



Gleanings

a monthly newsletter from The Gesneriad Society, Inc.

(articles and photos selected from chapter newsletters, our journal **Gesneriads**, and original sources)

Volume 5, Number 1

January 2014

Welcome to the latest issue of **Gleanings!** This issue includes photos from Jim Roberts' and Drew Norris' growing areas, The Gesneriad Society's convention registration information, and John Boggan's thoughts on growing xGloximannia 'She's Dancing'.

Hope you enjoy **Gleanings!**

Mel Grice, Editor



Karen Allen from near Fredericksburg, Virginia, USA, sent these photos of (top) *Streptocarpus* 'DS - Beloved' and (right) *Streptocarpus* '6001'.



A Visit to Jim Roberts' and Drew Norris' Growing Areas

Jim Roberts jim.roberts2408@gmail.com
Drew Norris extensionofgreen@yahoo.com
Marriottsville, Maryland, USA



Full shelves in Jim's area



New shelf for 36" tall plants —
six T-8 tubes overhead

Photos by Jim Roberts





Drew holding *Streptocarpus* 'Iced Pink Flamingo'



xPhinastema 'California Dreaming'



Drew's area — much more organized with space between plants

28 Plant Stands

119 2-tube fixtures (some shelves use two or three fixtures)

Approximately \$700.00 a month in electricity (about 1/3 directly related to plants)

Over 800 varieties of gesneriads

Over 500 varieties of African violets

Over 75 begonias, 100+ other plants from other plant families



Plants have invaded the office and the guest room!



Work in progress — shelves and poles just going up in office

gasteranthus and gesneria in living room



What living room would be complete without a couple of terrariums?



gasteranthus and besleria

Then there's the outside for growing part of the year.



Thirty varieties of epiphyllum that come in for the winter



Sinningia 'Arkansas Empress' — garage for the winter



Achimenes 'Purple King' on rocks behind the house



Titanotrichum oldhamii — hardy in the garden



Paraboea rufescens

Photos and text originally appeared in a slightly different form as part of a PowerPoint presentation given to the Long Island Gesneriad Society by Jim Roberts. Used with permission of the growers. The PowerPoint presentation is in constant revision and Jim is willing to give his talk to your chapter — **Hoarders: One Man's Unnatural Obsession to Grow it All!**



[Convention 2014](#)

The Gesneriad Society's
58th Annual Convention
DoubleTree by Hilton - Nashville
Downtown
315 4th Avenue
Nashville, TN 37219 USA
July 1 - July 5
Hosted by the
Tennessee Gesneriad Society
[REGISTER NOW!](#)

<http://gesneriadsociety.org/Conv2014/index.htm>

xGloximannia 'She's Dancing'

John Boggan
Washington, D.C., USA

DC Tropics blog: <http://dctropics.blogspot.com>



What the heck is a xGloximannia? (The "x" or multiplication sign, indicating an intergeneric hybrid, is not pronounced.) In a [previous blog post](#) I discussed the gesneriad genus *Seemannia*, a close relative of *Gloxinia*. Although these two genera look very different, they are closely enough related that their respective species can be easily crossed to produce viable hybrids. And what do you get if you cross the two genera? The nothogenus (hybrid genus) xGloximannia, of course. To the best of my knowledge, only *Gloxinia perennis* has been used from that genus and the hybrids tend to take after this parent. Neither of the other two species

— *Gloxinia erinoides* and *Gloxinia xanthophylla* — have yet been crossed with any *Seemannia* species; it would be very interesting to see how such hybrids would turn out.

The first xGloximannia hybrids were produced by [Gesneriad Society](#) legend [Frances Batcheller](#) in the late 1970's, but at the time *Seemannia* was included in *Gloxinia* and they were simply considered *Gloxinia* hybrids. At least one of these, xG. 'Arion' (*Seemannia* 'Medusa' x *Gloxinia perennis*), is still around. In the 1980's I produced my own xGloximannia hybrids by crossing *Gloxinia perennis* with *Seemannia* (then *Gloxinia*) 'Chic'. These were spectacularly ordinary plants and not worth naming. They weren't improvements on either parent and I never gave much thought to such hybrids again until Dale Martens, a prolific gesneriad hybridizer, shared with me a small rhizome of her latest hybrid, xGloximannia 'She's Dancing', at a [Gesneriad Society convention](#) in 2009.

