



# Gleanings

a monthly newsletter from The Gesneriad Society, Inc.

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

Volume 4, Number 9

September 2013

Welcome to the latest issue of **Gleanings!** This issue includes photos of Karyn Cichocki's growing areas, Alcie Maxwell's thoughts on *Sinningia speciosa*, Ben Paternoster's experience with growing *Kohleria* 'Pink Shadows', and Coming Events.

Hope you enjoy **Gleanings!**

Mel Grice, Editor



Hung Nguyen of San Jose, California is fortunate to be able to grow *Sinningia tubiflora* outside year round in a location that receives full sun.



# A Visit to Karyn Cichocki's Growing Areas

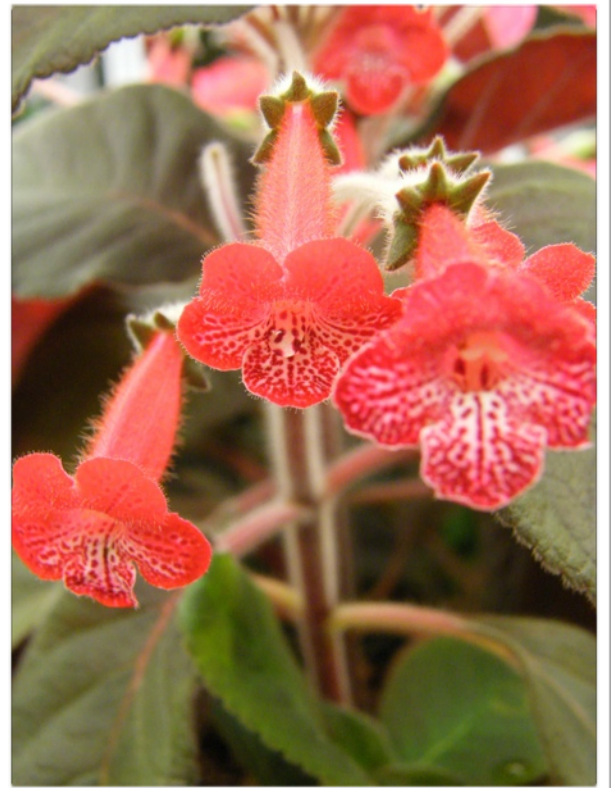
Karyn Cichocki [kdc05@ptd.net](mailto:kdc05@ptd.net)  
Lafayette, New Jersey, USA





*Achimenes flava*

Photos by Karyn Cichocki



*Kohleria 'Ruby'*



*Achimenes misera*



*Columnnea schimpffii*



*Columnnea schimpffii*





*Kohleria spicata*



*Kohleria spicata*

All photos by Karyn Cichocki



# My First Time Growing *Sinningia speciosa*

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

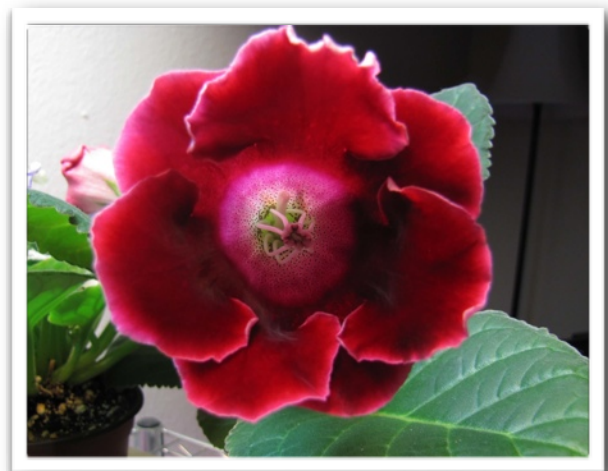
I remember the first time I laid eyes on it. It was March 2011, and I was at my first show hosted by the three African violet clubs in the Dallas Metro area. At that time, I was not a member of any of those clubs. I only casually knew about African violets and *Streptocarpus* – and I had just learned that *Streptocarpus* even existed by seeing a great plant of *Streptocarpus* 'Purple Panda' exhibited in the showroom.

I was sitting in one of those obligatory instructional classes that clubs hold at shows. You know, the ones that teach the public how to care for their violets just long enough to enjoy them but not so long that they won't come back to the club sale next year to purchase another plant. After talking about potting and propagating African violets, one of the instructors said that she was now going to talk about one of African violets' "kissing cousins." She removed this plant with bright red blossoms from her box on the floor and placed it on the table.

I was mesmerized. Time had stopped. I remember the bright red blossoms with thin white lines on the edges of the petals that complemented the white "body parts" in the center of the flower. It was like the plant was looking at me. I had to get one.

