



The Newsletter of the Delaware African Violet and Gesneriad Society

Volume XII, No. 10

June 2010

AVSA Judging School Announced

One of the best ways to learn about African Violets and Gesneriads is to participate in a judging school. For the competitive grower, a judging school provides valuable insight on what how plants are evaluated. The school also is a great way to discover a plant's real potential.

Our own Carol Callaghan will be offering an AVSA Judging School at her home on Wednesday, September 22, 2007. That is only three months away, and those who would like to participate in the school need to purchase and review *The AVSA Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors and Judges*. This book includes growing, showing and judging information about African violets and their gesneriad cousins, as well as an introduction to the history of the African violet plant and the African Violet Society. It can be purchased through the AVSA Store for \$20.00 if you are a member of AVSA and also is available to non-member for \$30.00. If you prefer, you may order by calling our toll-free phone number 1-800-770-2872, or contact them at (409) 839-4725.

There was a note in the magazine that they would not take credit card orders for under \$25. If you wanted to call the office and order the Handbook which is \$20, you might want to combine your order with a friend to go over the \$25 or perhaps order something else, like the book from the Storks. Other things that could be combined with your order are entry tags (\$8.75 for 100) or culture folders (new pricing not in latest magazine). There might be a charge for shipping and handling, so you would need to check with the AVSA office

The AVSA Judges School will cost \$20 (\$15 for those not taking the exam) and includes coffee cake in the morning, coffee, tea and iced tea all day and ice cream and cake for dessert. Bring your own sandwich. Space is limited and Carol notes that it looks like she will have 8 or 9 students, which fits nicely into her living room. If you want to volunteer to bring goodies for the morning or dessert, let Carol know so she can plan accordingly.

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The \$10 annual dues are now payable to Carol Callaghan, the Chapter's Treasurer. Make checks payable to DAVS and give them to her at either the June meeting or mail them to her at her address on page 3 of this newsletter.

Gesneriads in the Garden

By Quentin Schlieder

Many Gesneriads grow successfully outdoors including hardy types that winter outdoors like *Haberlea*, *Titanotrichum*, *Ramonda*, and *Hemiboea*.

I have had these over winter for several years now in a shady and protected corner of my Zone 7a garden in Smyrna, DE. The raised bed in which they grow, while moisture retentive, offers excellent drainage. Indeed it is heat, rather than cold, which is the limiting factor with the alpine Gesneriads like *Haberlea* and *Ramonda*, which grow very well in gardens in New England.



This plant of Haberlea rhodopensis has been growing in my Smyrna garden for the past five years in a protected, shady corner.

Although I have grown *Sinningia tubiflora* successfully in pots for five years in pots in the garden, many members have been successful growing and overwintering this and other species of *Sinningia* in the garden. Forming large underground tubers, *Sinningia tubiflora* not only lives, but spreads nicely in their gardens. All summer long, the green, felty leaf clumps are topped with 2' tall spikes of 6" long, very fragrant, pure white flowers...somewhat resembling *Hosta plantaginea*. Hummingbirds love this plant.

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...*Judging School – Continued from page 1...*

Carol notes that she will cover all the changes in the class, and you can expect to see some of them on the exam. Another way to prepare is to look at old exams. If this is your first class, borrow old exams from a friend, or let Carol know and she will send you copies of some of her old exams. AVSA requires that the questions be 2, 4, 5 or 10 parts (probably for easy grading) - so there are some things which fall nicely into those categories, and Carol often uses them in exams.

Carol generally organizes the school according to the following schedule:

- 8:30 Registration, bring current AVSA membership card which is on the cover of each African Violet magazine, latest AVSA Handbook (2007), and three blue ribbons if you are taking exam for credit. See Handbook for details about the ribbons.
- 9-12 Lecture with a 15 minute break at about 10:30
- 12 - 1 Lunch
- 1-2 More lecture and practice point scoring
- 2-2:30 Additional practice point scoring, if needed, or a break to relax!
- 2:30-4 Exam

Each student is asked to bring at least one African violet, so that we have plenty of plants for the practice point scoring. Gesneriads would be good for discussion but are not needed for point scoring.

