

Gesneri-Eds

Next meeting:
 Sunday, Jan. 10
 2:00 p.m.
 Cheekwood's
 Botanic Hall
 Refreshments:
 Julie
 POTM:
 Nematanthus

Volume 39

The Newsletter of the Tennessee Gesneriad Society

Issue 1

A Message from the President

It is funny what a big difference a little humidity makes. I have plants blooming now that have never bloomed for me before. I have had a yellow flowering chirita for several years where the buds always blasted. Now it is finally blooming. In the fall, after I had brought in all my plants from outside, I noticed they were really suffering from the inside dryness caused by the heating system. As it happened, the humidifier system we have connected to the heating system had been turned off last year and we needed to get it running again. But I also bought two small humidifiers from the local drugstore. They are inconvenient to fill every morning and only hold enough water for twenty hours, but they sure have made a difference. It has encouraged me to try to find something better and more convenient. I saw something in a catalog which (of course) was more expensive, but just the convenience of one that would fill itself would be well worth it. I have yet to do the obvious things like put in pads in the bottoms of my trays, but I probably will. It is just a bad experience with root rot many years ago which has prevented me from doing anything like that before now. Root rot spreads like wildfire through water.

I have yet to really start propagating plants for the Lawn and Garden Show sale. I have a few plants, though,

which I will have there. I resolve to work on putting down more cuttings right away. With some new light shelves that were put in last month, I will have the room. The only problem is watering. I was out of town last week and even though I had only been gone five days, I noticed a big difference in dryness. I hadn't been here to fill the humidifiers, and the plants were on the edge of all drying out. I will be out of town all the month of February, so I am scared about whether the person I get to water my plants will do a good job. I have so many, it is easy to miss some, and only I know how much each plant really seems to need. For instance, I know that some baskets of *Episcia* that don't have any drain holes need only to the count of ten with my small watering hose. I count to different numbers according to the size of my pots. It sounds silly, but it works for me, and I don't usually have saucer overflow.

Hope to see you all at our next meeting. We will be discussing what kind of programs we will be having this next year as part of the meeting. So it would be really good if you can attend. If not, please email us beforehand to tell us what you would like to have for programs.

Dam

Schedule for Preparing African Violets for Show

Week	Fertilizer	Light	Plant Care
12	Foliar feed once in addition to regular fertilizer program	Minimum of 10 hours per day	Removed damaged, baby or other leaves that would fault plant; pot down or pot up necks
11	Maintain regular fertilizer program	Maintain	Continue to repot and groom
10	Start "bloom booster" fertilizer 5-50-17 or 12-55-6.	Put one new tube in each light fixture	Completely disbud all plants except maybe minis and trailers
9	Continue "bloom booster"; foliar feed again	Increase light time by 1 hour	Disbud doubles and lightly variegated varieties for the last time
8	Continue "bloom booster"	Increase light time by 1 hour	Disbud heavily variegated varieties for the last time
7	Change to 12-36-14 or 15-30-15 for duration	Increase light time by 1 hour	Disbud semi-doubles for the last time
6	Maintain	Maintain	Disbud singles for the last time. Remove suckers and wash foliage carefully
5	Maintain	Maintain	Maintain
4	Maintain	Maintain	Maintain
3	Maintain	Maintain	Maintain
2	Maintain	Maintain	Maintain
1	Maintain	Maintain	Pot necks up or down. Remove spent blossom, peduncle and pedice stubs, suckers. Brush away soil particles, etc

From the (Co-) Editor

Our program this month will be on Carol Ann's and my trip to Ecuador last year to collect gesneriads. We saw many wonderful plants and met some wonderful people. I will present a slide show which hopefully will make you all want to go on the next trip. Hope you will join us.

The party at Molly's house was a lot of fun. We played Bingo and everybody won some prizes. We also played Dirty Santa and had a lot of laughs. The food was good as well. Thanks so much to everyone who participated.



The Whole Gang

I want to thank Dave Kauffman for donating several trays of young plants to the club. Dave, your generosity is really appreciated. We distributed them at the party. Hopefully some of them will appear at the Lawn and Garden Show sale. Speaking of the L&G, don't forget to put down cuttings to grow for that sale in early Mar.



