

Gesneri-Eds

Volume 32

The Newsletter of the Tennessee Gesneriad Society

Issue 4

Next meeting
Sunday,
2:00 p.m.
July 18
Cheekwood's
Botanic Hall
Refreshments:
TBA
POTM:
Kohleria

A Message from the President

Well, others arrived back sooner, but Bonnie, Sam and I just got back from the

convention yesterday afternoon (Monday). It was a very good convention - the flower show was quite impressive, although without as many rare and really unusual things as I personally like to see.

Never the less, an impressive show with many entries across the divisions and classes. Plant sales was also quite exciting, and I do believe that you will all be excited with what got brought back for our own auction this coming Sunday at our meeting - some really fun things, and a good variety as well. The talks were all very informative, and entertaining as well for the most part. I was especially excited with John Clark's talk, even though it was predominantly



dealing with plants that are not for windowsill gardening and can be a challenge even in the greenhouse. It is wonderful to know that there are some folks coming along that are very knowledgeable and that are going to continue exploring and illuminating this family for us.

Arriving back home, I was thrilled to see several of Dale Marten's hybrids in bloom on my front porch. In the garden, *Sinningia sellovii* is through for now, *S. tubiflora*'s second set of spikes are just passing their prime, and *S. curtiflora* is continuing to develop very slowly. In the greenhouses at work, flowers continue to be produced on a *Drymonia* which I believe is still an undescribed species, related to *Drymonia coccinea*, grown from seed that John Clark sent me two years ago. continued on

Do I hear an opening bid of \$2.00?
Two...two...two-fifty...three...three-fifty...
Yep, it's time for our annual after-convention auction where incredible bargains are to be had. The sales room at the convention was packed with interesting and well grown plants, and there were a lot of good table favors as well, some of which will be up for bids. *Lysionotus pauciflorus* will be on the block. Something which probably won't be offered on Sunday was a table favor Julie and I received of *Columnnea 'Mary Jane Evans'*, a Jerry Trowbridge hybrid. I wasn't familiar with the plant and was somewhat unenthusiastic until I saw one in the show - a beautiful yellow flower with all edges thinly rimmed in red. I'm sure cuttings of it will be appearing at meetings in the next few months. --CA

MINIATURE GESNERIADS FOR TERRARIUM CULTURE

by Wallace Wells, reprinted from *GloxNews*, the newsletter of the Greater New York chapter, 39 (203) No. 2

Fortunately for the gesneriad grower there are many small plants for use in terrariums. Probably the most popular are the miniature *Sinningias*. The two original micro-miniature *Sinningias* i.e. *S. pusilla* and *S. concinna* have been joined by a third as yet unnamed one, *S. sp. novalis nom. ined.* 'Rio das Piedras' (*sp. novalis nom. ined.* meaning new species as of yet unnamed).

Sinningia concinna has spots in the throat of the limb and as such is unique among the other two. It imparts the spottiness to its hybrids such as 'Freckles.' *S. pusilla* is more fertile and makes hybrids more easily. *S. pusilla* and *S. concinna* differ also by the locality of their collection and number of nectar glands they contain. The original *S. concinna* is somewhat difficult to come by

since there are so many cultivars now in commercial offering.

A third micro-miniature gesneriad was recently found by Alain Chautems. It resembles *S. pusilla* but 1) lacks the spur at the the base of the flower 2) has variegated foliage and 3) has unusual 'pin-wheel' coloration of flowers. It is being grown as 'Rio das Pedras.'

Alain wrote...the following:"It was found in one location, near Mangaratiba, East of Rio de Janeiro, in Brazil. It should have 5 glands of unequal size, with 2 dorsal somewhat fused, following its placement in the *Corythololma* group, like the 2 other miniature species. ...I did not hybridize it, but some others did!"

All miniature *Sinningias* were derived from crosses of *S. pusilla* and *S. concinna* with other species. *S. 'Tinkerbelle'* for example was a hybrid made by Elena continued on

From the (Co-) Editor

Julie Mavity-Hudson

Carol Ann, Molly and I flew back in to Nashville on Sunday afternoon after a great convention. I think it is safe to say we all had a good time but were glad to be home.

