

the

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Cyrtandra compressa

American Gloxinia and Gesneriad Society, Inc.

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OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY — The objects of the American Gloxinia and Gesneriad Society, Inc. are to afford a convenient and beneficial association of persons interested in gesneriads, to stimulate a widespread interest in, and gather and publish reliable information about the identification, correct nomenclature, culture and propagation of gesneriads; and to encourage the origination and introduction of new cultivars.

GESNERIAD REGISTRATION — The American Gloxinia and Gesneriad Society, Inc. is the International Registration Authority for the names and cultivars of gesneriads excepting the genus *Saintpaulia*. Any person desiring to register a cultivar should contact Judy Becker, 432 Undermountain Road, Salisbury, CT 06068 <jbecker@mohawk.net>.

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COVER

Cyrtandra compressa —
photo by John R. Clark of
collected specimen from
the island of Savai'i, Samoa
(elevation: 900 meters).
See article on page 34.

New *Streptocarpus* species: *Streptocarpus lilliputana*

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Sherrard, Illinois, USA

Streptocarpus lilliputana is a miniature, rosette-shaped species introduced at the AGGS Convention in 2003 as seed donated by Jaco Truter to the GHA seed fund. According to Jaco, "*Streptocarpus lilliputana* was originally collected by Prof. Dirk Bellstedt (from the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa). This new species grows in semi-shade on rocks, in pads of moss, in seepage, which is a very unique habitat type in the genus. My two adult plants flowered fairly early in the season, stopped over December through January, and have now been flowering again, although only individual flowerers. The new species has no obvious affinities within the genus. This is a rarity amongst rare species, as Dirk only found a very few plants in a few small colonies. Some of these have subsequently died out due to a prolonged drought in Southern Africa. So every plant in cultivation is a victory for conservation through cultivation!"

I distributed several packets of Jaco's *Streptocarpus lilliputana* × self seed to experienced *Streptocarpus* growers, but the seeds proved to be difficult to germinate. Only three of us were able to grow plants to maturity. I had three plants and showed one at the 2004 AGGS Convention with an educational label giving background information and a photo of the only flower I got in May 2004. I put another in the AGGS Auction. After the convention ended, I gave away about eight leaves from my show plant. Then I wondered if plants could be propagated from leaves that are only about two inches long and one-quarter inch wide. When I got home, I took leaves from my other plant and propagated them as if they were African violet leaves. There's no way to remove a mid-rib on something so tiny! It turns out that it takes about eight weeks before producing plantlets and then another eight weeks before a plantlet is large enough to remove from the mother leaf.

I have been growing *Streptocarpus lilliputana* indoors, under one set of fluorescent tubes. In my conditions it grows best in higher humidity, but I have several plants now and am experimenting with various growing conditions. It produced a single flower for me that was lavender and white. That flower was two inches long by one inch wide, which is remarkable since the leaves are so small. Because the plant was so young, I did not self it. I put pollen on some hybrids, but no seed was produced. As I write this in April 2005, I have another bud.

Toshijiro Okuto told me he has two plants grown from Jaco's seed. Each plant is less than 80 mm across. They bloomed last summer in June or July. He hasn't selfed them. Toshijiro grows *Streptocarpus lilliputana* in the same conditions as other species and hybrids and doesn't think they require any special conditions for now. He is hoping to cross them to create small hybrids this year.

Karyn Cichocki told me she has two plants growing in her basement in the sphagnum moss pellet soilless mix (one part each of reconstituted moss, coarse perlite and vermiculite). They are growing off to the side of a two-tube light stand one foot away from the tubes. The temperature ranges from

57°F to 70-75°F. Karyn is not growing them enclosed and her humidity level is around 50%. She uses MiracleGro Tomato Fertilizer (1/3 teaspoon to one gallon of water) on all her plants. She, too, only had a single flower just before the 2004 AGGS Convention.

Jaco successfully crossed *Streptocarpus lilliputana* and *S. caeruleus* (a very rare, small rosulate from Limpopo Province that has caerulean-blue flowers and two yellow flashes in the corolla throat). He said, "I planted the seed in autumn 2004, and the small plants are very advanced already, with believe it or not, that faint, almost-yellow type of variegation, and the beginning of buds! So, now it's only a matter of time; I cannot wait!" You can be sure I'll ask him for an update to print in GHA's *CrossWords* newsletter. Jaco's selfed seedlings of *S. lilliputana* only took one growing season to reach maturity, and are now currently flowering along with the original two adults.

Noting its formal publication, Ron Myhr wrote a letter to the Gesneriphile list quoting Dirk Bellstedt who is a frequent contributor to the Gesneriad Reference Web: "The new species that I discovered on the Transkei coast in 2000 has now been officially described as *Streptocarpus lilliputana*, so you can now officially release the new name. It is described in the Bill Burt 90th birthday Festschrift issue of the Edinburgh Journal of Botany. I had the pleasure of meeting him and Olive Hilliard in Edinburgh whilst attending a Gesneriad Workshop at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Edinburgh in September 2002, so it has been very nice for me to have the new description published in such an appropriate publication. That paper, entitled "A New Species of *Streptocarpus* (Gesneriaceae) from the Pondoland coast, South Africa", by D. U. Bellstedt and T. J. Edwards, appeared in the Edinburgh J. Bot. 60: 409-414, 2004.



Streptocarpus lilliputana
(grown and photographed by Dale Martens)



FIG. 1. *Streptocarpus lilliputana* (Bellstedt 145). A, flowering plant (scale bar = 25mm); B, corolla dissection (scale bar = 10mm); C, calyx (scale bar = 4mm); D, corolla, frontal view (scale bar = 15mm); E, corolla, lateral view (scale bar = 15mm). Drawn by T.J. Edwards.

Illustration from *Edinburgh Journal of Botany*, Vol. 60, No. 3 (2004),
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