If you are interested in attending the September 22, 2010 judging school at Carol's house, please contact her as soon as possible by telephone at (302) 478-3633 or by e-mail at mom.callag2@verizon.net.

May Meeting Plant Sale & Raffle

The Society realized \$20 on the raffle and \$72 on plant, supply and magazine sales at the May meeting. Thank you to Geno Iubatti, Carol Callaghan and Quentin Schlieder for their generous donations to the raffle.

The sale was fantastic and offered a great variety of Saintpaulias and other gesneriads, some quite choice and rare, including *Paradrymonia densa*. Thank you to Grace Prophet, Sandra Hill, Barb Borleske, Nancy Murray, Maria Walueff, Bobby LaFashia, Ann Petrucci and Quentin Schlieder for donating plants for the sales table. There also was a great assortment of supplies, including fertilizer and pots at very attractive prices. A special thanks to Gary Hunter for organizing and conducting the sale!

...*Gesneriads in the Garden – Continued from page 1...*

Plant Delights Nursery Inc. a mail order nursery in Raleigh, North Carolina specializing in new and rare perennials, offers a number of *Sinningia* species and hybrids they have found hardy in Zone 7b (<http://www.plantdelights.com/Catalog/Current/page60.html>). Gary Hunter has procured a number of the hybrids they offer and I am propagating them. It will be interesting to see how they fare outdoors in winter here in Smyrna.



Sinningia tubiflora flowering eight weeks after having been divided. It is easy to grow and admired by cactus enthusiasts!

John Boggan, a member of the National Capital Chapter of the Gesneriad Society who resides in Washington, DC has been a pioneer in growing many Gesneriads outdoors. I never was successful in growing *Titanotrichum oldhamii*, a gesneriad from Taiwan, under lights, and at his encouragement tried it outdoors. The results have been incredible. It has flowered in late summer and early autumn for several years sporting spikes of showy golden flowers with orange-red throats.

Another member of the National Capital Chapter, Jim Roberts encouraged me to try *Hemiboea subcapitata* (formerly *Hemiboea henryi*) outdoors in the garden. It

shares the same protected shady nook with the *Ramondas*, *Haberleas* and *Titanotrichum* and has proven itself reliably hardy for many years in a row. Jim provides a protective cover over the ground when they go dormant to help keep the ground frozen since he believes that freeze-thaw cycles are not good for the dormant rhizomes. However, I honestly have never provided any extra protection. This handsome plant makes a beautiful ground cover with nice clusters of creamy white tubular flowers with reddish throats in late summer.

There are reports of many other gesneriads proving themselves hardy outdoors including *Achimenes*, *Conandron*, *Optithandra*, *Lysionotus*, *Raphiocarpus*, *Jankaea* (good luck with this one with our heat and humidity!) and *Oreocharis*. Some adventurous souls have suggested they are going to try *Chirita*, *Petrocosmea* and *Kohleria*.

Tender gesneriads thrive in planters outdoors from late spring to early autumn and can be used to add interest to decks and patios. Indeed, this may be the easiest (and least expensive) way to extend you collection without the need for additional light stands or crowded windowsills. One friend, Karyn Cichocki, has grown stunning containers of mixed gesneriads.



Karyn Cichocki's planters contained an assortment of plants including Kohleria, Sinningia and Chrysothemis. Karyn lives in Lafayette, NJ. Photo courtesy of Karyn Cichocki.

I have found that *Achimenes* grow luxuriously outdoors in our summers. I struggled for many years to produce satisfactory plants indoors under lights and a few years ago decided to pot them up and place them on my patio which receives full sun for much of the day. I overwinter the dormant rhizomes in their pots on my east facing sun porch under other larger plants. The temperature stays between 50-60 degrees F. for most of the winter. I currently am growing the cultivars 'Desiree,' 'Purple King,' and 'Double Blue Rose.' This year I am planning to add a few more!



I struggled to keep the double flowered Achimenes 'Desiree' alive from year to year until I transferred it to the patio a few years ago. It filled the pot with rhizomes in one season and I have shared it with many fellow growers.

