



# Gleanings

a monthly newsletter from The Gesneriad Society, Inc.

(articles and photos selected from Chapter newsletters, our journal GESNERIADS, and original sources)

Volume 3, Number 5

May 2012

This issue includes an article by Jaco Truter on new *Petrocosmea* hybrids, photos from the Long Island Gesneriad Society Show, tips from Dale Martens about traveling with show plants, a list of some plants that will be available at the Seattle Convention, and Coming Events.

Hope you enjoy **Gleanings!**

Mel Grice, Editor



Alcie (AL-see) Maxwell from Shreveport, Louisiana, USA grew this *Smithiantha* 'Big Dots Rule' in his work office window.

Click [here](#) to see his video and commentary on YouTube.



# NEW PETROCOSMEA HYBRIDS

Jaco Truter <[Jaco.Truter@fenner.com](mailto:Jaco.Truter@fenner.com)>

Isando, South Africa

Although hybridizing in the genus *Petrocosmea* is still in its infancy, a number of hybrids have already been made by Tim Tuttle and Jeff Foederer. Cool temperatures, coupled with high "cool" humidity was found to "unlock" the secret to successfully selfing and crossing of species in this genus. Unfortunately, the taxonomy of these pretty plants leaves much to be desired, with a number of taxa reaching the west simply as numbers, or with possibly incorrect names.

The following are the first four of my hybrids that I've managed to bring to flower; a number of others should follow suit next season:

1. *Petrocosmea* 'In Rainbows' (*Petrocosmea forrestii* x *Petrocosmea barbata*)
2. *Petrocosmea* 'Codex' (*Petrocosmea begoniifolia* x *Petrocosmea barbata*)
3. *Petrocosmea* 'Little by Little' (*Petrocosmea sericea* x *Petrocosmea minor*)
4. *Petrocosmea* 'Morning Mr. Magpie' (*Petrocosmea duclouxii* / *floribunda* / *grandiflora* x *Petrocosmea* Chinese sp. #2)



*Petrocosmea* 'In Rainbows'



*Petrocosmea* 'Codex'



*Petrocosmea* 'Little by Little'



*Petrocosmea* 'Morning Mr. Magpie'

# Long Island Gesneriad Society



*Sinningia cardinalis* 'Redcoat'



*Sinningia* 'Magic Moment'

Photos courtesy of Mel Grice



*Saintpaulia confusa*



*Kohleria* 'Peridots Salish'



*Sinningia* 'Big Cal'



*Primulina longgangensis* (crested)



*Streptocarpus* 'Bristol's Hop Along'



*Primulina 'Charade'*



*Streptocarpus 'Annabel Rae'*



*Primulina 'Aiko' (dark form, variegated)*



*Kohleria 'Sunshine'*



*Streptocarpus 'Blueberries 'n' Cream'*

# Back to Basics: Traveling with Show Plants

Dale Martens <dalemartens@mchsi.com>  
Sherrard, Illinois USA

Traveling to a show or convention with entries you've carefully grown for months or years can fill one with anxiety. Whether traveling by air or car, the goal is to reach your destination with your flowers unblemished and leaves undamaged. I can tell you how I take plants to shows, but I strongly suggest your chapter have an experienced grower give a demonstration of how it can be done.

**Start with boxes.** You have some time before the convention, so start looking for large cardboard boxes or large plastic storage boxes with lids. A good size is around 12 to 14 inches in height, as that will accommodate blooming Primulinas and Streptocarpus. Ideally, a large box for your show plants should be only a couple of inches taller than your tallest plant to allow you to stack boxes on top of each other in the car. It doesn't make sense to put miniature Sinningias in a box that is 14 inches tall, so depending on your collection, determine what box heights you need.

**Determine how much space you will have.** If you are able to drive to a convention rather than fly, you're pretty lucky. First determine how much room you have in the car, minus passengers and luggage. The size of the area set aside for plants will determine which plants you can enter. Usually I have boxes with lids stacked on top of each other with an open box with taller or wider plants exposed on top. In my rear view mirror, I get to watch those flowers bounce along as I drive. Stack some of those boxes you have collected to see how many your car can hold. About three inches below the lid of cardboard boxes, I usually cut horizontal 4-inch wide by 2-inch tall slots on either side of the big boxes so I can insert my fingers to grasp and carry them easily. Beware of plant placement so that you do not position the peduncles (flower stems) too close to those openings.

**In-transit support.** If you plan to transport a plant such as a Kohleria or Smithiantha, seriously consider staking the plant even if it appears to have strong stems while sitting on your plant stand. One, the stems of these particular genera tend to bend while trying to find light at the hotel or in the show room and two, bouncing in a car weakens the stems. The color of the stake and the tie should be inconspicuous and the stake not taller than your plant.

I also stake Streptocarpus and Primulina flower stems for the long ride and remove the stakes before I enter the plant. The staking helps prevent drooping peduncles due to the heaviness of the flowers. Also, if any of the flowers are old enough that they are likely to look past their prime during the show, I remove them as there is a chance they'll rub against a newer flower and bruise it during the trip. Often I place clear plastic food wrap, rolled into ball shapes, between the peduncles and the leaf node to help support shorter peduncles.

