

The Newsletter of the Delaware African Violet and Gesneriad Society

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June 2013

Special Ad Hoc Finance Committee Offers Recommendations

President Gary Hunter appointed a Special Ad Hoc Finance Committee to offer recommendations on possible projects that the Chapter might support using funds not needed for the Chapter's annual expenses. The Committee was chaired by Quentin Schlieder and originally included President Gary Hunter, Vice President Mary Schaeffer, Treasurer Bobbie LaFashia, Carol Callaghan, and Elizabeth Varley. Carol Callaghan recused herself due to other commitments.

The Chapter had accumulated about \$5,000.00, and the Committee's first objective was to recommend a reserve fund to ensure adequate funding in the event of unforeseen circumstances. The Committee conducted its deliberations effectively via e-mail and offered a preliminary report at the May meeting, with the intent of reporting its final recommendations for discussion and consideration at the June picnic. Cognizant of the recent experiences of the African Violet Society of Springfield encountering significant increases in its meeting space and annual show space rentals, the Committee suggested a separate reserve account of not less than \$3,500.00 nor more than \$4,500.00. While DAVS has been fortunate in currently having complimentary space for both its monthly meetings at Rockland Place and for its Annual show and sale at Boscov's, the Committee cautioned that such fortunate circumstances should not be taken for granted and could change on short notice. Additionally, while the Chapter has attempted to diversify its funding sources from monthly sales and the monthly door prizes, it is dependent on a significant portion of its funding from the Annual Show and Sale. One bad year could result in a significant decrease in revenue. The Committee is also aware that the proposal to host the MAAVS meeting in 2014 could also require some upfront funding and contingency funding should be set aside for this event.

Therefore, after considerable discussion, the Committee is recommending that a grant up to \$250.00 be offered to Rockland Place for a permanent screen for the Brandywine Room, a \$250.00 grant be awarded to the Gesneriad Conservation Center of China and a \$100.00 fund be established to help offset costs for officers to participate in national meetings.

The Gesneriad Conservation Center of China Saves at Risk Gesneriads

Professor Wei Yi-Gang and Stephen Maciejewski, a DAVS member, co-founded this Center at the Guangxi Institute of Botany (IBK) in Guilin, China. Stephen just returned from his second visit to China and reported that the staff at the Institute is already doing incredible work. They even have a three year plan to complete their ambitious projects.



The Gesneriad Conservation Center of China Display House

Their goals include continuing to search for new species in the field, collecting live plants to grow them on, maintain a propagation house, start new plants from collected wild seed, harvest seed from plants in the propagation house, house a special collection of extremely rare gesneriads in a beautiful glass display house and create an outdoor gesneriad garden open to the public. They even have plans to reintroduce plants back into their native environment.

Stephen will be presenting a slideshow report/lecture on all of the many activities the staff at the GC3, this July at the The Gesneriad Society Convention in Toronto during the Conservation meeting.

Stephen has requested that the Delaware African Violet and Gesneriad Society consider supporting this important work by including a donation to support The Gesneriad Conservation Center of China among the projects which will benefit from the Chapter's surplus funds.

Propagation Techniques for Getting More from Your Collection – Part 2

by Andrew Norris

Reprinted with permission of the author and the Editor from the February 2013 issue of Petal Tones, the newsletter of the National Capital Chapter of the Gesneriad Society.

Rooting Crowns:

Crowns are only removed from trailers and chimeras, as a rule. On occasion, a plant may need to be restarted from a crown, after cultural problem or disease destroys the roots. A crown is removed by cutting through the main stem of a single crowned violet or the "branch" of a trailing one. Remove all but the first three leaves in the crown and set the bare stem into the mix to just below the crown and treat as you would a sucker or leaf cutting. If the crown came from a diseased plant, be sure to remove any mushy or brown material and cut away the diseased portions, until you reach the healthy, cream colored tissue, seen in the middle of the stem. In these cases, the application of a fungicide may be desired, either sprayed on the material or as a powder you can dip the stem into, before rooting. Expect a blooming plant is as little as 2 months, even immediately in the case of trailers and a show plant within 3-6 months.