The instructor eventually revealed that the plant was a "Florist Gloxinia." She attempted to tell all of us how a "Florist Gloxinia" should now be called *Sinningia speciosa*, but all of that information was lost on me and my fellow newbies in the class. The instructor said she couldn't give us cuttings of the plant, but she pulled out a copy of *How to Know and Grow Gesneriads* and suggested that we join The Gesneriad Society to obtain seeds. That was the first time I heard of The Gesneriad Society, and I joined soon after that class.

It took me quite a while to obtain *Sinningia speciosa* seed. I had a large learning curve to overcome. (I barely knew how to care for African violets, now I was supposed to learn how to care for varieties of *Sinningia speciosas*!) To tide me over, I purchased a plant of *Sinningia* 'Bristol's Good Morning' from the Violet Barn, which was the only vendor that I could find who sold actual plants instead of seed. When the plant bloomed for me for the first time in June 2011, I was just itching to try different varieties.



*Sinningia* 'Bristol's Good Morning'

I became aware of the different *Sinningia speciosa* varieties from several sources. Charles Lawn hybrids were specifically mentioned in the *How to Know and Grow Gesneriads* book, so when I saw additional pictures of his hybrids in my Google searches, I quickly placed his plants on my Must Get list. I learned about cultural information from a 1965 book by Peggie Schulz named *Gloxinias—and How to Grow Them*. Finally, I gained knowledge of how to grow *Sinningia speciosa* from seed from Steven Wood's Gloxinia feature on his Senior

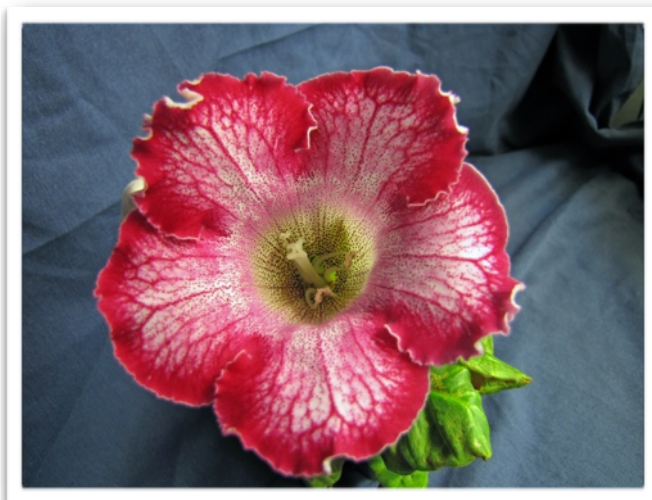
Gardening website (<http://www.senior-gardening.com/features/gloxinias.html>). Now I just had to get the seed.

I had placed an order with The Gesneriad Society's Seed Fund for Charles Lawn hybrids, and I eventually received the seed in July 2011. I sowed the seeds on top of a moistened 1-1-1 mix of a seed starting mix, fine vermiculite, and sand. I had the mix in a clear plastic container with a clear lid, and I placed the container about four to six inches from a two-bulb T12 fixture.

The seed germinated. Emboldened, I purchased seed of the commercial lines Brocade mix and Empress mix from an Ebay vendor. I sowed them in August 2011, and I got pretty decent germination.

Fall and Winter 2011 were a very exciting time for me. Aside from the Thanksgiving feasts, the Christmas parties, and the onslaughts on Black Friday, I watched as the leaves of all those seedlings grew larger and larger each day. I fussed over them a little too much because I kept moving them to different areas of my grow room where they received varying degrees of light intensities.

In December 2011, my three Charles Lawn hybrids were the first to bloom. They bloomed 22 weeks after being sown.



Charles Lawn red hybrid



Charles Lawn white hybrid

The double Brocade and Empress mixes bloomed quickly after the Charles Lawn hybrids.

This purple Brocade plant bloomed 15 weeks after sowing. The plant shows off the double blooms associated with the Brocade mix. The leaves are burnt because I kept changing the plant to shelves with different light intensities (i.e., moving from T12 lights, to T8s, to high output T5s). After much trial and error, I realized that in my conditions *Sinningia speciosas* grow best under a four-bulb T8 fixture. (photo on next page)

The other plants in the Brocade mix had varying shades of pink double blossoms. These plants were noticeably smaller in size than the purple version. They all bloomed in about 15 weeks after sowing.