During the first year I grew this plant, I have to confess I wasn't impressed. The plant took a long time to get established (largely due to neglect on my part) but eventually grew into a plant with handsome, glossy dark green foliage and an ever-elongating stem with large purple flowers with darker purple spots. The flowers were attractive, but grown indoors under fluorescent lights the plant was weak-stemmed and floppy. By the time it finally went dormant in mid-winter it had produced three very large rhizomes and several smaller ones, so I saved them and decided to give it another chance the following year. This time I planted the three largest rhizomes together in one large pot to grow outdoors on my [rooftop deck](#), and the smaller rhizomes individually to grow indoors under lights. The

difference between the two groups of plants was amazing. The indoor plants grew much like the one I grew the previous year, and started to bloom in late summer. But the outdoor plants, which received several hours of direct morning sun with very bright indirect light the rest of the day, grew bigger, and bigger, and bigger, and didn't start setting buds until about the same time the indoor plants were already blooming. These large, stocky plants produced far more flowers and continued to bloom for a very long period, eventually growing to almost 3 feet tall.

When I showed photos to Dale she was shocked by its size, saying it had never grown nearly that large for her, but other growers later corroborated my results. The secret seems to lie in the size of the rhizome: plants grown from small rhizomes, rhizome sections, or individual scales (a common way of propagating scaly rhizomatous gesneriads in quantity) will stay relatively small, but plants grown from large rhizomes will grow much larger. Dale was probably so excited by her new hybrid and anxious to share it that she propagated it by breaking up the rhizomes. This demonstrates why many scaly rhizomatous (and other) gesneriads, which may bloom in their first year from seed, can't be judged for their full potential until they've been grown through two or more growing seasons.



Flowers on ×*Gloximannia* 'She's Dancing' grown outdoors



Scaly rhizomes of ×*Gloximannia* 'She's Dancing'

Dale reports that she produced ×*Gloximannia* 'She's Dancing' by crossing *Gloxinia perennis* with an unnamed *Seemannia* hybrid (*S. gymnostoma* × *S. purpurascens*). *Gloxinia perennis* has fragrant flowers, a fairly unusual characteristic among its relatives. Dale has been working to produce fragrant hybrids in several different genera, and her goal in this cross was to produce a fragrant hybrid. According to Dale, the other seedlings from the cross were weak and this was the only one to grow to

maturity and bloom. Although the flowers had no fragrance, they turned out to be larger than those of either parent, and covered with large purple spots.



×*Gloximannia* 'She's Dancing' (r) with *Gloxinia perennis* (l)
(photo courtesy of Dale Martens)

I've tried growing ×*Gloximannia* 'She's Dancing' in different ways and under different conditions. Because of its height and high light requirements it simply isn't suitable for growing under fluorescent lights indoors but I've found it does well as a container plant outdoors. To my great surprise, a pot I left outdoors on my roof deck all winter sprouted a new plant the next spring, suggesting 'She's Dancing' may have some degree of hardiness if given good drainage and dry winter conditions. It can also be used as a bedding plant in bright shade or part sun.

Inspired by Dale's success, I decided to attempt some ×*Gloximannia* hybrids of my own, using dark-leaved hybrids from my [Seemannia breeding program](#) in hopes of producing flowers like those of 'She's Dancing' on plants with dark glossy foliage.

Unlike Dale's hybrid my crosses had *S. nematanthodes* 'Evita' in their background, so I hoped they might have some degree of hardiness. But once again, although I did get some dark-leaved hybrids, my results were spectacularly ordinary. The plants were attractive enough, but simply not different or distinct enough to merit naming, and not one of them had the distinct purple spotting of 'She's Dancing' that I liked so much. I gave them one more chance by leaving them in the ground over the winter, and not one of them returned the following spring. Oh well, you win some, you lose some. Dale is the clear winner of this round!

Dale tells me, "When the first flower opened in December of 2008, I screamed, 'Yippee!' then started my Happy Hybridizer's Dance. Then called my husband into the plant room to see it. I was shocked at how large the seedling's flower was. There was no scent that day or on subsequent days, but that was my only disappointment with the new seedling. The name for this seedling was inspired by my Happy Hybridizer's Dance which is where I do the 1960's dance, the 'twist' while doing 'jazz' hands."



×*Gloximannia* 'She's Dancing' (l) with its *Seemannia* parent (r)
(photo courtesy of Dale Martens)



×*Gloximannia* 'She's Dancing' in a garden bed



Unnamed ×*Gloximannia* hybrid

Reprinted with permission of the author from his blog <http://dctropics.blogspot.com/2013/12/x-gloximannia-shes-dancing.html>. Check out other interesting blog posts at <http://dctropics.blogspot.com>. Dale Martens photos used with permission. All other photos by the author.



From the editor —

I have registered for the Gesneriad Society's convention in Nashville this summer. It was quick and easy. Lots of things to see and do in Nashville. Will I see you there?

If you have suggestions, comments, or items for possible inclusion in future issues, please feel free to contact me at melsgrice@earthlink.net

Happy Holidays!

Mel

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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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