

Gleanings

a monthly newsletter from The Gesneriad Society, Inc.

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

Volume 7, Number 5

May 2016



Welcome to the latest issue of **Gleanings**! This issue includes photos from the Toronto Gesneriad Society Show, a visit to Eileen McGrath's growing areas, Paul Susi's report of Karyn Cichocki's talk on sowing and growing gesneriad seed, and information about the next webinar.

Hope you enjoy **Gleanings**!

Mel Grice, Editor



Bill Price of West Vancouver, BC, Canada exhibited *Mitraria coccinea* at the African Violet Society of Canada's Convention in Calgary, AB, Canada.



Toronto Gesneriad Society Show Photos



Sinningia gesneriifolia - Steve Kerr



Streptocarpus 'Haru no Mizu' - Bruce Williams



Sinningia 'Ozark Rosy Cheeks' - Bev Williams



Episcia 'Unpredictable Valley' - Deanna Belli



Columnea 'Fujiyama' - Ron Myhr



Primulina 'Cynthia' - Bev Williams

Mel Grice photos



"Leap" - Judy Zinni



"Zig Zag" - Steve Kerr



Sinningia leucotricha 'Max Dekking' - Brett Flewelling



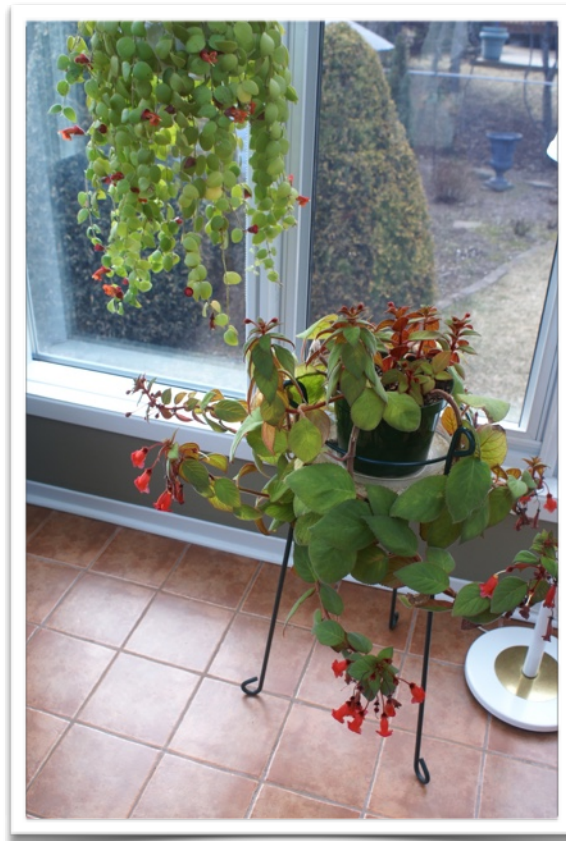
Petrocosmea minor - Emma Bygott

A Visit to Eileen McGrath's Growing Areas

Eileen McGrath eileenanddick@aol.com
Carleton Place, Ontario, Canada



Eileen has a beautiful solarium attached to the back of her house for growing gesneriads. Each one is a potential award-winning show plant. Eileen must move some of the plants to different locations each day depending upon the amount of clouds or sunshine — a real labor of love!



Mel Grice photos





Mel Grice photos

Eileen also grows gesneriads in her basement. Some are grown on light stands and some are grown on tables with lights hung above them. Notice her potting area in the photo above with all the necessary ingredients for successful growing within easy reach.

One of the keys to Eileen's success at shows is that she does not try to grow more plants than she can handle.



Karyn Cichocki - All You Ever Wanted to Know About Growing from Seed

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South Huntington, New York, USA

At our May meeting, Karyn Cichocki, President of the Frelinghuysen Arboretum Gesneriad Society and no stranger to our chapter, presented a very informative and hands-on discussion about growing from seed. From pollination to transplanting seedlings, she covered it all.

