



Gleanings

a monthly newsletter from The Gesneriad Society, Inc.

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

Volume 8, Number 1

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Welcome to the latest issue of **Gleanings**! This issue includes photos from Alcie Maxwell, excerpts from Pavel Enikeev's article on *Streptocarpus*, Dale Martens' article about wintering gesneriads, and information about the next webinar.

Hope you enjoy **Gleanings**!



Alcie Maxwell of Bossier City, Louisiana, USA, sent these photos of one of his new seedlings that was a cross of *Sinningia* 'Clara Louise' x *Sinningia* 'Owlsee Red Hot'. See photos of the plant parents and a second seedling resulting from this cross on the following page.



Meet the parents

Alcie Maxwell
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Sinningia 'Owlsee Red Hot'



Another seedling from *Sinningia* 'Clara Louise' x
S. 'Owlsee Red Hot'



Sinningia 'Clara Louise', a
hybrid created by Margery
Anderson-Clive named in
honor of her mother.

Photos by Alcie Maxwell

All About Streptocarpus — Introduction

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*Editor's note: Pavel Enikeev and Olga Makarova, PhD are co-authoring an English-language book on Streptocarpus based on Pavel's Russian-language book, Стрептокарпус. **Gesneriads** is introducing this book in serialization.*

The following conversation actually took place in a friend's home after she was smitten by *Streptocarpus*.

Wife: "My dear, I've decided to dedicate my life to *Streptocarpus*."

Husband, working on computer: "Ha-ha. Good joke."

Wife: "Excuse me. No joke. What do you mean?"

Husband: "The children's last strep infection practically transformed them into corpses."

Wife: "Oh, my . . . I was talking about *Streptocarpus* the plant, but not strep and corpses."

Husband: "You should start by renaming them."

It's funny that so many times when we mention that we are growing *Streptocarpus* people wrinkle their brows and ask what "that" is. Ah! These beautiful plants with the not-so-beautiful name. Had Gertrude Stein written instead, "A streptocarpus is a streptocarpus is a streptocarpus," her editor would have winced.

As many people already know the word *Streptocarpus* did not come from English, but originated from the two latin words that mean "twisted fruit," referring to the twisting pod seen in mature plants. The very first wild species of *Streptocarpus* was discovered in 1818 by James Bowie. By now approximately 150 species have been discovered.



Pavel's table at the Dnepropetrovsk Streptocarpus show in May 2012

All photos taken by Pavel Enikeev

Streptocarpus species are found mostly in southern Africa and Madagascar.

Now *Streptocarpus* is recognized as a genus in the family Gesneriaceae. The genus *Streptocarpus* has two subgenera: *Streptocarpella* and *Streptocarpus*. Species of the subgenus *Streptocarpella* have a stem. A recent nuclear DNA molecular comparison study shows that our famous plant genus *Saintpaulia* (African violets) is most closely related to *Streptocarpella*. More studies need to be done to precisely place these two groups relative to each other. We will leave that to taxonomists.

In this series we are only going to talk about the second subgenus of *Streptocarpus* that has the same name – *Streptocarpus*. Here we'll call them by their genus name *Streptocarpus* but also refer to the plants as "streps" for short.

There are a few morphologically different groups of native streptocarpus. One group comprises species that grow only one large leaf. These species are called unifoliate. They produce a few flower stalks that bear seed pods and after that the whole plant is destined to die. Most unifoliate are annuals or live for a few years at most.

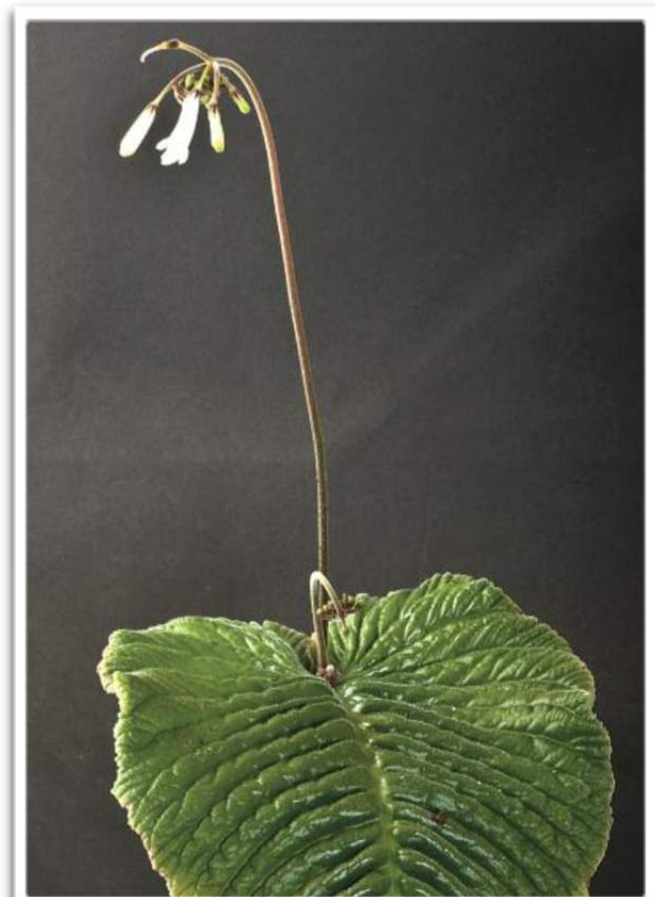


Pavel Enikeev



Olga Makarova

To be continued in next issue.