The Empress mix gave me the best variation in bloom colors. Like the Brocade seedlings, the Empress seedlings all generally bloomed within 16 weeks after sowing. They are also compact in size. (photos on next page)



Purple Brocade hybrid



Pink Brocade hybrid



Purple edged Empress hybrid



Purple dotted Empress hybrid

With so many blooming plants produced, I had an easy time of choosing presents for my family and friends at Christmas.

Months later, I returned to that Dallas African violet show where my *Sinningia speciosa* obsession started. I was a full-fledged member of one of the clubs, so I



Red Empress hybrid



entered two of my best Sinningias in the show. I received two blue ribbons.



## Kohleria 'Pink Shadows'

Ben Paternoster [ben9@optonline.net](mailto:ben9@optonline.net)  
Huntington, New York, USA



*Kohleria 'Pink Shadows'*  
Paul Susi photo

Every once in awhile a plant can be labeled as "spectacular" by observers and grower. I have had this Kohleria in this container for many years. The many rhizomes sprout, grow to maturity, get tired looking and I eventually cut the growth back to the soil level. The cycle repeats. The cycle that resulted in the plant pictured was different. Usually, the new growth from the many rhizomes varies resulting in various plant heights and bloom times. This time everything came together at the same time to produce a specimen in which the growth from the

many rhizomes produced a uniform mound shape and distribution of bloom. How did I achieve this? It has never happened for me before. I did nothing different. I will, however, give some credit to this particular John Boggan hybrid. It has a compact habit that increases the probability that this Kohleria might produce this result. Other than that, it was pure luck!

Reprinted from *Gesneriad News*, the newsletter of the Long Island Gesneriad Society, Volume 45, no. 1, September 2013, Mel Grice, editor.

# Coming Events

## **September 14-15 — Sacramento, CA** **Delta Gesneriad & AVS Show and Plant Sale**

Sacramento Garden & Arts Center, 3330 McKinley Blvd., Sacramento, CA

September 14 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

September 15 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Contact: Lynn Lombard [lynn\\_lombard@att.net](mailto:lynn_lombard@att.net) or <http://www.sacviolets.org/>

## **September 21 — San Francisco, CA** **San Francisco Gesneriad Society Judged Show and Plant Sale**

Golden Gate Park, San Francisco County Fair Building, 9th Ave. and Lincoln Way, San Francisco, CA 94122

September 21 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Contact: Paulo Castello da Costa [sfgs2013@outlook.com](mailto:sfgs2013@outlook.com)

<http://www.sfgesneriads.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/sfgesneriads>

## **September 21-22 — Boylston, MA** **New England Chapter, The Gesneriad Society Judged Show and Plant Sale**

Buxton Branch, American Begonia Society participating in combined show and sale.

Tower Hill Botanic Garden, 11 French Drive, Boylston, MA

September 21 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

September 22 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Contact: Leslie Milde [meribush@aol.com](mailto:meribush@aol.com)

Admission: \$12.00 adults, \$9.00 seniors and \$7.00 youth (6-18).

## **September 21-22 — Nashville, TN** **The Tennessee Gesneriad Society Flower Show and Sale**

Cheekwood's Botanic Hall, 1200 Forrest Park Drive, Nashville, TN, 37205

September 21 from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

September 22 from 11:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Contact : Carol Ann Bonner 615-293-5470 or [cabonner@gmail.com](mailto:cabonner@gmail.com)

## **September 27-28 — Kansas City, MO** **Heart of America Chapter Flower Show and Sale**

Loose Park Garden Center Building, Loose Park, 5200 Pennsylvania Avenue, Kansas City, MO. Phone for Building: 816-784-5300

September 27 Plant Sale only open to public during judging from 12:00 to 4:00 p.m.

September 28 Flower Show and Plant Sale from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Contact: Susan Grose [sagrose@gmail.com](mailto:sagrose@gmail.com)

## **October 6 — Morristown, NJ** **Frelinghuysen Arboretum Gesneriad Society Annual Show and Plant Sale**

Frelinghuysen Arboretum, 353 E. Hanover Ave, Morristown, NJ, 07960

October 6 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Contact : Karyn Cichocki 973-579-7914 or [kdc05@ptd.net](mailto:kdc05@ptd.net)



**From the editor —**

The fall shows are coming up. I hope to see many well-grown gesneriads and many good friends at the shows. Please introduce yourself to me if I have not met you yet!

Please continue sending articles. 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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Paul Susi, Development Chairperson  
2 Rushmore Street, South Huntington, NY 11746  
For additional information, contact: <development@gesneriadsociety.org>.

**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 on the back cover 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, slide programs and seed fund. Membership begins upon receipt of dues.

**New Member** Date \_\_\_\_\_

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