



Gleanings

a monthly newsletter from The Gesneriad Society, Inc.

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

Volume 6, Number 9

September 2015

Welcome to the latest issue of **Gleanings!** This issue includes photos from Ben Paternoster's growing areas, Paul Susi discussing the genus *Kohleria*, as well as information about two events coming up this October: the Northeast Regional Gesneriad Convention and a Webinar on growing and hybridizing *Streptocarpus*. Hope you enjoy **Gleanings!**

Mel Grice, Editor



Jim Roberts of Marriottsville, MD, USA submitted these two photos of *Seemannia purpurascens* red form. "It is nice and compact compared to other varieties of this species and the flowers are spectacular as you can see."



A Visit to Ben Paternoster's Growing Areas

Ben Paternoster ben9@optonline.net
Huntington, NY, USA



Ben grows a few plants strategically placed around the upstairs living areas in his well-kept home.

Most of his growing is done in his basement. Some more cold-tolerant plants are grown in a crawl space that is easily accessible to the rest of his basement.



Mel Grice photos



Some plants with low-light requirements grow by a single-tube fixture in sealed containers.

Mel Grice photos





Mel Grice photos

Ben has partitioned off a small area of his basement to create a growing room warmer than the rest of his basement since it is heated by the heat from the fluorescent ballasts and tubes. Thick foam sheets for the walls insulate the plants from the winter cold. A set of patio doors has been repurposed to make an entrance to the room. They can be closed or opened to adjust the temperature in the room depending upon the season.





Ben's enclosed plant room has a light stand with eight-foot long fixtures.

Mel Grice photos



Left - Ben shows some sinningia hybrids that he is growing to further evaluate their potential.

Bottom - Ben's sink and potting area.



The Genus *Kohleria*

Paul Susi psusi11@gmail.com
South Huntington, NY, USA

My interest in this genus dates to the late 1990s, specifically to the Chicago Convention in 1998, where one of the talks was on *Kohleria*. I was intrigued by the flowers – so many spots! – and by the apparent forgiving nature of the genus. Since kohlerias grow from rhizomes, you will (almost) never lose a plant. In addition, the plants are easy to propagate and, believe it or not, easy to grow.

Kohlerias have rhizomatous root structures. Rhizomes are one of the three root structures found in gesneriads, the other two being fibrous only and tuberous. Rhizomes are actually modified stems and they grow perpendicular to the force of gravity. There are three types of rhizomes: scaly (in which leaves have been reduced to scales), smooth, and round. Kohlerias have scaly rhizomes. An examples of a gesneriad with smooth rhizomes is *Hemiboea*, while *Sphaerorrhiza* is the only known gesneriad with round rhizomes. Numerous gesneriads have rhizomes, including *Achimenes*, *Smithiantha*, *Seemannia* and *Gloxinia*.



Kohleria allenii
Paul Susi photo

Kohleria was discovered in 1801 by J. Cavanilles, and was originally called *Gesneria tubiflora*. It seems that New World genera with red tubular flowers were routinely named *Gesneria*. In 1847 Eduard Regel described *Kohleria* as its own genus, with the type species named *Kohleria hirsuta*. The genus was named in honor of Michael Kohler, a Swiss biologist and natural historian. In the late-twentieth century, Hans Wiehler moved some species of *Kohleria* into *Moussonia* and, a few years later, created a new genus, *Parakohleria*, into which he moved kohlerias without rhizomes (these were eventually moved to *Pearcea*). A complete revision of the genus was published in 1992 by Lars P. Kvist and Larry Skog. The subsequent *Kohleria* Register, published by the Gesneriad Society and compiled by John Boggan, was based on this revision.

