

# Gleanings

a monthly newsletter from The Gesneriad Society, Inc.

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

Volume 5, Number 11

November 2014

Welcome to the latest issue of **Gleanings!** This issue includes a visit to the growing areas of Michael Riley and Francisco Correa, photos from the New York State AVS Show, and Karen Allen's methods for repotting streptocarpus.

Hope you enjoy **Gleanings!**

Mel Grice, Editor

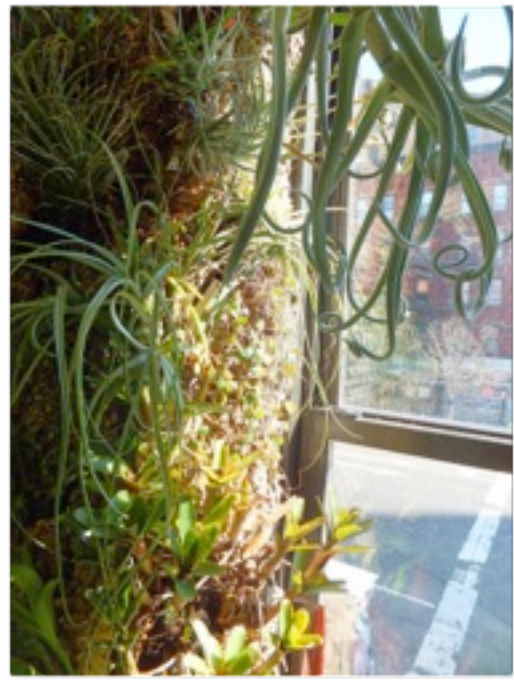


Photos of (above) *Streptocarpus* 'Neil's Twilight' and (right) *Streptocarpus* 'Spin Art' sent from Karen Allen in Fredericksburg, Virginia, USA. Karen describes her method of repotting streptocarpus on page 9.



# Growing Gesneriads in New York City

Michael Riley [riley2362@aol.com](mailto:riley2362@aol.com)  
and Francisco Correa  
New York, New York, USA



Michael Riley and Francisco Correa have turned their New York apartment into a tropical oasis filled with gesneriads, bromeliads, orchids, and other tropical plants. Numerous cork slabs have been applied to two of the walls. Plants have been tucked into the crevices and pockets with just a little moss to hold the plants in place. Over the years the plants have crawled over the surface and seeded themselves as they would have done in nature.

Supplemental lights and an irrigation system that drips water over the plants mimic as much as possible the natural growing conditions of these plants.

Mel Grice photos





Fish ponds with Ruykin (fancy-tailed goldfish) add extra humidity. They are not able to jump out of the pools like the previous attempt with Koi who "jumped" out of the pools when not happy with the water quality.



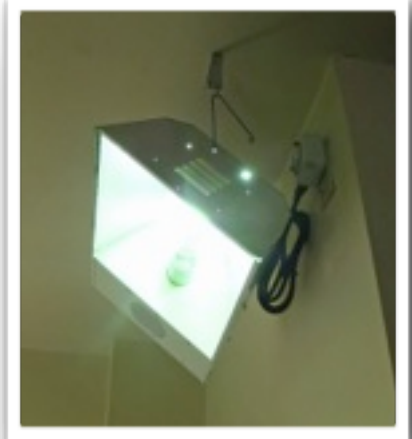
"*Drymonia chiribogana* has been there for many years. It only flowers on 'old wood' so growers should not cut it back too severely or they will never get the beautiful flowers, although the leaves are pretty cool also."



*Sinningia douglasii* tuber attached to the cork and numerous *Tillandsia* species.

Mel Grice photos

Lights directly above "the wall" are supplemented by high-powered halogen light fixtures focused on the area.



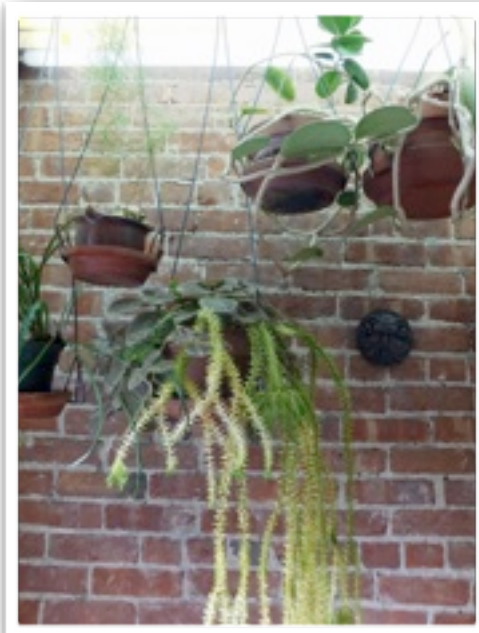
Part of the watering system is shown on the left. The water system is much like the system employed in the produce department of any good grocery store with intermittent spray. Water drips down and is collected in a drainage system along the floor.