This year's show and plant sales were excellent and I think between us we took around 700 or more photos, so hopefully you will see a much edited version on Sunday.

Eddy informed me that several people called our house while we were gone wondering if there was a meeting last Sunday. I hope everyone figured it out you could check your back Gesneri-ed's or call Cheekwood if you ever have doubts. We normally delay the July meeting a week to allow us to return from Convention.

The lectures were very interesting this year and there will be reports on them in the next newsletter, so stand by.

Best in Show at convention was a fabulous plant of *Sinningia tubiflora* exhibited by Ben Paternoster (who is Chair of Shows and Judging at AGGS). This was a fabulous plant, but I imagine it was quite a difficult choice for the judges as there were several other specimens that probably made the final decision tough. There was a fabulous plant of *Columnea* 'Midget' that was absolutely amazing, and any number of other gorgeous plants. There was an *Episcia* 'Suomi' (the yellow flowered *Episcia* which is very popular right now) that had an amazing number of blooms on it (for some reason the judges faulted it for lack of bloom! You never know what they are thinking!). There was also a very interesting plant of *Calcareoaea coccinea*, a seldom seen plant which looks like an African Violet with a tall stalk of red *Sinningia*-type flowers. Hopefully we will be seeing more of this plant in the future. Bill Price allowed the plant to be auctioned off and I specifically asked the person who bought it (Olive Ma Robinson) to try to set seeds on it and send to the seed fund, so maybe we will be seeing more of this plant.

It was very nice to see two fine specimens of large *Sinningia speciosa* (florist Gloxinias), which we seldom see in shows any more in spite of their being the reason that our club was founded in the first place by Elvin McDonald, who was a teenager at the time..

There were also some interesting things auctioned, including a number of botanical prints which had belonged to the late Maryjane Evans that were in the silent auction. Proceeds from this went to the Elvin McDonald Research Endowment Fund. In the live auction, it was very interesting to me to note that the lot that brought the highest price, \$200, was a group of 5 or 6 plants, one of which was our own Richard Holder's hybrid, *Sinningia* 'Out of Towhee'.

I was happy that the one thing I entered, a slide of *Chirita micromusa* won a blue ribbon. This was a plant which was shown at the convention last year, and amusingly, the slide that won second place (exhibited by Dale Martens) was of the same plant! I did not take anything with me to exhibit so was happy that Jeanne Katzenstein brought some slides of mine that she had not returned from last year and Carol Ann and Jonathan helped me decide which one to enter (you can only enter one in the convention show).

We brought back plants for you all and will have a little auction at the meeting. We have a number of interesting plants for you and I hope you will be pleased.

Julie

Finding *Lysionotus pauciflorus* in the Wild

Heinrich Handel-Mazzetti: **A Botanical Pioneer In South West China**

The road, in much better condition than most of the main routes in Yunnan, led north-eastwards to Zhenning, passing over horizontally stratified ridges of coal-bearing marl above limestone, with quartzite on top. Conical rock formations were only a little less prominent than before and seemed to belong to the quartzite layer. Next day a short march, for the most part in a channel between rows of limestone cones, brought us to the large town of Anshun. Most of the inns were better than those in Yunnan; in one place the mafu was greatly alarmed when I found an inn that was perfectly clean.

"There can't have been any horses here for ages," he said, "and there could be evil spirits inside. I'll have to drive them out before I take my horses in there." So saying, he set light to a bundle of straw and waved it about under the manger.

On another occasion it was my turn to be annoyed.

The local official had provided me with a watchman, and just as I was going to sleep he began to make an earsplitting clatter outside my open door by hammering on a large hollow bamboo, with the idea of keeping thieves away. The Chinese may be able to put up with such a racket, just as they will sleep under an electric light, sometimes even with their eyes open, but I rejected his well meant endeavors with unconcealed indignation. Along the road were the ruins of numerous stone-built houses belonging to deserted villages, the occupants having presumably fled to escape extortion and looting by passing soldiers from China's growing armies.