Species of *Kohleria* can be found primarily in Colombia (*Kohleria amabilis* v. *bogotensis*), with others in Ecuador, Mexico (*Kohleria allenii*), Peru (*Kohleria peruviana*), Venezuela, and Central America (*Kohleria rugata*). Twenty-one species are currently accepted. Species are terrestrial, perennial herbs that grow in filtered or full sunlight in rain forest areas (3000-6000 feet). They are found both in open areas and in the forest understory. Most species have green, velvety leaves with tubular flowers on the small side (which are pollinated by hummingbirds). However, one species, *K. allenii*, has large, open-faced, bat-pollinated flowers. All kohleria flowers are characterized by having a lot of spots. Flowers come in all colors and are slightly hairy, as are the leaves. Some species that I have grown are *K. inequalis*, *K.*

amabilis v. *bogotensis* 'El Crystal', *K. trianae* and *K. tubiflora*, all tall growers.

Kohlerias were popular in horticulture in the late 19th century but went into eclipse in the early 20th century. There was renewed interest in the genus in the 1960s and hybridizing of the time resulted in tall and gangly hybrids (which, it seems, may have contributed to the urban legend that kohlerias are difficult plants to grow). Hybridizing efforts from the 1990s to date have resulted in compact plants with varied leaf and flower patterns. There are twenty registered hybrids in cultivation, with most likely hundreds more that are unregistered.

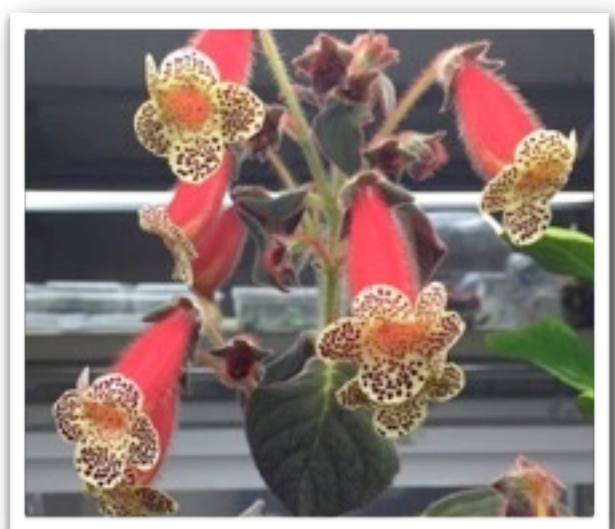


Kohleria 'Snakeskin'
Paul Susi photo

Frances Batcheller hybridized several kohlerias from the late 1970s through 1990, including *K. 'Lono'* and *K. 'Pele'*, both of which are tall growers. Patrick Worley's hybrids generally have both large, green-gray patterned leaves and large, red flowers. At least three of them are still in circulation: *K. 'Strawberry Fields'*, *K. 'Flirt'*, and *K. 'Red Ryder'*. John Boggan's hybrids display darker leaf colors and more tubular flowers. *K. 'Brimstone'*, *K. 'Tropical Night'*, *K. 'Snakeskin'*, *K. 'Silver Feather'* and *K. 'Rattlesnake'* all have wonderfully patterned silver/grey foliage with flower colors that are often in

marked contrast to the foliage. In addition to these characteristics, John's hybrids are shorter in stature and one, *K. 'Green Goblin'*, is definitely a low grower. Iain James' hybrids (the 'Peridots series) all exhibit good foliage and a controllable growth habit. He is responsible for 24 released hybrids, including *K. 'Peridots Pakal'* (six inches in height), *K. 'Peridots Mango Martini'*, *K. 'Peridots Tom Thumb'* (a low grower) and *K. 'Peridots Kitlope'*. Other recent hybridizers include Vivian Liu (*K. 'An's Nagging Macaws'*), Rick Hung (*K. 'HCY's Peach Queen'* and *K. 'HCY's Black Moon'*), Alfredo Lin (*K. 'Designer's Halloween'* and *K. 'Designer's Evening Gown'*) – all from Taiwan. Gunilla Svensson from Sweden has hybridized *K. 'Rebecka'* (one of my favorites), *K. 'Ni's Linn'* and *K. 'Ni's Pippi Långstrump'*. Brandon Erickson from Nebraska is actively hybridizing kohlerias and other gesneriads, with *K. 'Bud's Tangerine Dream'* and *K. 'Bud's Little Pig'* being two of his most recent hybrids.