*Columnea orientandina* from Ecuador with red tips on the leaves, yellow flowers and purple berries.



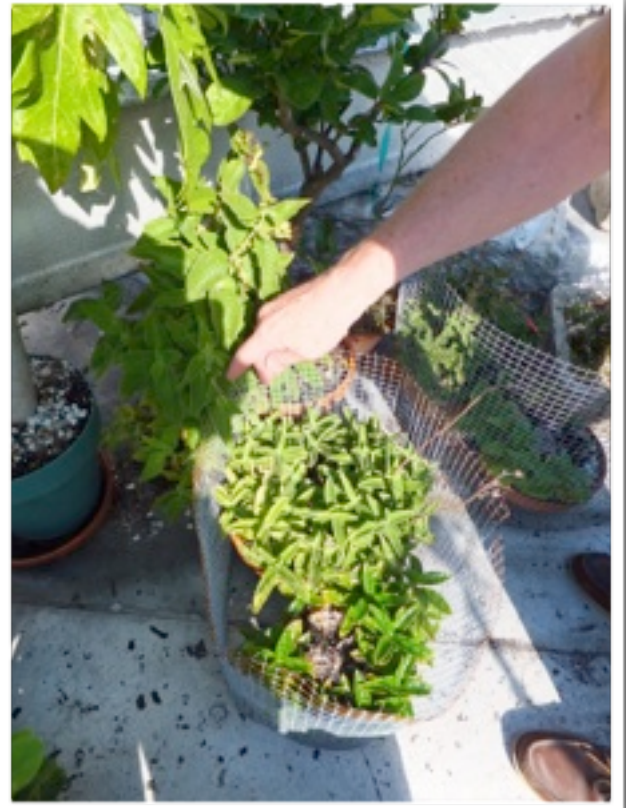
Mel Grice photos



Plants have even taken up residence in the shower and guest bathroom.



"For some reason, I could never grow *Columnea sanguinolenta* on the wall or elsewhere, but once I put it under lights in the shower - it was quite at home."



Plants are carried up five flights of stairs to be grown on the roof during warmer months.

Above: *Sinningia tubiflora* caged to keep out pigeons. "The pigeons love the succulent leaves of *Sinningia tubiflora* and *S. sellovii* — they will sit in the middle of a gigantic tuber and eat all the foliage around them (no salad dressing, no remorse?) down to the tuber itself."



Alpine or cold-loving plants sit in styrofoam coolers on the roof. Michael says that enough light passes through the styrofoam lids when they are placed on top of the containers to satisfy the plants' needs.



"The plants in this stone trough (inside a styrofoam container) are all plants from Southern China, left to right *Oreocharis auricula*, *Corallodiscus conchifolius*, *Vaccinium dalavayii* (Ericaceae) and *Tremacron aurantiacum* (which now has been reclassified as *Oreocharis pankaiyuae*). They took the New York City summer heat quite well and *Oreocharis auricula* only stopped flowering last week; they are all loving this almost freezing weather on the roof. The oreocharis, tremacron and vaccinium are available from Far Reaches Farm in Washington state and the tremacron is also available from Tony Avent at Plant Delights Nursery in North

Carolina. They will need some protection over the winter so keep your fingers crossed!" — Michael



Michael pointing to *Gloxinia perennis* — "One of the earliest gesneriads discovered and named, a favorite of mine. I didn't understand how to grow this until I saw it growing in a drainage ditch along the side of a road in Ecuador. It was loving its wet feet and head-in-the-sun situation. This species flowers prolifically with beautiful shiny leaves and lots of seed in the fall. Hey, and the flowers smell like peppermint — who could want more?"

# Photos from the New York State African Violet Show



*Eucodonia verticillata* 'Adele'  
Eileen McGrath



*Primulina liboensis* (white veined)  
Arleen Dewell



*Aeschynanthus humillis*  
Eileen McGrath



*Smithiantha* 'Vivian's Gift'  
Karyn Cichocki



*Streptocarpus candidus* 'Wahroonga'  
Paul Kroll



# "The Mountain and the Moat"

Karen Allen [karenjallen@hotmail.com](mailto:karenjallen@hotmail.com)  
Fredericksburg, Virginia, USA

From Gesneriphiles,  
the email list for gesneriad growers



*Streptocarpus* 'DS - Meteor Shower'



*Streptocarpus* 'Matylda'

Karen Allen photos

While discussing streptocarpus, Patrick asked, "While I'm impressed by your lovely, robust strep, my eye is drawn to the 'mound' at its base. I know one should be careful to not plant a strep too deep, and my first thought is you've created a method of raising the plant well above standard soil level. Please tell me what I'm seeing there!"