Anshun lies on a fair-sized river flowing south-eastwards. Previous measurements of its latitude were correct, but its longitude differs considerably from that shown in the atlases; according to my route survey it is 105° 58' 30" east of Greenwich, i.e., somewhat further west than the distance stated on the margin of Davies' map, "about 35 miles to Guiyang". In fact it is 80 km south west of the provincial capital. The road continued more or less in a straight line along a similar channel to Pingba. My mafu was greatly amazed to see a horse harnessed to a plough, though certainly it was a pitiful sight and one that we met nowhere else. He was equally astonished at seeing horsemeat on sale — apparently it was sometimes eaten in that district. Broad-leaved trees of new and different kinds began to appear beside the characteristic species of the montane woods, some of them even in the short distance we had travelled since leaving the Guarding district. Among them were *Paulownia tomentosa*, *Cercis chinensis* and *Firmiana simplex*, all three now showing an abundance of brown shading among their dark foliage: in the first two it was produced by their closely packed fruits and in the third by the felt covering of its young inflorescences. Growing on the bare rocks were two splendid gesnerads, *Didymocarpus ebumeus* with thick fleshy leaves and large pendent violet flowers (Fig.46) and *Lysionotus pauciflorus*, the latter not yet fully





Columnea 'Midget'

2004 AGGS CONVENTION



Julie, Tsuh Yang Chen (NYC), and Carol Ann patiently waiting for plant sales to open



Two views of Landcraft Environments display gardens



Nautilocalyx forgetii



Sinningia pusilla, prettier than a partridge in a pear tree



TG Editor Jeanne Katzenstein, left, and Gussie Farrice, 2003 Brazil trip organizer, right



The secretarial pool - AGGS membership secretary Bob Clark on the left and recording secretary Peter Shallit, right

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Other plants are continuing to grow and showing promise of blooming soon, while others are still just seedlings and have quite a ways to go yet.

Between convention and home we were able to stop in and visit with my folks, who were of course more admiring of young Sam than they were of any plants or flowers I brought along. Still, Mom now has a two pots of *Pearcea reticulata* on her deck among other things, and she's looking forward to seeing get larger and hopefully flower. Another stop was at one of my old haunts, the National Aquarium in Baltimore, to see how the top floor neotropical rain forest simulation was doing. Many plants there are continuing to grow along, although more gesneriads are needed. I dropped off a few, but will be sending more in another month or so - both epiphytes and terrestrials.

So, gesneriads all over the place - you never know where you'll see one next. But you can be sure that you'll see a bunch this coming Sunday at our meeting, both award winners from convention as well as potential future award winners in the plants that we brought back for our own auction. We'll see you there too, I hope.

Jonathan

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MINIATURE GESNERIADS

continued from

page 1 Jordan between *S. concinna* and *S. aggregata*. *S. 'Mercury'* was a hybrid between *S. pusilla* and *S. reitzii*. Hopefully soon we will see hybrids of *S. 'Rio das Pedras'* to add to the list. Perhaps we will see miniature sinningias with pinstripe veining.

Beside the micro and mini-sinningias, suitable small gesneriads are *Phinea*, such as *P. multiflora* 'Tracery', some *Gesneria* species and hybrids such as *G. cuneifolia*, miniature saintpaulias and others. Micro and miniature sinningias and other small gesneriad species and cultivars are available at Belisle's Violet House (catalogue \$2 to PO Box 111, Radisson, WI 54867-0111). Another great source for miniature plants is Kartuz' Greenhouse (catalogue \$3 to 1408 Sunset Drive or PO Box 790 Vista CA 92085-0790, or visit www.kartuz.com (ed. note, I believe the catalog is free to AGGS members www.aggs.org) Seeds of *Phinea* and *S. Rio das Pedras'* can be had via the AGGS seed fund (AGGS members only).



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