Streptocarpus wilmsii, a unifoliate species

Can't wait to read the rest of Pavel's articles? –

This article appeared originally in **Gesneriads** Vol. 66, No. 1, First Quarter 2016, Peter Shalit, editor. Read other interesting articles like this about gesneriads by becoming a member of The Gesneriad Society and receiving our quarterly 64-page journal.

Wintering Gesneriads

Dale Martens dalemartens@mchsi.com
Sherrard, Illinois, USA

I have friends who grow in greenhouses and outdoors in pots or in the ground, and they have to be aware of impending winter weather. Since I grow on fluorescent plant stands, one would think I'd do nothing to winter my gesneriads. Although my plants receive twelve hours of artificial light all year around, they "know" winter is coming because of the decrease in the natural light that comes through the windows into the plant room. Blooming often slows down by early November. That's when I begin to prepare my plants for winter.

In early November I leach the pots with tepid water. I pour two or three cups of water through the pots to remove excess salts and fertilizer. I cut off all the older leaves on the plants. After leaching, I decide if the plants are overgrown enough to need dividing and transplanting to three-ounce Solo cups. For streptocarpus I remove all the flowers and buds until mid-February or even to early March. This causes the plants to produce new leaves. The plant room is cooler in winter as we turn down the thermostat to around 67°F (19°C). This means the pint reservoirs don't empty for about three weeks as opposed to weekly during summer when plants are blooming.

By the end of November the rhizomatous plants such as achimenes, smithianthas, gloxinias, diastemas, amalophyllons and phinaeas look pretty ragged and become susceptible to powdery mildew. I have to decide whether to harvest rhizomes for storage, or just leave them in the pots. The latter is usually easier for me. I moisten the mix, but not so the mix is soaking wet. Then I put each pot in a plastic baggie to spend time in a box in the dark closet for the winter.

I have been in situations where we lost electrical power for 48 hours during snowstorms. In that case, because we didn't know when the power would return, I removed the plants from wick reservoirs so the soilless mix would dry out. Being excessively cold with wet roots is a dire situation. Putting several pots together in large trays, covered with light-weight plastic dry-cleaner bags, seemed to help keep damage under control. If I had a rare plant that was in real danger of getting cold, I know that I would box it and keep it under a blanket with me! A few dark days of warmth are better than freezing.

Michael Riley, who grows several gesneriads on a rooftop in New York City, covers his plants with styrofoam when the thermometer hits 30°F (-1°C). If there's prolonged cold, he'll temporarily bring them indoors. His *Aeschynanthus buxifolius* stays outside to 30°F (-1°C). When asked about alpine gesneriads, Michael says they need the



Hardy planting of *Oreocharis auricula*, *vaccinium*, and *Oreocharis pankaiyuae* exhibited by Michael Riley at the 2016 Gesneriad Society Convention Flower Show. Photo: Mel Grice

outdoor cold during winter, but cautions they need protection from the wind that will desiccate them if there is no snow cover. He's been known to water the alpines in winter, too.

Alpine gesneriads tolerate various degrees of frost or freezing weather. For example, *Mitraria coccinea* tolerates frost on occasion. *Conandron ramondioides* needs to be watered sparingly in the winter. Its origin is mountains in Eastern Asia, Taiwan, and Japan. A light covering of snow is okay for it. When it is dormant, one finds small cabbage-like formations that eventually become new plants.



Conandron ramondioides
and dormant form below



Ingrid Lindskog lives in Sweden and shares with us a photo of an alpine gesneriad, *Haberlea rhodopensis*. Her

alpine gesneriads survive three feet of snow at temperatures of -4°F (-20°C). She reports that one winter it rained, covering the plants with ice, and yet they still survived.



Mitraria coccinea

Julie Mavity-Hudson's area of Tennessee can get down to 20°F (-7°C). She says several local gesneriad growers grow *Sinningia sellovii* and *S. tubiflora* outdoors. She has had a seemannia or two come back after a mild winter by using a light mulch over them. She used to put a heavy straw covering over achimenes planted in the ground.

