



# *The Newsletter of the Delaware African Violet and Gesneriad Society*

Volume XII, No. 4

December 2009

## ***December 8<sup>th</sup> Potluck Dinner and Auction at Carol Callaghan's Home***

This year we'll be gathering again at the home of Carol Callaghan who has graciously offered her home located at 2806 Rickdale Road in the Talleybrook development in Wilmington, Delaware. The festivities begin at **6:30 p.m.** (note earlier time.) Members may each bring a guest. Directions and a map are included on page 4 of this issue of the newsletter.

There was a sign up sheet at the November meeting, however if you didn't sign up and would like to attend, please contact Terry Celano so that she can coordinate the arrangements at (302) 658-5770 or by email at [Theresa.Celano@redclay.k12.de.us](mailto:Theresa.Celano@redclay.k12.de.us). Also, don't forget to bring plants, handicrafts, surprise boxes or something special from your kitchen for the auction to benefit the Richardson Park Learning Center, which is directed by Terry who is ably assisted by mother in law, Angie and Anne Petrucci.

## ***Nominating Committee to be Appointed in January***

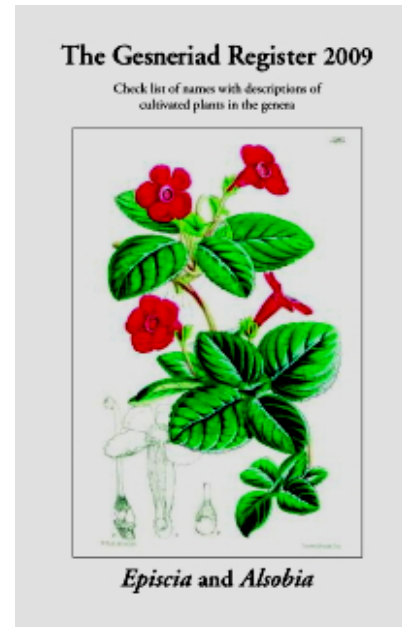
According to the Society's Bylaws, the President appoints a Nominating Committee at the January meeting to prepare a slate of officers for the next club year, which runs September 2010 through June 2011. If you are interested in serving on the Committee, please contact Quentin Schlieder at the December meeting or by telephone at (302) 653-6449.

## ***Don't Forget Your Lyndon Lyon Selections***

In order to increase the selection of gesneriads in the Chapter, each member is invited to submit one selection (African Violet or gesneriad) and an alternate (not costing more than \$10) from Lyndon Lyons catalog which can be viewed at <http://lyndonlyon.com/>. These are complimentary plants at no cost to you. Selections must be submitted no later than the January 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. We hope you will grow, propagate and share your plant!

## ***New Episcia-Alsobia Register Now Available***

Peter Shalit, Publications Chair for The Gesneriad Society, Inc. advises that the *Episcia-Alsobia Register 2009* is finally done. It took a few months longer than he had anticipated, but when he believes that when you see it I think you'll agree the wait was worth it. There are 64 pages plus four reproductions of antique botanical illustrations. The Register includes descriptions of every known *Episcia* and *Alsobia* species and hybrid. Judy Becker, Registrar, compiled this register. whi8ch was edited by Jeanne Katzenstein.



Copies that were ordered in advance have been shipped and Shalit advises you ordered a copy and it does not arrive by mid-December, you should let him know. If you haven't ordered one, the Register is available via the Gesneriad Society Web store at <http://www.gesneriadsociety.org/Shop/misc.htm#GR> - US\$8 for a printed copy (including free shipping anywhere in the world) or \$4 for an electronic copy (PDF). Every gesneriad grower will want a copy of this new publication.

