



# 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 4

April 2014

Welcome to the latest issue of **Gleanings**! This issue includes photos from the Philadelphia Flower Show and Alcie Maxwell's article about growing gesneriads outside in the ground.

Hope you enjoy **Gleanings**!

Mel Grice, Editor



*Aeschynanthus* 'Tiger Stripe' grown by Ruth Coulson from Australia. This was originally posted a few months earlier on Gesneriphiles when it was summer in Australia.



# Philadelphia Flower Show 2014



*Drymonia strigosa*  
Lynn Cook and Troy Ray



*Streptocarpus* hybrid  
Lynn Cook and Troy Ray

Photos courtesy of Mel Grice



*Primulina dryas* 'Hisako' grown by Brandon Huber from the Liberty Bell chapter



*Sinningia* 'Gone Salmon Fishing'  
Brandon Huber



*Sinningia* 'Prudence Risley'  
Brandon Huber





*Sinningia iarae*  
Nancy Bruhns





*Nematanthus* 'Othello' (above and to the right)  
Lynn Cook and Troy Ray (Mel Grice photos)



Close-up photo by Karyn Cichocki



*Sinningia* 'Arkansas Empress'  
Lynn Cook and Troy Ray  
Karyn Cichocki photos



# Growing Gesneriads in the Ground

Alcie Maxwell [alciemaxwell@gmail.com](mailto:alciemaxwell@gmail.com)  
Shreveport, Louisiana, USA

This year, while other people were making New Years' resolutions filled with new diet plans, new workout routines, and a new attitude, I set a goal to plant gesneriads in a shady part of my yard. I was partly motivated by curiosity. I have gotten so used to growing gesneriads under fluorescent lamps on my plant shelves that I wanted to see if the plants actually grew better in filtered sunlight. I was also motivated by the fact that I had run out of space on my plant shelves, and I was not quite ready to give away or toss some of the plants just yet.

My biggest obstacle is that I am not much of a gardener. I have never grown ornamental plants outside before. I have only grown vegetables once, but they were grown in containers. I also got poor yields. The easiest thing to do would be to grow the gesneriads in pots. I am a glutton for punishment, so the plants have to be grown in the ground.

I asked a few of my gesneriad-growing friends about their experiences with growing some of the gesneriads in the ground. I received a great deal of feedback, and it appears that the rhizomatous gesneriads are the easiest and most hardy gesneriads to grow. Ruth Coulson has had success growing *Kohleria hirsuta* and various achimenes hybrids in a shaded part of her yard in New South Wales, Australia. With an average high of 86° F (30° C) in the warmest month and an average low of 50° F (10° C) in the coldest month, Ruth says her *Kohleria hirsuta* does not really go dormant on her during the winter.



*Kohleria hirsuta*

Ruth Coulson photo



*Achimenes* 'Violet Knight'

Ruth Coulson photo

Julie Mavity-Hudson gets colder weather at her Tennessee, USA home, but she has had success with growing achimenes and seemannias. At her location, Julie has average lows of 28° F (-2° C) in the coldest month of the year, and she has snow of approximately 6 inches per year. She said her achimenes and seemannias come back year after year except when she has colder winters.

At his Florida, USA home, Greg Sytch grows his achimenes as groundcover similar to impatiens. He has also had great success with kohlerias. Like Ruth Coulson, Greg is located

in a place that has an average low in the coldest month of the year of 50°F (10°C) with no frost days.

John Boggan described his success with growing the rhizomatous species *Raphiocarpus petelotti* and *Titanotrichum oldhamii* outdoors in his article "Growing Gesneriads Outdoors: *Raphiocarpus petelotii*" in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2004 edition of *The Gloxinian: The Journal for Gesneriad Growers*. John noted that *Raphiocarpus petelotti* was cold hardy to several nights with temperature in the teens (°F).

Tuberous gesneriads also have some cold hardy options. Virtually everyone who provided me information sang the praises of *Sinningia tubiflora* or its hybrid *Sinningia* 'Apricot Bouquet'. Dennis Krumb said *Sinningia tubiflora* survived in his Ohio, USA yard. He receives an average of 21 days of snow per year and an average low of 19°F (-7°C) in the coldest month of the year. Thad Scaggs successfully grows *Sinningia sellovii*, *Sinningia bullata*, *Sinningia leucotricha*, *Sinningia guttata*, *Sinningia reitzii*, *Sinningia piresiana*, *Sinningia* species "Ibitioca", and their related hybrids. Like Greg Sytch, Thad Scaggs lives in Florida, USA where there are no real frost days.



*Sinningia warmingii*  
Ruth Coulson photo



*Chrysothemis pulchella*  
Ruth Coulson photo

Ruth Coulson grows *Sinningia warmingii* and *Chrysothemis pulchella* under high light conditions in the yard of her Australia home. Alan LaVergne (California, USA) reported success with genera like *Sinningia guttata*, *Sinningia schiffneri*, *Paliavana tenuiflora*, and *Vanhouttea pendula* in his article "Cold-Tolerance Data Points: Central California" in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2004 edition of *The Gloxinian: The Journal for Gesneriad Growers*.