Karyn told us that it is always a good idea to know what the pollinators are for the plants that you are thinking of hybridizing, since this will influence your choice of tools used for the actual pollinating. For instance, long thin flowers may be pollinated by hummingbirds or butterflies and a long, thin brush would seem to be the pollinating tool of choice. She told us to keep in mind that, on most flowers, the male stage precedes the female stage. This is a natural protection against self-pollination. The stigma (the female receptive structure) is long and protrudes above the anthers (the male, pollen-producing structure). When ready to receive pollen, it splits or develops an opening. Karyn sometimes uses her finger or a small brush (good for sinningias, since they produce a lot of pollen) to transfer pollen to the receptive stigma. The stigmas of gesneriad flowers are not all the same. For instance, primulina stigmas have a curve at the end – are they pollinated when an insect enters or leaves the flower? To ensure pollination, Karyn places the pollen on both sides. Successful pollination will result in the enlargement of the ovary. There are usually other signs of successful pollination (for instance, the entire sinningia stem will straighten when the flower has been successfully pollinated). Keep in mind that pollen can be frozen for some time for future use.

One of the most important things to remember when hybridizing is to keep track of the source of the pollen. You can mark the seed pod with a tag or a small dab of paint to keep track of the source of pollen. Karyn uses a cut-down plant label and attaches this to the flower peduncle. To identify the resulting cross, the receptive (female) plant name is first, followed by the pollen source (male) plant name: plant1 x plant2 = mother (recipient) and father (pollen source).

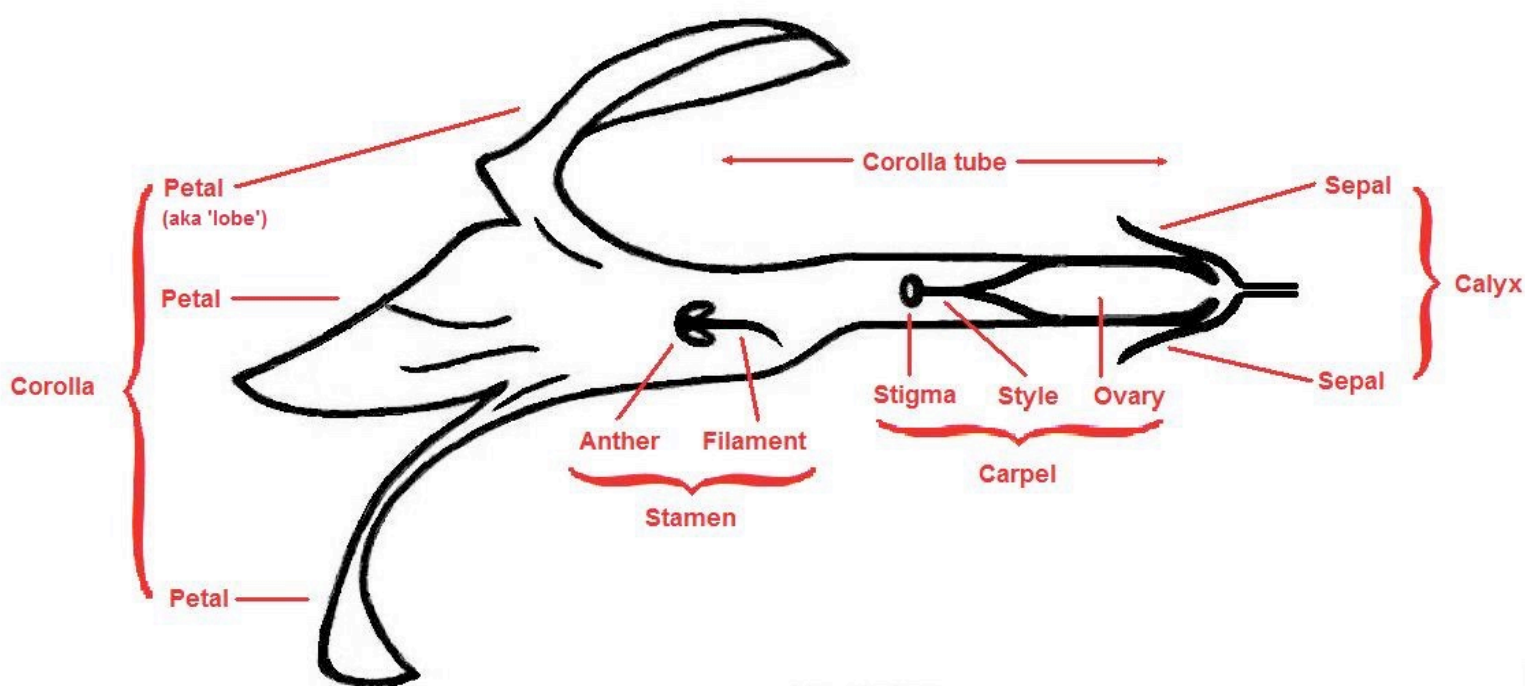
Many growers indicate that humidity may play a part in setting seed. So, once you have finished pollinating, you should raise the humidity in the area where the plants are located. Seed pods may take up to nine months to develop (common with saintpaulias) but some develop in as short as two to three months. When the pods become dry, that means that they are ready to dehisce – open and spill their seeds. Seeds are usually stored in covered containers in the fridge in labeled, glassine envelopes. Karyn has found that it is a good idea to wait about four weeks before planting fresh seed, since fresh seed doesn't often germinate.

