



The Newsletter of the Delaware African Violet and Gesneriad Society

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January 2011

Winter Weather Worries

Winter weather which may cause the cancellation of a meeting is always a concern at this time of year. The Society tends to decide whether to cancel a meeting on the side of caution. Please check your e-mail and or telephone messages before leaving for a meeting. Carol Moody is Chair of the Telephone/E-mail Committee, and either she or someone on the Committee will try to contact you in the event of a cancellation. If in doubt, call either Carol at (302) 477-1703, or Quentin Schlieder at (302) 653-6449.

Convention Information Now Available

Both the African Violet Society and The Gesneriad Society have posted their Convention information on line. It is possible to register on line on the Gesneriad Society website, and the earlier the register, the earlier you are admitted to plant sales!



We will have copies of the convention registration information for both the AVSA and The Gesneriad Society conventions at next Tuesday evenings meeting. If you are unable to attend the

meeting and don't have access to the internet, contact Quentin at (302) 653-6449 and a packet will be mailed to you.

We have been offering daytrips to members recently and one proposal is to schedule a trip to the AVSA Convention on Friday, May 20, 2011 for members who cannot attend the full convention. The show and sales rooms are open to the public from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. that day and this will be an unusual opportunity to see fantastic show plants and to purchase great African violets and supplies since the Convention will be held at Crowne Plaza Philadelphia/Cherry Hill in nearby Cherry Hill, New Jersey. There may be a modest charge to access the show and sale for those not registered for the Convention. I believe it is \$5.00. We will discuss this proposal further at our Tuesday evening meeting.

Dr. Lindstrom Appreciates Support for his Work

Gary Hunter received this note of appreciation for our member's support of his gesneriad hybridization program, and he asked that it be included in our Newsletter. His hybrid bonus plant *Sinningia* 'Arkansas Bells' has been in flower since early September in my light stand!



Dr. Jon T. Lindstrom, Associate Professor, Department of Horticulture, University of Arkansas and his hybrid Sinningia 'Arkansas Empress'

UofA UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE

29 Nov 2010

Dear Gary,

I would like to thank the Delaware African Violet and Gesneriad Society as well as the Liberty Bell and National Capital Society groups for their recent donation of \$1,000 to support my Gesneriad breeding program. The money will definitely help my hybridization efforts here at the University of Arkansas. I hope to be able to show some of these results at the upcoming 2011 Gesneriad convention.

I really appreciate this, thank you!

*Sincerely,
Jon*

The Genus *Nematanthus*

Editor's Note: This article is adapted from the slide script which accompanied the slide presentation titled "The Companion Genera from the Gesneriad Society which was shown at the October 12, 2010 meeting. Much of the information in the script was based information made available to participants at the Gesneriad Research Foundation seminars on the Biology of Codonanthe and the Biology of Nematanthus as well as during the GRF Study trips to Central and South America by Dr. Hans Wiehler. This is the 3rd and final part of a 3 part article.

The last group of *Nematanthus* is what was formerly called "Genus Indeterminate". Although the plants look more like *Codonanthes* on steroids, it has been determined that this group belongs in the genus *Nematanthus*. One of the most popular members of this group, now named *Nematanthus albus*, was formerly referred to as *Nematanthus* "Santa Teresa." It can be grown as a nice basket plant.

The flowers are very large and are creamy white with gold/orange spots. They also have an unusual fragrance, described by some as a combination of fine olive oil and oranges and by others as drying paint or rotting tangerines. There are two or three other species in this new group yet to be named.

The first hybrid *Nematanthus* was created by Dr. Robert E. Lee at Cornell in 1967 by crossing *Nematanthus fluminensis* by *N. fritschii* crossed with the species then-called *Nematanthus longipes*. It was named *Nematanthus* 'Stoplight'. It is a large grower, but very attractive.