**Immobilize plants within the packing boxes.** A day or two before the show, plan how you will position the show plants for transport. I position the pots of show plants in shallow cereal or pizza boxes that then go into a much larger box with a lid. I measure the inside of the large box and use a newspaper template to determine how best to pack the large box. On the dining table I lay out newspaper one inch smaller than the

length and width of the size of the large box and I put cereal/pizza boxes on the newspaper to determine which box goes where. I place my show plants on top of the cereal/pizza boxes, being careful not to exceed the size of the newspaper. As long as the leaves don't touch, you can place several small pots on one cereal/pizza box.

When I'm satisfied that I can place the maximum number of show plants in the large box, I create a final layout. Starting in the lower right area, I use a pen to draw around the base of the pot(s) on the cereal/pizza boxes. I write the name of the plant(s) just outside of the area where the pot(s) will go. I remove the show plant(s) from the tops of the cereal/pizza box and cut out the circles where the pots will go, allowing for tapered pots by cutting circles slightly larger if necessary. When finished, I make sure the pots fit.

When the template with pot-sized cut-outs is done, tape the empty cereal/pizza box securely to the lower right bottom of the larger box making sure the one-inch space in the corner of the large box is left. Repeat until all the smaller boxes have holes cut and are taped to the bottom of the larger box.

**Protect leaves, if necessary.** I also like to place plastic food wrap under the leaves of rosette-shaped plants like Primulinas or African violets so the leaves are not constantly rubbing the cardboard.

**Entry presentation.** I prefer to slip-pot my plants. That means I take a pot the same size and color, and I line the empty pot with clear plastic food wrap so when watered, my show plant will not leak water on the show table. I slip the show plant into the empty pot.

**Making the trip.** When it's time for travel, I tape each show pot to the cereal/pizza box. That way if I hit a bump, it's not likely to flip out of the hole I cut for it. Tape each pot as you place it. Put the large box in your car and then tape the next big box securely to the box below it to restrict the top boxes from sliding around. If you have an open box/flat on the highest level, tape it to the box below it. When you arrive at the convention hotel, find the hotel's luggage cart and load the boxes while they are still taped to each other and carefully transport them to your room.

When traveling by air, I have found that a clear plastic box with a tight fitting lid is best because the airport security people can see pretty flowers and are often more helpful. I made handles for my box so I can carry it with one hand, but the box must be able to fit under the seat or in the overhead compartment. Web sites for the airlines are usually not very helpful about giving the sizes because there can be a variety of compartment heights and depths. In fact, they may give the total number in inches (let's say 45 linear inches) that is the height plus length plus depth. You still don't know the real height of the overhead compartment, and that's the key



Airplane carry-on with holes cut in a cardboard flat

if you are bringing plants. Consider entering a plant with ornamental foliage rather than one with flowers since the height is shorter.

Due to the very small commuter planes I must take out of my small, local airport, I will rarely be able to put a box in the overhead compartment due to the very limited height of about nine inches. I have found that a box no taller than 10 inches, no wider than 12 inches and no longer than 18 inches usually will fit under the seat of most airplanes, but that often means I have to put my purse in the overhead since the space under the seat won't accommodate my purse plus my show plants, too. Again, tape smaller boxes within the larger box and tape the pots to the smaller boxes. At the screening area, try to put your box in one of those containers that normally would hold shoes and purses. Otherwise your light box might flip over as it enters the X-ray area with its heavy plastic flaps. If security won't let you put your box in a container, then put something heavier directly behind it. I use my purse.



Show plants boxed for transport

If driving to convention, I bring with me a gallon of water that the plants are used to rather than risk the hotel has softened water. If I fly, then I water with bottled water purchased at the hotel.

**Arrival tips.** If your car trip is more than six hours, the humidity inside the big boxes, particularly if you use plastic boxes, will be high. Therefore when you arrive at the hotel, it is best to leave the plants in the boxes, but open the tops. Keep the plants away from direct sunlight and out of drafts, especially from the air conditioner fan.

Normally I arrive at least a day or two prior to the start of convention to acclimate my plants. The second day I move the table/desk in front of the window and put the plants on top, making sure the sheer curtains protect the plants from direct sunlight. I bring with me paper and pen to leave directions for the hotel staff and write a note, "Please do not touch curtains" that I pin to the sheers with a diaper pin or clothespin (that I also bring).

Is it worth the hassle? Yes, it is. You really feel a part of the convention when you enter a horticulture exhibit. If you don't have a horticulture entry, consider signing up for a design or bringing a photo or craft.

**Remember what is most important.** When driving to convention with a carload of entries, I always tell my husband that the plants are not worth our lives. If we need to brake hard to prevent an accident, then brake hard. I can always share broken leaves with friends.

This article appeared originally in *GESNERIADS* Vol. 62, No. 2, Second Quarter 2012, Jeanne Katzenstein, editor. Read other interesting articles like this about gesneriads by becoming a member of The Gesneriad Society and receiving our quarterly 56-page journal.

