



# Gleanings

a monthly newsletter from The Gesneriad Society, Inc.

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

Volume 7, Number 6

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Welcome to the latest issue of **Gleanings**! This issue includes photos showing how Alcie Maxwell and Karyn Cichocki grow gesneriads outside, photos from the African Violet Society of Canada's Convention, Dale Martens' article about increasing humidity, and information about the webinars.

Hope you enjoy **Gleanings**!

Mel Grice, Editor



Alcie Maxwell of Bossier City, Louisiana, USA sent these photos of *Nematanthus pycnophyllus* in bloom (right). He has tried to cross it with several other nematanthus, but has only been able to self it (resulting seed pod above).



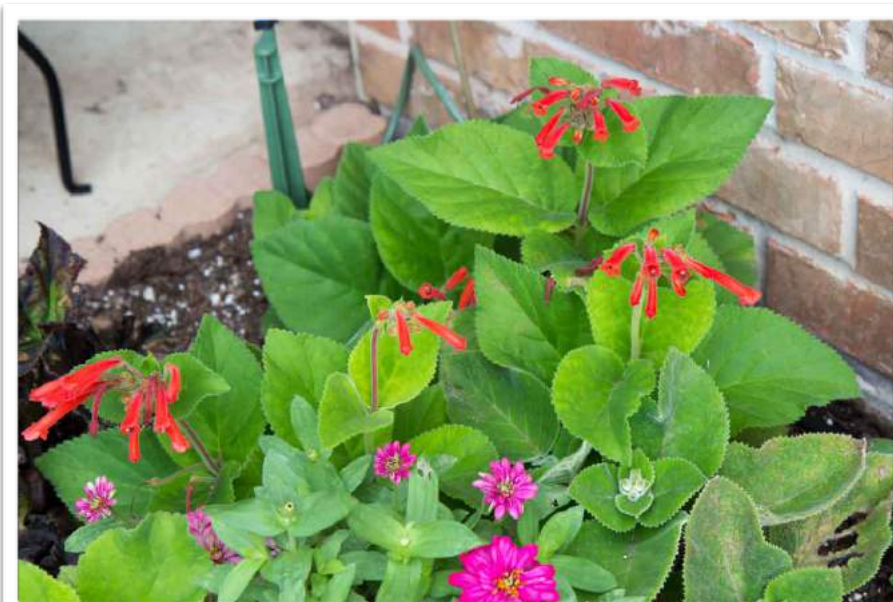


# Growing Gesneriads Outside

Alcie Maxwell [alciemaxwell@gmail.com](mailto:alciemaxwell@gmail.com)  
Bossier City, Louisiana, USA



xSeemakohleria 'Seaman Cole'



*Sinningia cardinalis* 'Innocent' x *S. insularis* hybrids

Alcie Maxwell photos



*Nematanthus* 'Lemon Lime'



*Nematanthus* 'Black Gold'



# Growing Gesneriads Outside

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

One year I wanted to try growing my achimenes outside, thinking that they would do better in natural light. I was concerned about heavy rain so decided that I would use an extra unlit stand that I have that has rollers. I placed this alongside the house, under the eaves facing west. My biggest concern is how to deal with the chipmunks. I have to put stones in my larger planters so they don't dig in them so I covered the entire stand with netting. I used twist ties to close it up so I could easily take the netting down for watering. The plants did grow a bit larger, but dealing with the netting every time I wanted to water got a bit tiresome and something enjoyed chewing on some of the leaves.

Another year I purchased a small plastic cold frame that I also placed in the same area of the house. This frame allowed for the top to be propped up for ventilation and more light. I also covered this with netting.

Note that the netting that I used is the size to keep birds out of gardens, not deer netting, which the chipmunks would be able to get through.



Rocks placed on top of soil to keep out chipmunks.

Karyn Cichocki photos



Gesneriads growing in cold frame.

Karyn Cichocki photos



## Gesneriad Society Webinar Information

“Meet the Gesneriad Family” webinar is free through the end of this year. Please give it a try and see how easy it is to register. You can view this over and over again. You can take your computer to your AV or Gesneriad chapter to show the group if your meeting room has internet access. It’d be a good idea to enhance the sound with speakers if your computer’s speakers are not strong enough to project to a large room. We’re also hoping you can volunteer to give talks to Begonia, Indoor Gardener, and Master Gardener groups and show this webinar to give a great overview of the Gesneriad Family. Just make sure their meeting place has internet access.

The really great news is that all the webinars are now available until the end of the year. This means your groups can schedule meetings with the webinar programs. If your meeting place does not have internet, then think about going to someone’s home to view the webinar. Think about having a “pot-luck” evening at someone’s home. The webinars are an hour long.

Here’s what’s available for a small fee that can be paid for with a credit card or PayPal:

- “The Joy of Sinningias” with Alan LaVergne
- “Fun with Kohlerias” with Paul Susi
- “Growing and Showing Primulinas” with Mel Grice
- “Growing and Hybridizing Miniature Sinningias” with Dale Martens
- “Growing and Showing Episcias” with Thad Scaggs
- “Growing and Hybridizing Streptocarpus” with Dale Martens

<https://shop.gesneriadsociety.org/collections/webinars>

Remember, “Meet the Gesneriad Family” is free.