In the late 60's and early 70's, Bill Saylor became interested in hybridizing *Nematanthus* and created many of the hybrids we grow today. Some of his most popular hybrids included 'Black Magic', 'Castanet', 'Rio', 'Butterscotch', 'Moonglow', and perhaps the most widely grown of all, 'Cheerio', since it is very floriferous and can be kept nice and compact if pinched regularly as a young plant.

In the mid 1970's, Bartley Schwarz also created some popular *Nematanthus* hybrids including 'Black Gold', 'Freckles', and 'Christmas Holly', well named for its bright red flowers and shiny, bright green leaves.

In the 1980's, Dr. Hans Wiehler at the Gesneriad Research Foundation in Sarasota, Florida, also did some hybridizing and released several hybrids including 'Pink Lady', the first hybrid within the genus to involve five different species, *N. crassifolius*, *fritschii*, *maculatus*, *tessmannii*, and *wettsteinii*. 'Heart Throb' is another interesting Wiehler hybrid with intense color both in the flowers

and the leaves. It is a large grower, as is 'Tequilla Sunrise'. These last two hybrids are in limited cultivation mostly in Florida where they can be grown outdoors almost year-round.

Since the introduction of several of the new species in the early 1990's, Mauro Peixoto has also been hybridizing *Nematanthus* in Brazil. One of his hybrids is a cross of *Nematanthus fluminensis* and *Nematanthus albus*.

As noted earlier, both *Codonanthe* and *Nematanthus* have a chromosome number of eight which led to attempts to cross these genera. In the late 1970's, Bill Saylor succeeded in creating the first intergeneric between *Codonanthe* and *Nematanthus*. It was called x*Codonatanthus* 'Fiesta' and was a cross between *Nematanthus wettsteinii* by *Nematanthus fritschii* by *Nematanthus crassifolius*, crossed with *Codonanthe gracilis*. Other intergenerics were soon to follow. After 'Fiesta', Bill Saylor released several other intergenerics, including x*Codonatanthus* 'Antique Gold', 'Aurora', a very popular, easy to grow hybrid, and 'Springtime'. In the early 1980's, Patrick Worley released other worthwhile intergenerics including x*Codonatanthus* 'Barsoom', and 'Vista', whose flowers are the largest of any x *Codonatanthus* now in cultivation. Mauro Peixoto also has been working on intergenerics in Brazil using some of the newerspecies including a hybrid of *Nematanthus bradei* by *Codonanthe gracilis*. With all the new species being introduced, many other new hybrids should soon be possible.

There are so many interesting species and hybrids to grow. Over 30 species are available from the Gesneriad Society Seed Fund. Cuttings and plants are available from commercial growers and most likely at chapter plant sales. These are some of the most durable plants in the gesneriad family and most can be grown easily.



x*C.* 'Antique Gold' is a hybrid produced by Bill Saylor. He crossed *Nematanthus* 'Cheerio' with *Codonanthe gracilis* to produce this attractive cultivar. 'Cheerio' is a hybrid of *N. gregarius* and *N. wettsteinii*.

Design Concepts for Container Gardens

Karyn Cichocki & Jill Fischer 2009 – Reprinted from the September 2009 issue of Gesneri-Eds, the newsletter of the Tennessee Chapter of the Gesneriad Society with the permission of the Editor and the authors. This is the first part of this two part article.

Types of Container Gardens

Terrarium and bottle garden- completely or partially enclosed container with transparent sides surrounding a miniature landscaped planting within.

Tray Landscape or Dish Garden-miniature planting in an open container or shallow dish

Natural Garden-miniature planting in a natural container such as wood or rock

Selecting a Container

Larger container will give greater scale; smaller container greatly reduces scale and is more difficult to successfully plant.

Terrarium-straight sided glass with large opening, easiest with which to work. Five gallon fish tank makes an excellent container.



Karyn's winning entry in 2009

Curved glass containers are more challenging to plant effectively, and the shape of the glass may somewhat distort the landscape. Have a glassmaker

cut a suitable glass terrarium cover with finished edges, although a cover is not required for exhibit in a gesneriad show. Shop for interesting shapes at garage sales and flea markets.