Blossom Stem Cuttings:



Bloom stem cuttings are one of only two ways to get chimera and some fantasy violets to come true to their color pattern. Bloom stems are somewhat less successful and harder to root than other material, but bloom stalks that have the largest, tiny leaves, below the blooms are your best bet. If you know you are going to try bloom

stem propagation, remove the blossoms from the bloom stem, before they open and allow the tiny leaves, if present, to grow larger. After a week or two, remove the bloom stems and cut the bottom of them stem at an angle, leaving about an inch in total length. It is at the joint, right below the tiny leaves that you will hope to get roots. There is a rooting gel product, called 'Keiki Grow' that is used by orchid growers and has been said to be successful with bloom stem propagation. As far as I am aware, you use a sewing needle to lightly scratch the gel into the stem, right at this joint, to promote rooting and plantlet formation. This method also works, while leaving the stem on the plant, but removing the flower buds is still advisable. If you are using soil mix, pot them up and treat them as you did the leaf cuttings. Expect a longer time for the bloom stem to produce babies. An alternate method of rooting blossom stems is to float them in water, by sticking them through a piece

of Styrofoam or by rooting in floral oasis. Once roots are seen in the floating cuttings, they should be potted into traditional mix and treated like rooting leaf cuttings.

Bucket Plants:

Bucket plants are uncommon, but are essentially suckers that form on the blossom stems. They can be left on the plant, until blooming has ceased and then potted up and treated like a traditional sucker.

Growing from seed:

While we don't get true varieties from seed, seed is still a fun and exciting way to grow new plants and get new varieties. Many people order



viable seed from the internet and plant seeds for the fun of experiencing the unknown. Hybridizers, both hobbyist and professional alike, essentially are sowing for the unknown, but in this case, they have an idea of what they hope to see, based on the chosen parents. I won't list the sets of dominant and recessive genes here, but a Google search will yield this information, for those interested. Pollinating a violet is a simple matter. Once the perspective parents are chosen, you want to repot the mother plant. Once in bloom, you want to pollinate the mother plant within 3 to 7 days of the plant's flowers opening. Pollen is best harvested when the anthers have dried, about a week after opening and can be stored for months in a refrigerator. Using a jewelry tag, label the bloom stem with the date and the cross to prevent it from being accidentally removed. Choosing a flower from the father or donor plant that has been open for about a week, use a needle to slit the anther open and tap some of the powdery pollen onto a clean sheet of paper. Using a soft brush transfer the pollen to the sticky end of the pistil on the mother plant bloom. The base of the flower or ovary will begin to swell within days of successful pollination and the resulting seed pot will be left in place for approximately 4-9 months, until it has dried. Once



dried, the seed pod is removed and either stored in the refrigerator and labeled or sowed immediately. Sow the seed by creasing a sheet of white paper and gently opening the pod onto it. Tap the tiny seed into the crease and use the paper to lightly disperse the seed over a moist bed of seed starter or violet mix, without fertilizer. Do not cover the seed with soil mix. Cover the seed, like you do cuttings and place in a warm, bright location, such as the top shelf of the light stand or a bright spot in the warmer rooms in your house. Sprouts will appear as tiny green specks in as little as a week and in as long as month. As the seedlings grow, repot clumps of seedlings into small pots, and continue separating them further as they grow, beginning to fertilize once they have been potted individually. You can expect seed grown plants to give you an adult plant within about a year.

Other Gesneriads:

Many gesneriads can be propagated in the same way as violets mentioned above. As many ways as violets make available to propagate them, gesneriads offer a few more.

Stolons:

Stolons are small plants formed along runners, like a strawberry plant. Examples of plants that are easily reproduced by rooting stolons are *Alsobia* and *Episcia*.



The stolons can be removed and treated like African Violet suckers or be pegged down, still attached to the mother plant in the same pot or a smaller pot and tucked into potting mix. The stolon should be ready to grow on its own within 2 weeks, when it can be treated like the adult plant.