## Some unusual plants that will be available at the 2012 Gesneriad Society Convention Plant Sale:

*Alsobia* sp. RM2010-1 (new species from Belize, via Ron Myhr)

*Columnea* (*XColtrichantha*) 'Indian Feather' – Hans Wiehler hybrid with leaves marked in iridescent purple

New *Sinningia* hybrids by Iain James (several)

Classic *Sinningia* hybrids by Peter Shalit (several)

*Sinningia* species including rare and new collections from Mauro Peixoto:

*concinna*

*pusilla* 'Itaoca'

*leucotricha* hort. (mature tubers)

*leucotricha* 'Telemaco Borba' MP00616 (first new collection in decades)

*macropoda* hort. (mature blooming-size tubers)

*macropoda* 'Altinopolis'

*macropoda* 'Unai'

*canescens*

*speciosa* 'Carangola'

*globulosa*

*hatschbachii* 'Corupa'

*magnifica* 'Domingos Martins'

*tuberosa* (blooms straight from tuber)

*Drymonia chiribogana*

*Nautilocalyx pemphidius*

*Cobananthus calochlamys*

Six species of *Gasteranthus*:

*diverticularis* GRE10000

*delphiniodes*

*bilsaensis* GRE 12137

*atratus*

*tenellus*

*calcaratus* var. *calceolus* GRE9867

New *Petrocosmea* hybrids by Tim Tuttle (several)

*Primulina*: Peter Shalit hybrids (several)

Companion plants:

*Begonia hoehniana* (miniature, for terrarium)

*Hippeastrum papillio* (amaryllid, grows in *Sinningia* habitat in Brazil, originally from M. Peixoto)

*Cyrtanthus sanguineus* (amaryllid, grows in *Streptocarpus* habitat in South Africa, originally from M. Kunhardt)

This list is just what the Puget Sound Gesneriad Society members are growing for the convention plant sale. Many other rare and unusual plants will be offered as well.

# Coming Events

## June 9 — San Francisco, California San Francisco Gesneriad Society Plant Sale

San Francisco County Fair Building, Golden Gate Park, 9th Ave. and Lincoln Way,  
San Francisco, California

June 9 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Sale of potted plants and cuttings.

Contact: [David Waugh](#)

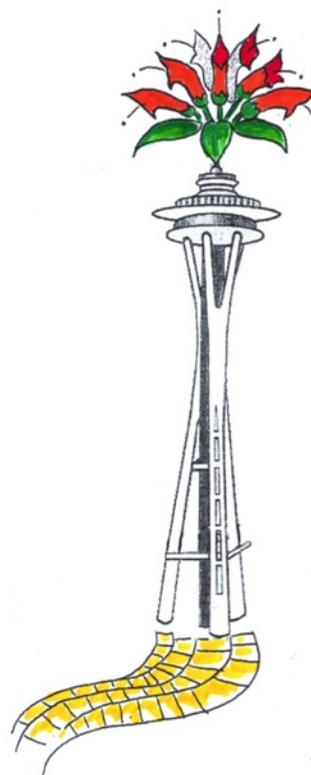
## 2012 Convention, Seattle, Washington

July 2 - July 7, 2012

"Gesneriads in the Emerald City"

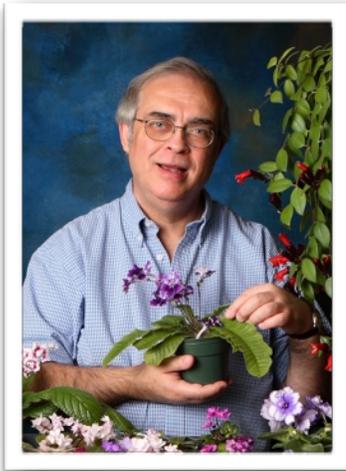
Register today at:

<http://www.gesneriadsociety.org/conv2012/index.htm>



Columnea  
Microphylla

Leonard Re from Fountain Valley, California, USA sent this photo of the first bloom on a young plant of *Columnea microphylla*. He says that it has been growing in an Oyama pot in natural light in a north window since its initial rooting. Quite a large bloom compared to the small leaf size — hence its name.



**From the editor —**

I enjoyed meeting some of you at the various shows I visited this spring. Now I need to stay home and take care of my plants. I hope to see many of you in Seattle at The Gesneriad Society Convention!

Please continue sending articles. If you have suggestions, comments, or items for possible inclusion in future issues, please feel free to contact me at [editor.gleanings@gesneriadsociety.org](mailto:editor.gleanings@gesneriadsociety.org).

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**Membership and Changes of Address**

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**Application for Membership — The Gesneriad Society, Inc.**

WELCOME – membership in our international society includes quarterly issues of *GESNERIADS* – *The Journal for Gesneriad Growers*, a copy of *How to Know and Grow Gesneriads*, a packet of gesneriad seeds and a wealth of information about our Chapters, Flower Shows, Publications, Research, Slide Programs and Seed Fund. Membership begins upon receipt of dues.

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