probably spent most of his time inside his own library. He listed among his History of Animals sources more than 80 Greek authors and at least 175 Latin authors, as well as works by German, French, and Italian authors. He even attempted to establish a "universal library" of all books in existence.

He died of the plague, the year after his ennoblement on December 13, 1565. At the time of his death, Gesner had published 72 books, and written 18 more unpublished manuscripts.

2014 Delaware Home Show



The Delaware African Violet Society's exhibit at the 2014 Delaware Home Show

The Delaware African Violet and Gesneriad Society's exhibit at the 2014 Delaware Home Show in the Chase Center at the Wilmington River Front attract great interest from the thousands of people who visited the Show. We even met some former members who we encouraged to return and distributed almost 1,000 promotional cards for the Chapter's April 12th Show and for the November Mid Atlantic African Violet Society Convention at the Crowne Plaza Wilmington North on Naamans Road.

We sold miniature Optimara African Violets which Gary hunter ordered at cost from Holtcamp Greenhouses and which Elizabeth Varley picked up at Longwood. Thank you to members who staffed our two tables including Elizabeth Varley, Mary and Hal Schaeffer, Quentin Schlieder, Mark and Stephanie Griffith, Linda McGregor, Barb Borleske, Claudia Bradley, and Dilley Schwartz. Overall the effort was very successful!

Upcoming DAVS Meetings...

Tuesday, April 8, 2014 7:30 p.m.

**Rockland Place, 1519 Rockland Rd, Wilmington,
DE 19803**

Hosts: Snacks - Geri Garvin

Beverages – Quentin Schlieder

Raffle Prizes – Stephanie Griffith/Maria
Walueff

Program: “Getting Ready for Show” - This will be the last meeting prior to the Society’s Annual Show and Sale at Boscov’s on April 11th-12th. Committee Chairman will be asked to report the status of their Committee. Little Show and Plant/Supply Sale will be held.

Saturday, April 12th, 2014 – 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

The Delaware African Violet Society’s Annual Show and Sale - See details on page 1 regarding schedule of what will be happening. We need all members to enter plants and/or designs and to bring plants, cuttings, rhizomes or tubers for the sale which is the Society's principle fundraiser each year.

Tuesday, May 13, 2014 – 7:30 p.m.

**Rockland Place, 1519 Rockland Rd, Wilmington,
DE 19803**

Hosts: Snacks - Terri Celano

Beverages – Elizabeth Varley

Raffle Prizes – Ray Ruger/Quentin Schlieder

Program: “The Primulina Workshop” Betsy Gotshall of the Liberty Bell Chapter will present her popular *Primulina* workshop where not only will attendees learn how to grow this popular plant, they’ll have the opportunity to go home with several leaves planted and ready to go. Members are encouraged to bring their own *Primulina* leaves to exchange. Show and Tell and Plant/Supply Sale will be held.

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c/o Quentin Schlieder, Editor

36 South Main Street

Smyrna, DE 19977-1431

Spring Excursion Plans

There was a great deal of interest in our proposed trip at the last meeting, so we are proceeding with plans. Plan to join us for a trip to Meadowbrook Farm and Ott's Exotic Greenhouses on Wednesday April 30th. Lunch on your own tentatively is at The Gravel Pike Inn near Otts since it gets fairly good reviews, is near Otts and offers a reasonably priced menu.

PHS Meadowbrook Farm is a gift shop and garden center affiliated with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS). There are indoor and outdoor sales areas and a wide variety of house and garden plants, along with pottery, baskets, scented candles and soaps.

Ott's Exotic Plants features a lovely glass conservatory built 1963. Still owned and operated by the Ott family since 1930, the greenhouse features high quality, exotic and custom grown plants for all seasons.

We plan to depart from the ACME Parking Area at the Fairfax Shopping Center at 8:45 a.m. and depending on traffic, weather, etc. should return to the Fairfax Shopping Center by 4:00 p.m. We need a few drivers and will be circulating a sign up sheet at our April 8th meeting. If you plan to join us be sure you sign up.

2014 Show Awards Reminder

If you are one of the sponsors and haven't already paid, please give either cash or a check payable to DAVS to Treasurer Bobbie LaFashia at the April meeting. A list of awards including the amounts appeared in the flower show schedule printed in the newsletter last month. If you have any questions, see Quentin Schlieder who has the sign up sheet.

First Class Mail

Time Value/ Please Expedite!