For planting seeds, Karyn uses plug trays (trays used by commercial growers for annuals and the like) that she cuts to fit a sweater box. Any container with a cover can be used. Unlike some other growers, Karyn uses her regular coarse mix (peat, perlite, vermiculite), which is slightly moistened by putting the mix-filled cells in a tray of water for a few minutes. She puts tags in each cell before planting the seeds. There are various methods of planting the tiny gesneriad seeds, such as folding a small piece of paper in half, dropping some seeds in the crease and sprinkling them onto the mix. However, Karyn has found that this results in too many seeds in one spot. She has the best success when she grabs seed with her fingers and sprinkles the seed in the cells. The seeds are not covered by the mix. Karyn places the cover on the box and places the box under lights about 1 foot from the lights. She currently uses a

24" 2-tube T5 fixture for seed growing, but has also used a 2-tube T8 fixture and has not noticed any difference in seed germination. Some seeds, such as those from petrocosmeas, need to be sown in the cold weather.

Karyn cautioned that the the moisture content of the mix must be watched once the seeds have germinated. Too much moisture will result in seed rot or, once the seedlings have emerged, damping off. After the seeds have sprouted, let them grow a bit before transplanting the seedlings. Karyn transplants them to community pots and then again as they get larger to another pot, but with fewer plants each time. Transplanting of seedlings has been shown to encourage quicker and stronger growth. The pots are in a covered container during this period. Alternatively, the soil around roots of each seedling can be disturbed with a toothpick. She continues repotting until the seedlings are mature. When they are ready to be moved out of the enclosed container, Karyn starts to harden them off by propping the cover up first on one end, then both ends. Karyn grows her seedlings in a warm area and does not use heating pads. She has found, in her growing conditions, it takes about 18 months from planting seeds to the production of a sale plant.

I, for one, came away from Karyn's talk with a new resolve to grow from seed, and maybe even to try pollination!



Stylised drawing of a
Vertical cross-section along the length of a *Streptocarpus* flower
 Please credit "Anderson's Streptocarpus"



<http://www.streptocarpus.co.nz>

Reprinted with permission from *Gesneriad News*, the newsletter of the Long Island Gesneriad Society, Vol 47, No 9, June 2016, Mel Grice, editor.




The Delaware African Violet and Gesneriad Society would like to invite you to join us for this year's convention, "Gesneriads in the First State." We are really excited about the programs that have been put together and think you will enjoy them while learning how to grow superior plants from some of the world's leading experts. The event will be held in Wilmington, Delaware, easily accessible by plane (Philadelphia Airport), train (Amtrak and SEPTA), and car (off I-95 in Delaware). Register online: <http://gesneriadsociety.org/conventions/2016-convention-wilmington-delaware/>


Gesneriad Society Webinar Information

The Gesneriad Society presents Alan LaVergne's webinar, "The Joy of Sinningias," beginning June 16, 2016 at 9:00 p.m. EDT. He is the driving force behind the website, "Sinningia and Friends," and has extensive experience growing sinningias indoors and outdoors. Register and be able to see it anytime through the expiration date. If your chapter has Internet, use it as a program.

<https://shop.gesneriadsociety.org/collections/webinars/products/webinar-joy-of-sinningias>



The Gesneriad Society



The Joy of Sinningias
with
Alan LaVergne

Change your labels — A recently published article in *Gardens' Bulletin Singapore* has transferred *Primulina tamiana* to *Deinostigma tamiana*. See <http://novataxa.blogspot.com/2016/05/deinostigma.html> for more information.



From the editor —

May has been a month of travel for me. I have just returned from the AVSC Convention in Calgary, AB, Canada and the African Violet & Gesneriad Society Show in Western New York. So the past few weeks have been a busy time for me. My own plants are sorely in need of attention!

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

Mel

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For additional information, contact: gesneriaddevelopment@gmail.com

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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.

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