Jaco Nel in the UK grows his streptocarpus plants in an unheated garage. Winter temperatures can go below freezing. The fluorescent lights are on for 12 hours a day, giving some heat. His greenhouse has a pipe heater set so the area does not go below 41°F (5°C). He grows on the dry side, only giving water when they are almost fully dry. In the winter they easily go three to four weeks between waterings. He experimented with

growing streps outdoors in the garden. Frosty nights killed newly emerging leaves in February, but older leaves were fine. However, when frost and wet weather combined, he lost the plants. His sister lives in southern Africa and has grown streps for three years outdoors under an acacia tree. Winter night temperatures frequently drop below 31°F (-1°C), but the plants seem to be protected from frost while under the tree.

Although Ruth Coulson's area of Australia doesn't freeze in winter, it is cooler. Many of her plants are grown outdoors. She prefers everything to be a bit drier in winter. The exception to that is when winter can bring strong, cold winds. In that case she needs to keep her gesneriads wetter to prevent them from drying out. Otherwise, she does not fertilize in winter months (mid-June to mid-August).



Haberlea rhodopensis. Photo: Ingrid Lindskog

Alan LaVergne lives in Northern California where



Ramonda myconi Photo: Karyn Cichocki

it can get as low as 28°F (-2°C) for a week or so in winter. Beginning in November, he moves his sinningia pots under the patio roof and onto shelving units. He feels the patio roof adds three to four degrees of warmth with those closer to the house being more protected. These are the most sensitive to cold and must be brought indoors: *Sinningia speciosa*, *S. aghensis*, *S. bragae* (formerly "Ibitioca"), and *S. nordestina*.

Alan gave a list of some sinningia species not harmed by 28°F (-2°C). These include *Sinningia sellovii* and *S. leucotricha*. *Sinningia glaziovana*, *S. bullata*, and *S. reitzii* keep their top growth year around. *Sinningia hatschbachii* blooms in winter but needs some protection. Some species of *Sinningia* go completely dormant in winter by dropping their top growth. These are only damaged if the freeze arrives before abscission is complete.

Alan said the late Celine Chase used to cover her plants with newspaper if it was going to be a cold night. Alan reports that sinningias that tolerate colder temperature also seem to appreciate the winter rain. He speculates the rain leaches the fertilizer salts out of the soil. They sprout earlier and more vigorously.



Haberlea rhodopensis virginalis
Photo: Karyn Cichocki



Sinningia bullata
Photo: Paul Susi



Sinningia leucotricha

Photos by the author unless otherwise noted

This article appeared originally in **Gesneriads** Vol. 66, No. 4, Fourth Quarter 2016, Peter Shalit, editor. Read other interesting articles like this about gesneriads by becoming a member of The Gesneriad Society and receiving our quarterly 64-page journal.

Next Gesneriad Society Webinar



The Gesneriad Society



Growing Smithiantha and Eucodonia: Two Sisters from Mexico

with
Michael Riley

Michael Riley holding *Smithiantha* 'Sassy Redhead'

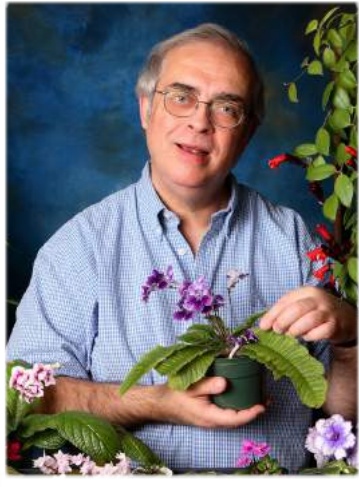
Many of us in The Gesneriad Society grow and love these colorful flowers and velvet-leaved plants from Mexico. They have been a horticultural sensation since they arrived in Europe, over 175 years ago. Join Michael Riley to hear the fascinating story of why these few species have provided

hybridizers and growers with an infinite array of hybrids to propagate and grow on our windowsills, under lights or outdoors – you will love these wonderful plants. Put it on your new calendar for Tuesday, January 31st at 9pm EST. You will receive your link to the live session within 24 hours of the start of the webinar.

<https://the-gesneriad-society.myshopify.com/collections/frontpage/products/webinar-growing-smithiantha-and-eucodonia>

There is an opportunity to submit questions during the live sessions but not during the anytime viewing. The Anytime Viewing version will be available 24 hours after the live session. Please note that while you can have as many people as you want in the room listening, you cannot share your link with others. The unique login link will only admit one computer. Please logon 10–15 minutes early to ensure you don't miss the beginning of the talk. Occasionally at large events, it can take a few minutes to get access to the webinar room.

Dale Martens along with Mary Schaeffer and Paul Susi, the webinar team.



From the editor —
 Happy New Year! I have already registered for the Gesneriad Convention in Omaha this year. Hope to see a lot of you there this summer. I hope to bring several entries!

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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Betsy Gottshall, Development Chairperson
 108 Godshall Road, Collegeville, PA 19426
 For additional information, contact: gottshb@verizon.net

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The Gesneriad Society Membership Secretary, Bob Clark,
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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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