**Check out our new Website at**  
<http://gesneriadsociety.org/chapters/DAVS/>  
**We are still tweaking it a bit. Your comments and suggestions are welcome!**

## ***The Gesneriad Research Center***

*One of the presentations at the Gesneriad Society Convention in Silver Spring, Maryland last July featured John R. Clark who gave a presentation on the new Gesneriad Research Center (GRC) and the Society's efforts toward gesneriad conservation. This article, based on the brochure distributed at the presentation gives an overview of this important initiative.*

Gesneriads are mainly tropical plants that range in size from smaller than a golf ball to shrubs and even trees taller than a single-story house. There are over 3000 species of gesneriads found throughout the world's tropical forests. Commonly known gesneriads include African violets (*Saintpaulia*), lipstick plants (*Aeschynanthus*), Cape primroses (*Streptocarpus*), Flame violets (*Episcia*), flying fish {*Columnea*}, and florist gloxinias (*Sinningia*). Gesneriads are often quite striking with a wide range of foliage, flower, and fruit types. Formally recognized as the plant family Gesneriaceae in 1816, gesneriads have captured the attention of botanists, explorers, and plant enthusiasts for centuries. The Gesneriad Research Center was founded in 2007 to conduct research and conservation efforts focused on understanding and preserving this important family of flowering plants.

### **HISTORY**

Research at the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens (est. 1973) historically focused on orchids, bromeliads and gesneriads as part of the institution's emphasis on epiphytic plants, as is evident from the Gardens' official seal. Dr. Hans Wiehler (1931-2003) was the driving force behind Selby's early gesneriad program, helping to build the living and preserved collections during his tenure at the Gardens.



*Dr. Hans Wiehler (right) accompanies Al Buell through the Gesneriad Research Foundation Greenhouse during the 2000 Convention.*

Following Wiehler's departure in the early 1980's, focus shifted away from gesneriads and the institution eventually became better known for its orchid and bromeliad displays and research. Interest in gesneriads was rekindled after Wiehler donated his extensive collection of literature, notes, and preserved plant collections to Selby Gardens Research in 2002. He died a year later.



*Display area at Marie Selby Botanical Garden in Sarasota, FL*

The Gesneriad Resource Center was established as a vehicle to curate and manage gesneriad resources at the Gardens. It soon became clear that to maintain the momentum fostered by the newly acquired collections, a staffed research center would be key in creating a vibrant and active hub to lead research, conservation, display and education of gesneriads worldwide. In collaboration with supporters of The Gesneriad Society, the international society for gesneriad enthusiasts,

Selby Research staff and affiliates began to formulate a plan for the future. The major objective of this plan would be to establish a self-sustained, fully integrated gesneriad research and conservation program within the Center for Tropical Plant Science & Conservation at Selby Gardens - the culmination of this effort is the Gesneriad Research Center.

### **RESEARCH**

Gesneriads comprise a notable portion of diversity in tropical forests. These plants are significant ecologically for their pollinators and seed dispersal interactions, as well as for their adaptations to specialized habits such as epiphytism (plants living upon other plants such as many orchids and bromeliads). Gesneriads have been around for tens of millions of years and are excellent models for studying the dispersal and evolution of plants on Earth.

**Collections** The gesneriad collections at Selby Gardens are a valuable resource used by the GRC. Several thousand herbarium specimens (pressed and dried plants), spirit collections (flowers preserved in alcohol), and living collections make up an indispensable resource to conduct research on gesneriads. These collections are also made available to researchers outside of Selby through institutional loans and electronically available images and databases. The GRC also maintains extensive literature files on gesneriad species including original descriptions, taxonomic revisions, and other pertinent literature.

**Expeditions.** Researchers at the GRC are actively involved in inventorying plant diversity in the world's tropical forests, many of which remain understudied. By conducting research expeditions, GRC botanists contribute to a better understanding of our natural world through discovery and description of new species and by providing base-line distribution data vital to other scientific and conservation efforts.

**Systematics Research.** A major part of the research conducted by the GRC involves systematics, the study of plant diversity and how and why species have evolved over time. To do this, we use classical taxonomy, the study of physical characters to distinguish and classify organisms, as well as molecular systematics, the use of gene sequence data to understand evolutionary relationships. These tools allow us to identify and classify the species and genera of gesneriads and help us understand evolutionary relationships, not only within the gesneriad family but within the entire plant kingdom.

## CONSERVATION AND EDUCATION

Selby Gardens dedicates significant efforts and resources to the areas of conservation and education. Research at the GRC contributes to this effort through on-going botanical inventory and basic research that provide the baseline information required by conservation programs and governments to make wise choices as to the fate of their biodiversity. GRC research also supplies preserved and living material for research and display. In addition, the GRC researchers are working with members of The Gesneriad Society to establish a conservation program that fosters conservation knowledge and empowers plant enthusiasts to help conserve gesneriads through propagation and accurate record keeping for specimens being grown.