Columnea tenella

March. Our club depends on the money from this and our show sale, so we need all your help.

I was pleased to hear from a few people who took the judging test that they had passed. Hopefully some of you others passed as well and haven't let me know. We will hopefully know by the meeting and will offer our congratulations. If anyone didn't pass, don't worry, there's always next time.

It's REALLY cold this week. Hopefully everyone has plenty of heat. Those with greenhouses may need some supplemental heat. Right now I don't have anything (alive) in my greenhouse as I had a heater malfunction late last winter and haven't gotten it back up and running. If you grow in windowsills, be aware that the plants could freeze if touching cold glass and that cold drafts may be coming in around the window. It might be best to move things away from the windows temporarily. Hopefully those who are growing outside in the ground (there are a few gesneriads hardy in our area) won't lose their plants to these cold temperatures.

Be sure and bring your ideas for programs for the rest of the meetings for this year. This is your club, and we want to meet your needs, so let us know what you want to learn about.

See you Sunday!

Julie



Working in the herbarium

DUES ARE DUE DUES ARE DUE

From the Treasurer Molly Schneider

DUES ARE DUE!

If you haven't paid your dues, please do so at the January meeting or mail to the Treasure at the address at the top of page four.

Rates:

Individual:

\$5/year for email only

\$10/year for mailed copy (can include email as well)

Family:

\$6/year for email only

\$12/year for mailed copy (can include email as well)

DUES ARE DUE DUES ARE DUE

A Review of Some of the Microminiature Sinningias Currently Available in the Trade

by Quentin Schlieder

Reprinted with permission from *The Newsletter of the Delaware African Violet and Gesneriad Society* Vol.e XII, No. 2, October 2009.



Sinningia concinna



Sinningia pusilla

Sinningia concinna: (Nichols) the flowers on this plant are light to dark lilac/purple/lavender with a spotted throat. This plant is rare in cultivation and is temperamental, setting seed reluctantly. *S. concinna* is one of the micro-miniature sinningias, the whole plant often being 5 cm (2") or less across. It is similar in size and general form to *S. pusilla*, although it has a rosier color and decorative purple spots. It has been used to create a large number of hybrids and is a parent of *S. 'Cindy'*, one of the first of the widely grown miniature sinningias. The hybrid of *S. concinna* with *S. pusilla*, *S. 'Wood Nymph'*, is very popular, as is *S. 'Bright Eyes'*, the backcross of 'Wood Nymph' to *S. pusilla*.

Sinningia pusilla: The flowers are tiniest of all. Miniature lilac-blue nodding flowers with a white throat and lilac/violet lines in middle of throat. The foliage is half-inch oval leaves veined dark green. Always in bloom. Needs terrarium culture. It is a species plant which sets seed easily. *S. pusilla* was the first of the "microminiature" sinningias to enter into common culture. It is truly tiny, the pot in the picture below is about the size of a quarter. It has been much used in hybridizing, and along with *S. concinna* has been the source of the miniaturization resulting in hundreds of hybrids known as "Miniature Sinningias".

S. pusilla requires high humidity, and does best with low light. It is the ideal subject for an enclosed container at the edges of a fluorescent light stand. Soil should be moisture retentive but well drained, and the pot should not be too much larger than the spread of the plant. *S. pusilla* grown with several plants in a common pot, preferably a small shallow bonsai-type ceramic pot makes a great display.

This species, like all sinningias, will go dormant, although it sometimes stays in active growth for a long time. If dormancy occurs, the pea-sized tubers can be replanted in new soil. It is also easily grown from seed, and if allowed to will self-seed vigorously, resulting in many tiny seedlings sprouting from every soil surface around.

Sinningia pusilla 'White Sprite': The flower is pure white and is a sport of *Sinningia pusilla*. It is very free flowering and usually comes true from seed which is set

freely. Terrarium culture is recommended. Unfortunately, the white flower characteristic is not transmitted to its hybrid progeny, as there is a reversion to the lavender color of *S. pusilla* when crossed with other species.



