



The Newsletter of the Delaware African Violet and Gesneriad Society

Volume XIV, No. 9 May 2012

Favorite 25 Lists Solicited

Each year the African Violet Magazine in its November/December issue prints a list of the Best Varieties from around the world. This list will be compiled by AVSA Best Variety/Honor Roll Chairman, Floyd Lawson.

Every member gets 25 votes, so the number of violets and the number of total votes can be very large. The result of this survey is a great list of what is growing and blooming around the world. It's fun to do, and it is so helpful to other growers who learn of old favorites and new introductions.

It's time for members to review their favorite plants and choose a list of 25 to send to AVSA. Members are encouraged to forward their lists to Quentin Schlieder either at the May meeting or the June pot luck dinner. If you can't attend these events, don't despair, you can e-mail them to him at qcsjr@comcast.net or mail them to him at:

Quentin Schlieder
36 South Main Street
Smyrna, DE 19977-1431

New Additions to the Chapter Library

The first issue of the Newsletter from the British Streptocarpus Society has arrived and will be available through the Chapter Library. Of note is an excellent month by month guide from February through May on how to grow award-winning Streptocarpus plants. The Society also offers a free seed fund, and the listing in the February 2012 issue is impressive with more than ninety offerings! Accompanying the newsletter was a very impressive cultural guide.

The PowerPoint® presentation, "Judging Gesneriads," developed by noted growers Dale Martens, Paul Kroll and Bill Price presented at the last month's meeting also is now available in the library. This presentation is of value growers who will learn how accomplished judges will evaluate their entries.

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 May or June meetings. A preaddressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience except for new and honorary members.

Yipes! Stripes!

By Quentin Schlieder

I have to admit I have a penchant for variegated plants, and two gesneriads with decorative leaves are among my favorites.

I received a cutting of *Drymonia chiribogana* at a propagation workshop the National Capital Chapter offered to encourage members to grow plants for the sale at the Silver Springs, MD Gesneriad Society Convention they hosted in July 2009. I divided my cutting into several pieces and rooted them for the sale, but because of the handsome foliage decided to keep one.



Drymonia chiribogana flowering in my basement under fluorescent lights.

Drymonia chiribogana, in my experience, defies the logic of growing other plants. In order to encourage it to produce side shoots to fill out the plant, I pinched the tip out. The plant responded unlike other members of the family which when pinched usually produce several side shoot, by producing only one branch several nodes down. It looked very awkward!

I have accepted that this species has a will of its own, and have decided to just let it grow as it pleases. It is

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growing in a potting medium comprised of Pro-Mix B amended with coarse perlite to enhance drainage. Since the plant was growing tall and was “a wee bit tipsy,” I resorted to growing it in a clay pot to give it extra stability.

The plant is growing under fairly low light conditions under a cool white two tube 4 foot T12 fixture, but in spite of the conditions hasn't shown signs of stretching to the light.

The plant has been subjected to my rather erratic watering and fertilizer regimen, watered and fertilized when I remember and have time. I generally use Plant Marvel's Nutriculture 12-31-14 soluble fertilizer mixed at about a quarter of the recommend strength, since this formulation is readily available at the Chapter's plant and supply sales table at the meetings, and since this formulation is urea free.

I was delighted earlier this spring when the plant produced a bud and flowered! The showy flowers protrude from a light green calyx which remains on the plant long after the flower has faded. The flower remained for almost a week in my basement which has a fairly constant temperature of about 70° F.

The late Hans Wiehler of the Gesneriad Research Foundation discovered this Ecuadorean species, which he describes as being closely related *Drymonia killipii*, in 1988 on the old road from Quito to Santo Domingo, near Chiriboga on the Pacific (western) slope of the Andes Mountains. It was an epiphyte growing in a forest at an altitude of about 4,000 feet.