## *Design Classes Selected for 2010 Flower Show and Sale*

Flower Show Chairman Bobbi LaFashia proposed the design classes during the Society's meeting on November 10<sup>th</sup> to enthusiastic members. The theme for this year's Show is "*Legacy of the Brandywine Valley.*" Setup for Show, Entries and Plant Sales will be on Friday, March 26, 2010 from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. and on Saturday, March 27, 2010 (with permission) from 7:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. followed by Judging at 10:00 a.m. The Show and Sale will be open to Public on Saturday from 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from noon - 4:00 p.m. The show is being held in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Auditorium in the Boscov's at Christiana Town Center.

**Class 26. "Delaware Center For The Contemporary Arts"** - Visit seven galleries and twenty-six artist studios at the Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts. Do a contemporary design to be staged in a lighted niche 6" high, 5" wide, and 4" deep. Background is the designer's choice.

**Class 27. "Hagley Museum"** - Discover the beginning of the DuPont science company at Hagley Museum and Library where the original gunpowder manufacturing plant was established in 1800. Design an arrangement incorporating black to be staged in a yellow niche 10" high, 8" wide, and 6" deep. Background is the designer's choice.

**Class 28. "Winterthur"** - Tour distinctive Winterthur Museum and Country Estate, home of Henry Francis DuPont's American decorative art collection. Design a hat to wear to the annual Point-to-Point country horse race at Winterthur. Hat and hat stand to be provided by the club.

**Class 29. "Longwood Gardens"** Experience the floriferousness of Longwood Garden's forty indoor and outdoor gardens, home of Pierre DuPont. Make an arrangement using a mini or semi miniature African violet plant to be staged in a niche 16" high, 12" wide, and 10" deep.

Now that the design classes have been accepted by the membership, Quentin Schlieder will complete the show schedule which will be submitted to the African Violet Society's Flower Show Schedule Approver. Once the schedule is approved, copies will be published in the newsletter and will be available at meetings.



## ***Next DAVS Meeting...***

***December 8, 2008 – 6:30 p.m. (Note earlier time!) Potluck Holiday Dinner and Auction at Carol Callaghan's home located at 2806 Rickdale Road, Wilmington, DE***

### ***Directions to Carol Callaghan's Home***

*These directions are courtesy of Expedia and originate at the Sunrise Assisted Living Facility where we have been holding our monthly meetings this past year. Carol lives nearby in the development named Talleybrook, which is located a few minutes north of Sunrise Assisted Living where we used to meet, just off Shipley Road. See directions printed to the right.*



**Map to Carol Callaghan's home.**

<i>Directions</i>	<i>Distance</i>	<i>Time</i>
<i>Start: Depart Start on Shipley Rd (North)</i>	<i>1.1</i>	<i>0:03</i>
<i>1: Turn RIGHT (East) onto Summerset Rd</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>0:01</i>
<i>2: Turn RIGHT (South) onto Rickdale Rd</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>0:01</i>
<i>End: Arrive End</i>	<i>&lt; 0.1</i>	<i>&lt; 1min</i>
<i>Total Route</i>	<i>1.3 mi</i>	<i>4 mins</i>

*Don't forget to bring plants, handicrafts, surprise box or something special from you kitchen for the auction!*

## ***January DAVS Meeting...***

***Tuesday, January 12, 2010 – 7:30 p.m.***

***The Brandywine Room at Rockland Manor, 1519 Rockland Road, Wilmington, DE 19803***

**Hostess:** Terry Celano

**Program:** "Flashback...Moments to Remember!"

– Join us for a nostalgic evening as we look back at the Delaware African Violet and Gesneriad Society through the years. Carol Callaghan and Barb Borleske will show slides and reminisce over memorable moments, plants and people. Another prop shop will round out the evening so that you will have plants for our Spring Show and Sale. A plant sale will conclude the evening. If you have surplus plants to share bring them. Don't forget to bring plants for the Little Show or Show and Tell!

*With best Wishes for the Holidays and the New Year !*

### ***The Delaware African Violet and Gesneriad Society Newsletter***

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