# Photos from the 2016 African Violet Society of Canada's Convention



Calgary, AB, Canada



*Streptocarpus* 'Bridie'

Mel Grice photos



*Sinningia speciosa* 'Pedra Lisa' - Lisa Kampel



*Primulina yungfuensis* - Bill Price





*Aeschynanthus humilis* - Bill Price

Mel Grice photos



*Episcia* 'Limeade' - Linda Lieu



*Streptocarpus* 'Nerys' - Gertrud Schnieder





*Sarmienta scandens* - Bill Price



*Columnnea schiedeana* - Norma Kunzel

Mel Grice photos



# Increasing Humidity

Dale Martens [dalemartens@mchsi.com](mailto:dalemartens@mchsi.com)  
Sherrard, Illinois, USA

I got home from The Gesneriad Society convention with a box full of newly acquired plant material. Many of the plants will need extra humidity to root, and all will need to be isolated until I can determine they are free of disease or hitchhiking critters. When there are several plants to take care of, I get all the materials ready including rubbing alcohol that I wipe onto the utensils I'm using such as scissors and knives. Each stem or leaf cut has the potential to spread insects or disease; therefore, each tool is wiped with alcohol before going onto the next plant. I wash my hands between each planting. A new sheet of wax paper is placed on the table and then thrown away every time I reach for new plant material.

There are many methods of increasing humidity. One is simply to put a couple of plastic straws or coffee stir sticks in the pots and then place a sheet of clear food wrap on top. The straws/sticks prevent the plastic wrap from sitting on top of leaves. Here is another example: A dear friend gave me a variegated kohleria mutation. I set it up in a glass cylinder with a wick and small reservoir. To prevent root rot, the soilless mix is around 50% perlite, and for the wick I used only one strand of the 4-ply acrylic yarn.

Throughout the year I collect clear, plastic containers to re-purpose. My family members know I want the taller containers that used to have ice cream sundaes or shakes in them, so each has a dome lid with a hole.



Glass cylinder with tip cuttings of Streptocarpella.



Straws/coffee stir sticks can hold plastic food wrap off leaves

Photos by author except where noted.

While the tip cutting or leaf is rooting, I cover the hole with clear food wrap. Much later when I want to acclimate it to room air, I remove the food wrap to expose the rooted plant/leaves, but continue to make sure each has enough water.

I met Hyn Patty through Facebook. She posted a photo that caught my eye. She has a large east-facing window with dappled sunlight. Hyn fastens string from one side of the window to the other and then hangs plastic bags with Solo cups of leaves being propagated. She is still experimenting with this method, but at the moment uses Scotch tape to secure the bags to the string, then puts staples through both the bag and tape. I mentioned clothespins, but she found they don't hold the slippery plastic bags well. This method could only be used in a





Hyn Patty's leaf propagation system. Photo: Hyn Patty

staple gun to attach plastic to my wooden plant stand. I was going to be gone for a month, so I removed all flowers and filled quart-size reservoirs. When I returned home, my plants were quite lush. I didn't continue with this arrangement because it was a hassle to push back the plastic curtain to water and groom plants.

*Phinaea albolineata* is a species that needs high humidity to set seeds, but not necessarily 100% humidity. I placed the pot on top of a water reservoir and then placed the whole



thing in a six-inch wide glass cylinder. I did not

put clear food wrap on top of that cylinder, because I wanted the soil to dry out enough so that the roots would drink the fertilizer water in the reservoir daily. I was rewarded with flowers and with fruit.

The reward of high humidity: *Phinaea albolineata* fruit and seeds.

window without direct sun beating on the bags and cooking the plants.

Nancy Kast is the queen of terrarium growing. If a container is too short for some of the tall species she grows, she finds a plastic container that fits on top of the glass. At the 2014 Nashville Convention she entered several gesneriads that required 100% humidity.

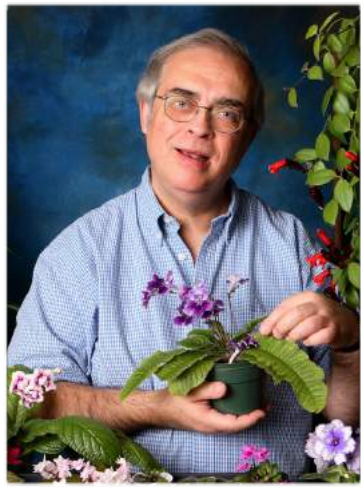
I have seen some growers place heavy plastic, similar to shower curtains, on the sides of plant stands. I did that once using a



Bill Price with Nancy Kast and her tall high-humidity containers.

This article appeared originally in *GESNERIADS* Vol. 65, No. 4, Fourth Quarter 2015, 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.





**From the editor —**

June has been another busy month for me. I drove to the African Violet Society of America Convention in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Now it is time to get ready for the Gesneriad Society Convention in Wilmington, Delaware. Hope to see many of you there!

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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**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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