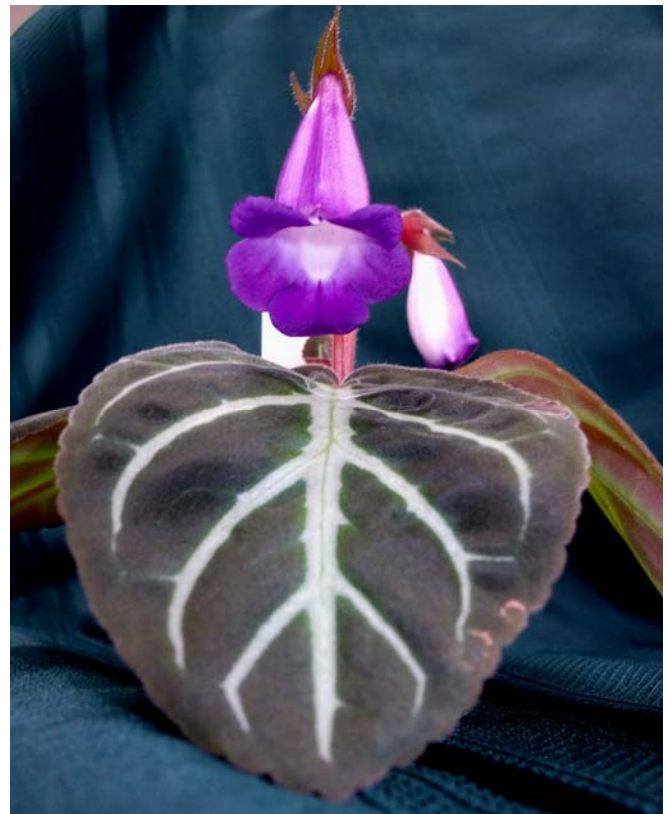
Drymonia chiribogana is a fibrous rooted epiphytic subshrub endemic to Andean Ecuador, in Pichincha province. It is known from three populations including the one along the old Quito-Santo Domingo road (to Chiriboga), as well as the Puerto Quito-Mindo road, 7 km from Los Bancos. An isolated population grows in the Ila Mountains, on the Santo Domingo-Mirador road. Unfortunately it hasn't been reported inside Ecuador's protected areas network, although it might be present in the Reserva Ecológica Los Ilinizas. The plant is considered vulnerable due to its small geographical range, and large-scale deforestation and habitat fragmentation over the last fifty years.

The other plant which has captured my interest is *Sinningia speciosa* “Regina Serra da Vista,” which I purchased at the Gesneriad Society's Philadelphia Convention in July 2011. The plant, undoubtedly grown from seed obtained through Mauro Peixoto's Brazil Plants Seed Club, is now in its second growth cycle and remains a compact plant under six inches which handsome foliage which could give any

Primulina (Chirita) a run for its money. However, I should note that Peixoto notes it can attain a diameter of up to 12 inches.

The nodding flowers are a gorgeous rich blue-purple in color, and are a great dividend on an already attractive plant.

This selection is native to Atlantic Forest, in Rio de Janeiro State, Brazil where it grows in humus and among rocks in semi shady places.



Sinningia speciosa “Regina Serra da Vista” actual size

It has been growing under approximately the same conditions as my *Drymonia chiribogana*, although I confess that I am a little more attentive to preventing its drying out, which would send this tuberous plant into dormancy. Peixoto notes that the plant needs good drainage to prevent the tuber from rotting.

I have used Betsy Gottshall's method of encouraging the plant to reawaken from dormancy. After the tuber goes dormant, I remove it from the pot and clean it off so that no potting medium is sticking to the tuber. I am certain in removing the old crown of the plant to leave some of the old stem, since this is generally where the new sprouts will begin to grow. If you remove the stem completely, the tuber sometimes will not resprout. I then enclose the tuber in a clear plastic deli container and put it under the lights. I spray it lightly with water keeping the environment barely moist. Generally, in a few weeks, new root and stem growth resumes, and I

repot the tuber to grow through the next cycle. While you can leave the tuber in its pot during its dormancy, I have a tendency to feel sorry for the plant and I water it...a sure way to rot the tuber!

My love for all plants with fancy leaves springs for the fact that they can be attractive even when not in bloom. I have requested that Mary Schaeffer order seed from our membership in the Brazil Plants Seed Club of the following selections:

- 🌿 *Sinningia speciosa* "Regina Corrego da Xica"
- 🌿 *Sinningia speciosa* "Regina' Domingos Martins"
- 🌿 *Sinningia speciosa* "Regina São Fidelis"
- 🌿 *Sinningia speciosa* "Regina Seidel"
- 🌿 *Sinningia speciosa* "Regina Serra da Vista"

I am cutting back my plant of *Drymonia chiribogana* and will be rooting cuttings. Hopefully, these will be appearing on the sales table this autumn, so you won't want to miss them!

Regional Meeting Update

Plans for the Regional meeting on the weekend of September 28 and 29, 2012 continue to move along. Mary Schaeffer and Quentin Schlieder have measured the show room and a scaled drawing of the room has been completed. There will be 21 tables to fill with horticultural entries, so start thinking what you might want to grow and enter!

This Show will be different in several ways. First, this will be a judged Gesneriad Society Show, not an African Violet Society Show. African Violet Society Shows use merit judging where there can be many blue ribbons awarded in one class. Gesneriad Society Shows use competitive judging, with only one blue, one red and one gold ribbon in each class. Additionally, the emphasis is on all genera in the African Violet family and Saintpaulias are limited to certain classes.