Although fibrous rooted gesneriads did not appear to be a popular option for yard-growing, a few people have successfully grown fibrous rooted genera in their yards. Jamie Anderson grows streptocarpus outside under some Chattham Island Forget Me Nots in his yard in Wellington, New Zealand. Jamie's part of New Zealand gets average lows of 43°F (6°C) and average highs of 70°F (21°C) in the coldest and warmest months of the year, respectively. He warns that the largest obstacle is dealing with the strong winds.



*Streptocarpus*  
Jamie Anderson photo

Greg Sytch grows *Nematanthus* 'Plum Pretty' in his frost-free Florida yard with great success. He reports that the plant easily grows three feet tall by three feet long, with steady blooms throughout the spring and summer. Gary Meltzer grows African violets, episcias, and columneas in his paradisiacal yard in Hilo, Hawaii, USA. That part of Hawaii is said to be the third wettest part of the United States, as it rains approximately 275 days of the year. The temperatures are between 84°F (29°C) to 63°F (17°C) throughout the year.



*Ramonda myconi*  
Karyn Cichocki photo



*Haberlea rhodopensis* 'Virginalis'  
Karyn Cichocki photo

For six years, Karyn Cichocki has successfully grown the alpine gesneriads *Haberlea rhodopensis* 'Virginalis' and *Ramonda myconi* in a rock wall in her front yard. She grows those alpine gesneriads in a part of New Jersey, USA, that receives approximately 16 days of snowfall per year and an average low in the coldest month of the year of 16°F (-9°C).

Armed with all of this information, I tilled and added amendments to the soil in my flowerbeds. I did not have a specific soil recipe that I used. I just made sure the soil had good drainage. I also ensured that the pH was neutral to slightly acidic. I planted sinningias, kohlerias, smithianthas, and begonias in one bed. Primulinas, African



Alcie Maxwell photo



violets, and an episcia were placed in other.

Photo on right shows my planting. Back row: Smithiantha hybrid (can't see it), *Hencklia* 'Moonwalker', *Begonia fischeri*, *Kohleria hirsuta* (can't see it), cane begonias. Front row: rhizomatous begonia, *Sinningia conspicua* (can't see it), *Sinningia globulosa* hybrids, *Sinningia bullata*, and *Sinningia macrostachya*.



The climate in my area has temperatures in the range of 94° F (34° C) to 36° F (2° C) in the warmest and coldest months of the year. On average, I get about 1 inch of snow per year. I suspect the episcia and African violet will not make it. The other plants, however, should come back fine next year if there is a mild winter. Either way, it will be fun just to see how they all grow.

All of my plants came from the extras on my plant stand. If you are looking for plant material, seeds to most of the recommended plants can be obtained through the Gesneriad Society's Seed Fund or from the commercial vendors of gesneriads. Quite a few people recommended the mail order company Plants Delights Nursery, Inc. ([plantdelights.com](http://plantdelights.com)) for hardy plants like the recommended sinningia species, hemiboeas, raphiocarpus, and *Titanotrichum oldhamii*. Wrightman Alpines Nursery ([wrightmanalpines.com](http://wrightmanalpines.com)) was also recommended because it sells mature plants of the alpine genera.

I will update my project throughout the growing season. If you decide to plant some gesneriads in the ground, submit your pictures to *Gleanings*.

#### POPULAR COLD HARDY GESNERIADS

##### Rhizomatous gesneriads

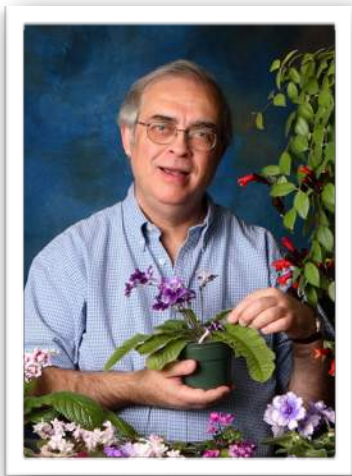
Achimenes species and hybrids  
Kohleria species and hybrids  
*Raphiocarpus petelotii*  
Seemannia species and hybrids  
*Titanotrichum oldhamii*

##### Tuberous gesneriads

*Sinningia sellovii*  
*Sinningia tubiflora* and its hybrid S. 'Apricot Bouquet'  
*Sinningia warmingii*

##### Fibrous rooted gesneriads

*Nematanthus* 'Plum Pretty'  
Streptocarpus  
*Haberlea rhodopensis* (for areas with frost)  
*Ramonda myconi* (for areas with frost)



**From the editor —**

I was able to spend three days at the Philadelphia Flower Show because of the weather. What a treat! Now the spring shows are all beginning so please send me photos if I don't make it to your show.

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

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