Scaly Rhizomes:

Plants such as *Kohleria* and *Smithiantha*, and *Achimenes*, make worm-like structures, called rhizomes. These rhizomes are actually densely packed, modified leaves, which help the plant survive adverse conditions. The scaly rhizomes are very much like the familiar bulbs of daffodils, tulips, and onions, in form and function. The most productive way to get plants from these

structures is my scaling. By taking the rhizome and rubbing between the fingers, over damp potting mix, you will distribute numerous scales, each capable of growing a new plant! Treat the planted scales like violet seed, expecting to see plants in about 2 weeks. This is a very fast way of getting numerous plants. Alternately, the rhizomes can be potted up, an inch below the potting mix and kept in a warm location, barely moist, until growth is seen, then placed in its permanent location and treated like an adult plant.

Air layering:

Air layering is used on woody stems and involves binding a wad of moist sphagnum moss around a joint in the stem. The stem is lightly scoured and the moss secured with a rubber band and plastic wrap, until roots are visible under the plastic. The plant can then be removed from the parent and potted up. It is best to cover the newly potted plant for extra humidity for a few weeks, and then wean it as described for leaf cuttings, to room air. *Besleria* and *Drymonia* are examples of plants that can be reproduced in this way.

Stem cuttings:

Stem Cuttings:

Stem cuttings are essentially crown cuttings and are often used in trailing plants, such as *Columnnea* and tuberous plants, like *Sinningias*. The stem is removed and the leaves stripped off, to the point of a node or joint in the stem. The node is buried in potting mix and the cutting treated like a leaf cutting, until rooting and growth is evident. The cutting can then be treated like an adult plant and will function as such in short order.

2012-13 Little Show Results

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

First Place - Gary Hunter (\$50 cash award)
Second Place- Barbara Borleske (\$30 cash award)
Third Place- Elizabeth Varley (\$20 cash award)

Libby Behnke	2 Blue	
Barbara Borleske	10 Blue	
Brian Connor	2 Blue	
Gary Hunter	17 Blue	1 Red
Bobbie LaFashia	1 Blue	
Julia Lynch	1 Blue	
Mary Schaeffer	1 Blue	1 Red
Quentin Schlieder	1 Blue	
UDBG		1 Red
Elizabeth Varley	4 Blue	






Final Meeting of the Season...

Tuesday, June 11, 2013 – 6:00 p.m.

(Note earlier time!)

***Potluck Dinner and Picnic at the Borleskes' garden,
116 Bellant Circle, Greenville, DE 19807***

Everyone is invited to bring their significant other or a guest and your favorite dish. If you didn't sign up at the May meeting and still want to attend, call Barb Borleske at (302) 691-8487 and let her know what you will be bringing. Installation of Officers and a brief business meeting follow dinner. Also don't forget to pay your dues for next year! The directions below are from Rockland Place where we hold our monthly meetings...

-  1. From Childrens Drive go to light and turn left onto SR-141 / Powder Mill Rd
-  2. Take SR-141 South / Powder Mill Rd 0.2 mi
-  3. Keep straight onto SR-141 South / Powder Mill Rd 2.9 mi
-  4. Turn right, and then immediately turn right onto Centre Rd 0.2 mi
-  5. Road name changes to Barley Mill Rd 0.5 mi




The \$10 annual dues are now payable to Bobbie LaFashia, the Chapter's Treasurer. Make checks payable to DAVS and give them to her at either the June meeting or mail them to her. A preaddressed envelope was enclosed for your convenience in the May Newsletter, except for new and honorary members.

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

First Class Mail

Time Value/ Please Expedite!

-  6. Turn right onto Fairthorne Ave 0.2 mi
-  7. Turn right onto Oriente Ave 0.3 mi
-  8. Turn right onto Bellant Circle 0.1 mi
- 12. Arrive at 116 Bellant Cir, Greenville, DE 19807-2267. The last intersection is Fairthorne Ave



Map to the Borleskes' from Barley Mill Road

Please review your entry in our yearbook. If you would like to make any changes (new telephone number, e-mail, cell number, etc.) please advise Quentin Schlieder no later than July 15, 2013. You can contact him at (302) 653-6449 or qcsjr@comcast.net.