The keys to good kohleria culture are very bright light and a good fertilizing regimen. Although kohlerias will bloom when grown in moderate light and with little or no fertilizer, nothing will produce straight-stemmed kohlerias with abundant bloom like 4-T8 tubes (or 4-T12s) and a consistent feeding schedule (1/4 strength at each watering of a balanced fertilizer; I use tomato fertilizer). If you are able to provide the former but are slack on the later, you will still get decent bloom; however, if you can't provide the former you will get either rangy kohlerias, or kohlerias with weak and floppy stems. Keep in



Kohleria 'Rebecka'
Paul Susi photo

mind that some of the older and tall-growing hybrids may need staking because you most likely won't have the room in your growing area to keep them under lights as they get taller. I grow my kohlerias in a light mix (any standard prepared mix, with additional perlite and vermiculite added) on capillary matting. They prefer warm (70-80°F) temperatures and don't seem fussy about humidity. They will not be in active growth if the temperatures fall below 60°F, but they will not perish like episcias. They also do well outdoors, in containers or as bedding plants, and can be grown in light shade or almost full sun (you will need to experiment to see what will work in your conditions). Kohlerias rarely go into full dormancy; new growth generally pokes its head above the mix surface before the old growth has died back. In those cases, just cut the old growth at the soil line. Rhizomes can be stored in the pot or removed and stored in a plastic baggie. I prefer the later method and I also include some slightly damp moss or potting mix to prevent the rhizomes from desiccating. I have found that doing this will keep the rhizomes plump and ready for planting for up to five to six months.



Kohleria 'An's Nagging Macaws'
Lena Klintberg photo

Kohleria propagation is by stem cuttings in water or mix. Stem cuttings root very quickly, sometimes within days. Many growers have reported success with cuttings placed in mix in a container that is then left in the open. Rhizomes can be planted whole, in pieces, or by removing individual scales and planting them. Bear in mind that some kohlerias are shy rhizome producers so don't assume that a pot will be full of rhizomes when you want to propagate. Always take some stem cuttings to be sure.

At the conclusion of my talk, there was a free raffle of kohleria material that I had grown from rhizomes and also bags of rhizomes. I hope that everyone is now growing their kohlerias and it would be great if they could be brought to the September or other future meeting for discussion!

Reprinted from *Gesneriad News*, Vol 47, no. 1, September 2015, a publication of the Long Island Gesneriad Society <https://sites.google.com/site/longislandgesneriad/>, Mel Grice, editor.



Kohleria 'Designer's Halloween'
Alfredo Lin photo

New Hybrid Registrations



Primulina 'Dan's Emerald'

Primulina 'Dan's Emerald', 2015, IR151281, Lai Bi-dan, Huang Yi-qin, Guangxi, China. (*P. ophiopogoides* × *P. macrorrhiza*). Cross made Mar. 25, 2012, planted Apr. 25, 2012, and first flowered Feb. 26, 2015. Reproducible only vegetatively. Rosette. Leaves coriaceous, dark green with short gray or white muricate hair, 7-8 cm long × 3-3.5 cm wide with 0.3-0.5 cm petiole, linear with crenate margin, cuneate base, and acute tip. Calyx split, chartreuse, 0.6-0.7 cm long. Pedicel 1.3-2.4 cm with 9-12 flowers. Corolla salverform, 4.5-4.8 cm long × 3-3.4 cm wide, light blue. Easy to grow, suitable to very good and slightly direct light. Temperature should be in a range of 0-35°C.

See more newly registered hybrids in *GESNERIADS* Vol. 65, No. 4, Fourth Quarter 2015, Peter Shalit, editor. Read interesting articles about gesneriads by becoming a member of The Gesneriad Society and receiving our quarterly 56-page journal.

Webinar: Growing and Hybridizing Streptocarpus



Listen to Dale Martens discuss streptocarpus growing and hybridizing in the first [webinar](#) sponsored by The Gesneriad Society. A webinar is the perfect opportunity for members who do not belong to chapters and or can't attend meetings to find out more about gesneriads. And, if you are not a member of The Gesneriad Society, this is an opportunity to hear one of the best growers and top-notch hybridizers of gesneriads. The webinar will be available on either October 21 at 9 p.m. EDT or October 24 at 2 p.m. EDT. <http://shop.gesneriadsociety.org/collections/webinars>



Northeast Regional Gesneriad Convention — Flower Show and Plant Sale!

