



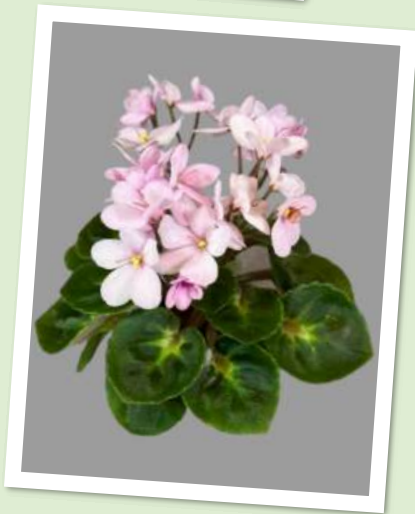
Gleanings

a monthly newsletter from **The Gesneriad Society, Inc.**

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

Volume 15, Number 10

October 2024



This issue includes Mary Schaeffer's article about moving her plants to a new home, gesneriads blooming now, and The Annual Appeal.

Hope you enjoy **Gleanings!**

Mel Grice, Editor

Streptocarpus 'Sandra P.'
grown by Terri Vicenzi from
Bloomington, Indiana. A
hybrid created by Piotr
Kluszczynski. Terri says, "It
has very large blooms which
present nicely on a relatively
compact growing plant."

Terri Vicenzi photo



Don't Leaf Me Behind: Moving Hundreds of Plants Without a Nervous Breakdown

By Mary Schaeffer

Whenever I mentioned to any of my plant friends that we were moving several hundred miles away, they all had the same question, "What about your plants? How are you going to move your plants?" Initially, I took the Scarlet O'Hara approach, since our new house wouldn't be ready for almost 12 months. I simply didn't think about it.

Obviously, that was not a sustainable plan. With no one quite certain as to what the housing market would be in early 2023, we decided to put our existing home up for sale in April. This meant confronting the plant issue. We had several agents in to look at the house and I told them all that the plants would not be moved. It probably won't surprise you to learn that none of them were pleased but they all wanted the listing so they said little. But what they thought was written all over their faces.

Addressing the Matter

So how big a problem are we talking about? I have several hundred plants in a sun room, on a plant stand in the dining room and several other smaller places around the house. Additionally, I have somewhere between 50-100 pots in our unheated basement that go outside for the summer. They are primarily achimenes, eucodonias and very tall sinningias. Although I am a numbers person, I studiously avoid counting the number of pots.

My husband suggested I consider getting rid of all my plants and buying new ones after we moved. That was absolutely not happening. But, since we really did want to get as much as possible for the house, I realized we needed to move the plants. That's when my husband came up with the idea of moving them to the basement. Since we were headed into the warmer weather months, the temperature in our unheated basement was

acceptable. He would take my lights and hang them from the basement ceiling and we'd move the tables from the sun room, along with the plant stands.

Getting Started: The Great Purge

Some might call this the long overdue purge. The first step was to get rid of everything that was of questionable quality – like the plant you've been nursing along for two years but still has only three leaves or the tuber that hasn't broken dormancy in three years, etc.

My husband followed me around with a big black garbage bag and I ruthlessly tossed plants that should have gone to the big compost pile in the sky long ago. In an ideal situation, I would have saved some of the pots. But we were now under the gun with the house going on the market in two weeks and a LOT of work still to be done. By the time I was finished, more than 100 pots were in that bag.

Addressing The Duplicates

Do you, almost without thinking, pot up any cuttings you might take off a plant? I can't bear to throw them out, hence the out-of-control collection. Next, we took a big box and I went through pulling out all duplicate plants for our local chapter sale. In a few instances, I had three or four of the same plant. In some instances, I sold the larger of the duplicates, because I knew it was a plant I could grow easily.

I also took this opportunity to get rid of a few that never did well for me – despite growing like weeds for some of my friends. These, along with the duplicates were taken to our local chapter show.

The Deep Sleep

The next step was to address all the kohlerias and sinningias in my collection. With the exception of a few sinningias that don't go dormant, I forced them all into dormancy. My husband

followed with a big garbage bag and box again. I cut off all growing material and the pots (with rhizomes and tubers) went into a box. If we'd had more time, I would have rooted all the cuttings, but that wasn't in the cards. I also did not have time to take all the rhizomes and tubers out of the soil. That would have greatly reduced the amount of space the boxes took up.

Each pot (with roots, rhizomes and/or tubers) was roughly wrapped in newspaper before being placed in the box. I ended up with several boxes of plants that went into storage. They ended up taking an eight-month siesta. More on how this worked in a bit.

The First (and Simplest) Move

With the plant lights now hanging from the ceiling and the tables set up in the basement, the rest of my collection was moved down there. If I must be honest, I'd have to admit that the sun room looked much more inviting when it wasn't packed to the gills with plants.

Despite our concern about selling the house, it sold the first day. We were then faced with the prospect of two moves. The house sold in April; our new home wouldn't be ready until November.