Sinningia pusilla 'White Sprite' *Sinningia 'Snowflake'*

Sinningia 'Snowflake': (Clayberg) This hybrid resulted from a cross by Carl Clayberg of *S. pusilla* 'White Sprite' x unnamed mutant. The flower is white with three lobes on each petal and is propagated by cuttings, although it will set seed.



S. sp. 'Rio das Pedras' *S. 'Lil Georgie'* was one of the first hybrids produced from *S. sp. Rio das Pedras*

Sinningia sp. 'Rio das Pedras': Light to dark lilac, white flower. Tiny stripe pointed edges leaves. This interesting species and is a relatively new introduction, as yet without a formal name -- it was found in the vicinity of Rio das Pedras, in Brazil, hence the temporary descriptive name. Note the patterned and scalloped leaves, which are quite different from those of *S. concinna* or *S. pusilla*. Overall, *S. sp. "Rio Das Pedras"* is somewhat larger than the other micro-minis. . Newest species, prolific, sets seed so well it usually selfs before a cross can be made.



Sinningia 'Bright Eyes'

Sinningia 'Bright Eyes': (Clayberg) The flower is larger, purple slightly darker at edge of throat. This hybrid is usually sterile, but if it produces seeds they will not be true. *S. 'Bright Eyes'* is a vigorous micro-miniature sinningia, the product of Carl Clayberg's cross between *S. pusilla* and *S. concinna*, crossed back to *S. pusilla*. It has become very popular because of its vigorous growth and floriferous nature.

continued on page four

Officers of TNGS:

President: Pam Braun.....5528 Pinewood Road, Franklin, TN 37064.....615-794-3553
 Vice-President: Dave Cummings.....282 Stonehaven Circle, Franklin, TN 37064.....615-591-2436
 Recording Secretary: Julie Mavity-Hudson.... 1015 Park Lane, Joelton, TN 37080.....615-746-3532
 Membership Secretary: Carol Ann Bonner3705 Tibbs Drive, Nashville, TN 37211.....615-293-5470
 Treasurer: Molly Schneider.....608 Hillwood Blvd Nashville, TN 37205.....615-356-9655
 Editor: Julie Mavity-Hudson 1015 Park Lane, Joelton, TN 37080.....615-746-3532

Microminiature Sinningias continued from page three



S. 'Little Wood Nymph'

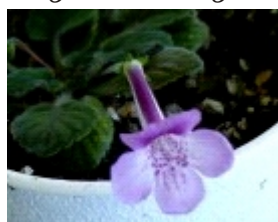
S. 'Ruffled Wood Nymph'

Sinningia 'Little Tiger'

Sinningia 'Mighty Mouse'

Sinningia 'Little Wood Nymph': is a hybrid between *Sinningia pusilla* and *Sinningia concinna*. The flower is half way between the two species and upper two lobes dark purple, lower three lobes white light purple edging/light purple spotted throat. This plant is sought after by many collectors.

Sinningia 'Ruffled Wood Nymph': is the result of a cross between *S. concinna* and *S. pusilla* (named 'Wood Nymph'), which was in turn crossed back to *S. concinna*. The resulting seedlings were generally distributed as 'Wood Nymph Improved', and one was selected and named 'Ruffled Wood Nymph'. Many of the plants in the 'Wood Nymph' series are hard to tell apart.



Sinningia 'Carefree Regina' *Sinningia' Freckles'*

There are numerous other microminiature sinningias including those pictured above. The following website offers descriptions and photos of these: <http://minisinningias.com/micro-mini-sinningias-2.htm> A wonderful little 24-page booklet titled "Gardening in Miniature" by Linda M. Zillach is also a useful reference. ☘



To help you help our chapter plan for the year ahead, here's a form you can fill in with your dream programs. There's room for shuffling around, so don't hesitate to recommend a program for each month or even the same program you really, really care about for every month!

<i>Meeting Date</i>	<i>Proposed Program</i>	<i>Planned as of January 2010</i>	<i>Refreshments</i>
January 10		Ges. Research Expedition in Ecuador	Julie
February 14			
March 3-7	Lawn & Garden Show		
April 11	Propagation Workshop		
May 16			
June 13			
July 11			
August 8			
September 12			
October 8-10	Annual Show & Sale		
November 14			
December 12	President's Party		