Karen Allen replied, "When I pot up my streps, the first thing I do with the new soil mix in the new cup or pot, is I 'fluff it up' while I am making the hole for my plant's root ball to go in to. This allows for more air circulation around the root ball, while new roots are trying to form. The second thing I do is while I am gently tamping the plant in, I form the 'mountain and the moat.' I make it so the crown is visibly higher than the rest of the soil line, sloping off to the edges of the new container. This serves the purpose of keeping the core root system (the roots up closest to the crown) from getting too wet when watering (the number one reason for root rot in hybrid streps). If I top water, the water goes in to the moat, and is absorbed by the plant through the outermost roots."



*Streptocarpus* 'DS - Valkyrie'

Adapted and reprinted with permission (original post on Gesneriphiles Internet Discussion Group.) Visit the Gesneriphiles website for instructions about joining the list: <http://lists.ibiblio.org/mailman/listinfo/gesneriphiles>>



**From the editor —**

I spent a large part of my October in the state of New York. The highlight of my travels was finally getting to see "the wall" in person. Now I can cross another item off my bucket list!

Plan on ordering the 2014 Gesneriad Society Convention DVD (available later this year) with images of all the flower show winners plus dozens of other high-scoring entries. It should be great!

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)

Mel

Consultants Peter Shalit  
Jeanne Katzenstein

Internet Julie Mavity-Hudson  
Communications Paul Susi

Newsletter Mel Grice  
Editor 2019 Crosswind Ct.  
Englewood, OH  
45322 USA  
[melsgrice@earthlink.net](mailto:melsgrice@earthlink.net)

Permission to reprint from **Cleanings** is granted, provided that credit is given to the author and the publication.

**Donations**

The Gesneriad Society, Inc. is a tax-exempt organization with an IRS section 501 (c)(3) status for donations. You can make your donations online at [www.gesneriadsociety.org](http://www.gesneriadsociety.org). You may also send your donation (check payable to The Gesneriad Society) to:  
Paul Susi, Development Chairperson  
2 Rushmore Street, South Huntington, NY 11746  
For additional information, contact: <development@gesneriadsociety.org>.

**Membership and Changes of Address**

The Gesneriad Society Membership Secretary, Bob Clark,  
1122 East Pike Street, PMB 637, Seattle, WA 98122-3916 USA

**Changes of Address** — Send changes of address to the Membership Secretary <membership@gesneriadsociety.org> 90 days prior to moving to avoid missing an issue. The Society is not responsible for replacing issues missed because of late notification of address changes. Back issues may be ordered from The Gesneriad Society Publications.

**Renewals** — Send dues to the Membership Secretary. A Renewal Notice is sent two months prior to the expiration date of your membership. (The expiration date is printed on your mailing label/membership card received with each copy of *Gesneriads*.) Please remit your dues prior to the expiration date to avoid missing an issue as we are not responsible for replacing issues missed because of late payment of dues. Back issues may be ordered from Publications.

**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.

New Member Date \_\_\_\_\_

Renewal Membership # \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
FAMILY NAME GIVEN NAME MIDDLE INITIAL

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
STREET

\_\_\_\_\_ CITY STATE ZIP CODE COUNTRY

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

(Rates in US\$)	Mailing in US 1 year	Mailing in US 3 years	Mailing outside US 1 year	Mailing outside US 3 years
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$25	\$70	\$30	\$85
<input type="checkbox"/> Household	\$26	\$73	\$31	\$88
<input type="checkbox"/> Journal Subscription <small>(organizations, chapters, affiliates)</small>	\$25	\$70	\$30	\$85
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Life	Mailing in USA \$375		Mailing outside USA \$450	
<input type="checkbox"/> Green Option	Electronic journal copy (no print copy) for Individual or Household Members \$20 (one year), \$55 (three years) anywhere in the world			

I wish to make a tax-deductible contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Elvin McDonald Research Endowment Fund     Nellie D. Sleeth Scholarship Endowment Fund

Frances Batcheller Endowment Fund     Students and Speakers Convention Fund     Conservation Fund

In Honor     Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks or money orders payable in US\$ on a USA bank to: **The Gesneriad Society**

Or, charge my  VISA, or  MasterCard

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: **The Gesneriad Society Membership Secretary, Bob Clark,  
1122 East Pike St., PMB 637, Seattle, WA 98122-3916 USA**

For application online: [www.gesneriadsociety.org](http://www.gesneriadsociety.org)