Tray Landscape or Dish Garden-choose shallow, natural colored containers made of ceramic, terracotta, or plastic. Large, round, plastic plant saucers may be used effectively. Avoid brightly colored containers, as the container will detract from the beauty of the planting.

Natural Garden-select unusual shaped driftwood or tree roots, lava or feather rock in which one may create "planting pockets" in which to place plant material. **WARNING:** Treat wood and roots before planting by soaking in a 10:1 bleach solution for 20 minutes before planting. This will help avoid introducing unwanted "critters" and inhibit mold growth on the wood.

Materials

Soil-light, sterilized. My personal preference is plain, milled, sphagnum peat moss, which I sterilize in the microwave oven, moistened with tap water for 10 minutes on high. This can be amended with vermiculite and perlite depending on the type of plants you are using.

Plant material-Plant material should be compatible (similar cultural requirements) and be proportional in scale. Vary plant material in height, color, texture for variety and interest. Consider using a single type of plant in several places in the planting to help unify the design.

Rocks-add height, promote interest. Lava rock-lightweight, craggy, interesting appearance (found in tropical fish store.)

Weathered wood-adds height and interest. **MUST** be treated with bleach solution prior to using in a terrarium

Soil Cover-cover exposed soil/peat moss with sheet sphagnum moss, "live moss" or fine 'natural colored' gravel or sand.

Planting Tools -long tweezers, large spoon, scissors, paint brush, spray bottle with water, glass cleaner (terrarium)

Time, patience, and some idea of what you are trying to create!

...to be continued next month...

Upcoming DAVS Meetings...

Tuesday, January 11, 2011 – 7:30 p.m.

Rockland Place, 1519 Rockland Rd, Wilmington, DE 19803

Hostesses: Beverages – Pam Orris

Snacks – Elizabeth Varley

Program: - “Convention 101!” – The AVSA’s 65th Convention and show will be held May 15th - May 22nd, 2011 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel Philadelphia/Cherry Hill, Cherry Hill, NJ followed by the Gesneriad Society Convention from July 5th, 2011 through July 9th, 2011 in Philadelphia, PA, hosted by the Liberty Bell Chapter and this meeting will be devoted to an in depth review of what to expect. A clinic on potting down is planned. A plant sale will conclude the evening. If you have surplus plants to share bring them. Don’t forget to bring plants for the Little Show or Show and Tell!

Tuesday, February 8, 2011 – 7:30 p.m.

Rockland Place, 1519 Rockland Rd, Wilmington, DE 19803

Hostesses: Beverages – Bobbie LaFashia

Snacks – Diane Abramson

Program: “Interpretations of the Design Schedule” Our own talented arranger and

AVSA Senior Judge Terry Celano will present this special interactive program showing slides of the design classes in our flower shows from 2001 to 2010. She will read the requirements for the class and lead a discussion as to whether or not the design fulfills those requirements.

The Delaware African Violet and Gesneriad Society Newsletter

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Smyrna, DE 19977-1431

First Class Mail

Time Value/ Please Expedite!

Upcoming Shows and Sales...

April 2 and 3, 2011 (See times below)

African Violet Club of Morris County will present “Violets Do Crafts” in the Haggerty Education Center at The Frelinghuysen Arboretum, 53 East Hanover Avenue, Morristown, NJ 07960 on Saturday 1:30-4:30 and Sunday 11- 3:00. Plant Sale. Free parking and admission. Information: Jill Fischer at HF.JG.Fischer@comcast.net.

Plan to attend...Springfield Delco AVS will be hosting a presentation by Ma and Ralph Robinson in March and our members are welcome to attend. Date, time etc. will follow. Usually it is possible to order plants from the Violet Barn and they will bring them to the meeting for you! We will try to set up car pools.



Auctioneer Anne Petrucci, ably assisted by Steve Borleske, incited spirited bidding at December’s Holiday dinner resulting in \$480 being raised for Richardson Park Learning Center.