October 3 from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.

October 4 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Frelinghuysen Arboretum, Haggerty Education Building, 353 East Hanover Ave., Morristown, NJ 07960

Hosted by the Greater New York, Frelinghuysen Arboretum, and Long Island Chapters of the Gesneriad Society.

One-day registration or full registration is available. Program and registration information is on the [website of the Long Island Gesneriad Society](#).



From the editor —

The fall shows will soon be here. I hope to see many of you at one or more of them. It has been so hot here in Ohio that I am not certain if I will have anything to enter. My air conditioning has been running full blast and this has made it difficult to provide the humidity that gesneriads require.

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

Mel

Consultants Peter Shalit
Jeanne Katzenstein

Internet Julie Mavity-Hudson
Communications Paul Susi

Newsletter Mel Grice
Editor 2019 Crosswind Ct.
Englewood, OH
45322 USA
melsgrice@earthlink.net

Permission to reprint from **Gleanings** is granted, provided that credit is given to the author and the publication.

Donations

The Gesneriad Society, Inc. is a tax-exempt organization with an IRS section 501 (c)(3) status for donations. You can make your donations online at www.gesneriadsociety.org. You may also send your donation (check payable to The Gesneriad Society) to:

Paul Susi, Development Chairperson
2 Rushmore Street, South Huntington, NY 11746
For additional information, contact: gesneriaddevelopment@gmail.com

Membership and Changes of Address

The Gesneriad Society Membership Secretary, Bob Clark,
1122 East Pike Street, PMB 637, Seattle, WA 98122-3916 USA

Changes of Address — Send changes of address to the Membership Secretary <membership@gesneriadsociety.org> 90 days prior to moving to avoid missing an issue. The Society is not responsible for replacing issues missed because of late notification of address changes. Back issues may be ordered from The Gesneriad Society Publications.

Renewals — Send dues to the Membership Secretary. A Renewal Notice is sent two months prior to the expiration date of your membership. (The expiration date is printed on your mailing label/membership card received with each copy of *Gesneriads*.) Please remit your dues prior to the expiration date to avoid missing an issue as we are not responsible for replacing issues missed because of late payment of dues. Back issues may be ordered from Publications.

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, programs and seed fund. Membership begins upon receipt of dues.

New Member Date _____

Renewal Membership # _____

Name _____
FAMILY NAME GIVEN NAME MIDDLE INITIAL

Address _____
STREET

_____ CITY STATE ZIP CODE COUNTRY

Email _____ Telephone _____

(Rates in US\$)	Mailing in US 1 year	Mailing in US 3 years	Mailing outside US 1 year	Mailing outside US 3 years
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$25	\$70	\$30	\$85
<input type="checkbox"/> Household	\$26	\$73	\$31	\$88
<input type="checkbox"/> Journal Subscription <small>(organizations, chapters, affiliates)</small>	\$25	\$70	\$30	\$85
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Life	Mailing in USA \$375		Mailing outside USA \$450	
<input type="checkbox"/> Green Option	Electronic journal copy (no print copy) for Individual or Household Members \$20 (one year), \$55 (three years) anywhere in the world			

I wish to make a tax-deductible contribution of \$ _____

Elvin McDonald Research Endowment Fund Nellie D. Sleeth Scholarship Endowment Fund

Frances Batcheller Endowment Fund Students and Speakers Convention Fund Conservation Fund

In Honor Memory of _____

Please make checks or money orders payable in US\$ on a USA bank to: **The Gesneriad Society**

Or, charge my VISA, or MasterCard

Card # _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____ Amount _____

Mail to: **The Gesneriad Society Membership Secretary, Bob Clark,**
1122 East Pike St., PMB 637, Seattle, WA 98122-3916 USA

For application online: www.gesneriadsociety.org