The Interim Move

We rented an apartment close to where our new home was being constructed. It was a four-story apartment building WITH a balcony. Yup, that's where most of my plants spent the summer and early fall. I had one full size light stand and two small ones in the apartment. But everything else went onto that tiny deck. This included my achimenes and those sinningias that only go out for the summer.

I had some concern about the achimenes because it was early July before they were taken out of dormancy. Only a few achimenes bloomed. We took possession of the new house on November 10. That means everything stayed on the deck

outside until November 11 – in Massachusetts. I lost only one plant due to the rather late date the plants were brought inside. It was a columnnea.

Unpacking

Do you think my great plant dormancy worked? While I was tempted to make setting up my plants top priority, I knew better. The plants that had been on the deck, were moved into the sun room. After seeing how good the old sun room looked without being stuffed to the gills, my husband agreed to set up a room in the unfinished basement for my lights. Amazingly, he didn't see this as a top priority so it was early December before he had everything set up.

It was now time to open the boxes. I expected things to be sprouting and perhaps rhizomes pushing out of the pots. But there was nothing. Just what looked like 100 pots of dirt. With the tables and lights set up, it didn't take long to unpack the plants and water them.

I vowed not to go down and look for a week – when it was time to water again. And, that's what we did. When we went down, NOTHING had sprouted. But, hope springs eternal and we watered, crossed our fingers and waited for another week.

When we went down after two weeks, a few pots were showing green. Upon closer inspection, this green was revealed to be WEEDS! Again, we watered and waited a week. When we went down for week three, a few of the pots were showing some life – like three or four. And so, we continued watering. Slowly, after that, each week when we went down, a few more pots had come to life. And of course, the first plants to come back were the ones where the labels had been lost. It took several months but eventually about 70-75% of the pots were revived.

Interestingly, *Sinningia* 'Deep Purple Dreaming' sprouted first and bloomed before some of the others even broke

dormancy. I had two tubers of *Sinningia* 'Kevin Garnett' – one made it and bloomed after only a few months the other went to sinningia heaven.



Sinningia 'Kevin Garnett'



Sinningia 'Deep Purple Dreaming'

But what about the achimenes that had been brought out late and had mostly not bloomed?

The Achimenes Journey

In early January, with only about a dozen of my plants in the basement light room showing any signs of life, I decided to get out one of my achimenes rhizomes and shell it so I'd have a few plants. I picked *Achimenes* 'Blue Swan' because I love its huge flowers and my friend, Gary Hunter, had given me a hanging basket of it. I figured, the pot could spare a rhizome or two.

As I pawed through the



Achimenes 'Blue Swan'

dirt in that pot, I couldn't find one rhizome. I was concerned. I knew my achimenes had gotten shoddy care over the last year and thought I might have lost them all. This was not the case. When I put them all out (under lights) in late April/early May, they all sprouted. Every single one of them, including that hanging basket that looked like it had no rhizomes.



Looking back on this venture, clearly, there were things that could have been handled better. I think we did as well as we could, given the circumstances. I learned that gesneriads are much hardier than we give them credit for and not to give up on a plant too quickly. Some did not come back to life for several months. I guess it's now time to make good on that promise I made myself when we did that first great purge. It's time to look through my collection and toss those plants who are just refusing to thrive.

Blooming now...

Primulina drakei
Kelly Ates



Kelly Ates photos



“Gesneriads Gather in the Garden State” The Gesneriad Society’s 68th Annual Convention

June 29 to July 5, 2025

Sheraton Parsippany Hotel
199 Smith Road, Parsippany, NJ 07054

The Gesneriad Society Annual Appeal

The [Annual Appeal](#) helps support gesneriad research, education, and conservation by ensuring that grant money is available for eligible applicants. The target fund for 2024 is **The Nellie D. Sleeth Scholarship Endowment Fund**. This fund establishes guidelines for submitting proposals to the NSSEF committee by student researchers. One or more scholarship awards are made each year to students currently enrolled in a college or university who seek a better understanding of the anatomy, ecology, physiology, relationships, distribution, growth and development, horticultural uses, or the pests and diseases of gesneriads. Donate now! You may make a donation on line by using the link above.

The Gesneriad Society, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) U.S. tax-exempt corporation.

The full amount of a donation is tax deductible

Happy Holidays!

Colleen Turley
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The late John Beaulieu created this holiday tree originally in black and white and the late Stan Sudol added the color a few years later.

Thanks to both for sharing!





Donations

The Gesneriad Society, Inc. is a tax-exempt organization with an IRS section 501 (c) (3) status for donations.

Colleen Turley
gesneriaddevelopment@fastmail.fm

Membership and Changes of Address

The Gesneriad Society Membership Secretary, Bob Clark,
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Changes of Address — Send changes of address to the Membership Secretary <gesneriadsocietymembership@gmail.com> 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.

From the editor —

Thanks to all who supplied articles and photos. Please keep them coming!

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

Mel

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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