Another difference is that this will be our first autumn show, so there will be many plants like *Achimenes*, *Smithiantha*, and other rhizomatous genera rarely exhibited in our traditional spring show.

There also will be a new host of growers from other Chapters challenging even our best growers, as well as a wonderful opportunity to discover and learn about new plants in the Gesneriad family.

The Regional Show will feature an awards banquet on Saturday evening at Timothy's of Newark. We are looking for members to sponsor awards for the show. Quentin Schlieder is the Awards Co-chairman, along with Donna Beverin of the National Capital Chapter.

If you would like to sponsor an award, and we hope you do, see Quentin at either the May or June meetings.

The weekend will also feature what promises to be a wonderful plant sale with the opportunity to acquire new and choice plants for your collection. We need growers to propagate and grow plants. Gary Hunter and Mary Schaeffer are chairing the Sale. This will also be a terrific opportunity to build the Society's treasury.

We are awaiting some final cost estimates to complete a brochure for the event which will include complete registration details. Hopefully, the brochure will be enclosed with the Chapter's June newsletter.

As the host Chapter, we are counting on all of you to support this promising event. Please plan to attend, and if you can help, let Quentin Schlieder know of your interest to assist.

April Show and Tell



Maria Walueff discusses her plant of Saintpaulia 'Sky Diver'

There were some fascinating plants presented during the Show and Tell session of the April meeting. Maria Walueff brought a beautiful specimen of Saintpaulia 'Sky Diver' and discussed how she grew it. Elizabeth Varley brought a specimen of her hybrid between *Sinningia cardinalis* 'Innocent' and *S. leucotricha*, which she bred while at Longwood Gardens. Her goal is to attain a white flowered plant with the foliage of *S. leucotricha*. Gary Hunter brought plants of *Sinningia* "Heartlands Maverick" and another stunning array of *Streptocarpus* hybrids. Thanks to all who participated!

Upcoming DAVS Meetings...

Tuesday, May 8, 2012 – 7:30 p.m.
Rockland Place, 1519 Rockland Rd, Wilmington, DE 19803

Hostesses: Snacks – Terry Celano
Beverages – Angie Celano

Program: “Terrariums” - Two big hitters from The Philadelphia International Flower Show-Lynn Cook and Troy Ray-will be presenting an informative program on Terrariums at our May meeting. Come and learn how to create a dynamic enclosed environment and maybe go home with the creation! It will be raffled off at the end of the meeting! 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, 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. Installation of Officers and a brief business meeting follow dinner. A sign up sheet will be circulated at the May meeting. Also don't forget to pay you dues for next year!

Saturday, September 29th and Sunday, September 30, 2012 Regional Meeting of The Gesneriad Society hosted by the Delaware African Violet and Gesneriad Society in Townsend Hall at the University of Delaware Botanic Gardens. Mark your calendars now, and plan to participate in the flower show, sale and presentations. Watch for more details in the June Newsletter.

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c/o Quentin Schlieder, Editor
36 South Main Street
Smyrna, DE 19977-1431

Upcoming Shows and Sales...

Saturday, May 5th and Sunday, May 6th, 2012
African Violet Society of Springfield, Delaware County, PA will hold their annual show and sale at the Springfield Mall, Baltimore Pike and Sproul Road, Springfield, PA 19064 Hours for the plant sales are from noon to 9PM on Friday May 4th, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Saturday, May 5th and 11 a.m. -4p.m. on Sunday, May 6th. The Show is open on Saturday from 2 p.m. – 9 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. For more information, contact Peggy Mooney atpm1016@rcn.com.

Friday, May 11th and Saturday, May 12th, 2012

The Baltimore African Violet and Gesneriad Club Annual Show and Sale will be held at The Shops At Kenilworth 800 Kenilworth Drive, Towson, MD. Admission is free. African violets, other gesneriads and supplies will be for sale. Club members will be happy to give advice and answer all violet related questions. On Friday, May 11th the show is open from 1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and the sale is open from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. On Saturday, May 12th, the show and sale are open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For more information, contact Shirley Huffman by e-mail at bshuffman2@aol.com or by telephone at 301-854-2021.

Saturday, May 19th, 2012

The African Violet Society of Burlington County will present its free Annual Show and Sale with the Dr. Seuss inspired theme “One violet, Two Violets, Red Violet, Blue Violet...” in the Medford Leas Community Building, 1 Medford Leas Way, Medford, NJ on Saturday, May 19, 2012 12:00 p.m. noon to 5 p.m. Medford Leas will be presenting their Spring Tea and Garden Tour also. For information about the tea which costs \$18, call 609-654-3527. For information about the Show and Sale call 609-758-1138.

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