This year I am growing *Chrysothemis pulchella* (Ecuador) on my sun porch with high hopes of a stellar display. I also plan to acclimate *Gloxinia sylvatica* and *Kohleria* 'Snakeskin' to my patio based on information I have received for other growers. I have some *Eucadonias* that also are destined to the garden for trial. We still have a lot to learn about the hardiness of Gesneriads and their use outdoors in containers during the warmer months. Dare to experiment; you might be pleasantly surprised by the results!

Favorite 25 Lists Reminder

Remember it's time for members to review their favorite plants and choose a list of 25 to send to AVSA. Carol Callaghan has again graciously assumed this task, so if you haven't submitted them to her, submit them June pot luck dinner, e-mail them to her at mom.callag2@verizon.net or mail them to her at:

**Carol Callaghan
2806 Rickdale Road
Talleybrook
Wilmington, DE 19810**

Final Meeting of the Season...

Tuesday, June 8, 2010 – 6:00 p.m.

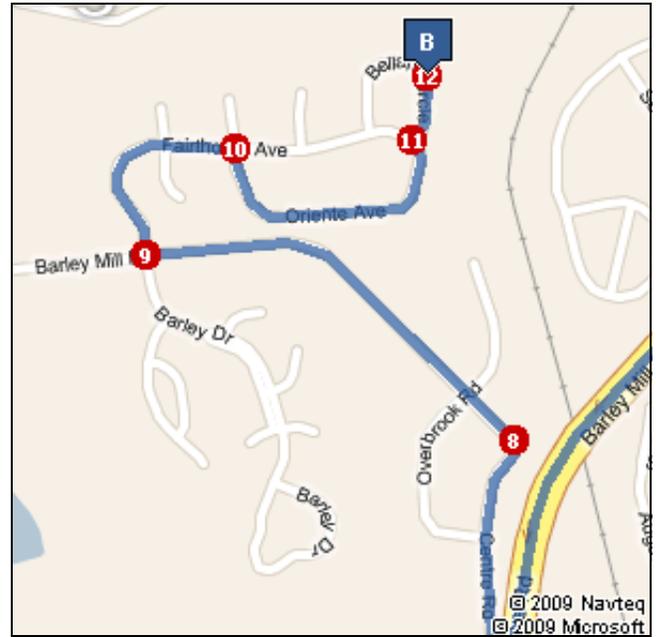
(Note earlier time!)

***Potluck Dinner and Picnic at the Borleskes' garden,
116 Bellant Circle, Greenville, DE 19807***

Everyone is invited to bring their significant other or a guest and your favorite dish. If you didn't sign up at the May meeting and still want to attend, call Barb Borleske at (302) 691-8487 and let her know what you will be bringing. Installation of Officers and a brief business meeting follow dinner. Also don't forget to pay you dues for next year! The directions below are from Sunshine Assisted Living where we held our monthly meetings...

- 1. Depart 2215 Shipley Rd, Wilmington, DE 19803-2305 0.7 mi
-  2. Turn right onto SR-261 / Foulk Rd 0.4 mi
-  3. Bear right onto Murphy Rd (EXXON on the corner) 0.7 mi
-  4. Road name changes to SR-141 / Powder Mill Rd 0.3 mi
-  5. Bear right toward SR-141 South / Powder Mill Rd 0.2 mi
-  6. Keep straight onto SR-141 South / Powder Mill Rd 2.9 mi
-  7. Turn right, and then immediately turn right onto Centre Rd 0.2 mi
-  8. Road name changes to Barley Mill Rd 0.5 mi

-  9. Turn right onto Fairthorne Ave 0.2 mi
-  10. Turn right onto Oriente Ave 0.3 mi
-  11. Turn right onto Bellant Circle 0.1 mi
- 12. Arrive at 116 Bellant Cir, Greenville, DE 19807-2267 . The last intersection is Fairthorne Ave



Gary Hunter is selling shares to support the propagation and distribution of a relatively new Sinningia cultivar 'Prudence Risley,' which he believes has great garden potential. Shares cost \$20 each and entitle the buyer to a plant of S. 'Prudence Risley.' See Gary at the picnic if you are interested!

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c/o Quentin Schlieder, Editor
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First Class Mail

Time Value/ Please Expedite!