



Gleanings

a monthly newsletter from The Gesneriad Society, Inc.

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

Volume 10, Number 12

December 2019



Welcome to the latest issue of **Gleanings**! This issue includes my photos of gesneriads at the New York State African Violet Society Show, a reprint of the late Monte Watler's article on the basics of growing gesneriads, and the Annual Appeal.

Hope you enjoy **Gleanings**!

Mel Grice, Editor

Michael Riley from New York, NY, USA, exhibited a specimen of seldom seen *Seemannia* 'Little Red' at the 2019 Gesneriad Society Flower Show in Cincinnati, Ohio this past July. It is a hybrid between *Seemannia purpurascens* and *S. nematanthodes* 'Evita' created by John Boggan.

It will soon be time to register for the 2020 Gesneriad Society Convention in St. Petersburg, Florida. Watch the Gesneriad Society website listed below for further details.



Mel Grice photos

Gesneriads at the New York State African Violet Show

Mel Grice photos



Columnea hirta 'Light Prince'
Jill Fischer

Primulina purpurea
Paul Kroll



Episcia 'Pink Dreams' - Paul Kroll





Gloxinia erinoides "Chapada dos Guimaraes"
Karyn Cichocki



Saintpaulia 'Astro'
Doug Burdick

Episcia 'Cleopatra'
Jill Fischer



Mel Grice photos



Nautilocalyx glandulifer - Paul Kroll



Eucodonia 'Adele' - Cindy Fagan



Primulina 'Patina'
Donna Coleman



Primulina 'Summer Song'
Karyn Cichocki



Saintpaulia 'Humako Inches'
Heidi Dillenbeck

Mel Grice photos

The Basics: Temperature and Humidity

Monte Watler

Editor's note — One of the things I love to do in the winter is go back through old copies of **THE GLOXINIAN** and **GESNERIADS**. This article by the late Monte Watler was printed in **THE GLOXINIAN** in 2000. The information is still just as applicable today as when it first appeared. The only things changed are in the box at the end. This information has been updated. One of the benefits of joining The Gesneriad Society is access to PDF's of back issues of **THE GLOXINIAN** and **GESNERIADS**. Mel

As a beginner, you should learn as much as possible about your plants in order to afford them the necessary requirements. Since the majority of our indoor plants are indigenous to the tropics, it is natural that we should try to provide them with an environment as close to their natural habitat as practical. This is not always possible with the gesneriad family. They have been acquired from varied climatic areas of the globe and require diverse conditions for growing.

So, instead of trying to adjust our conditions to suit an assorted collection of plants, we must select plants that will thrive under the conditions we can best provide. While many are adaptable and will adjust somewhat to unaccustomed conditions, it is improbable that one would successfully grow an alpine such as *Ramonda* (cool grower) in proximity to *Episcia* (a tropical, heat-loving genus).

The ideal temperature for growing most gesneriads is 18-27 degrees Celsius (65-80 degrees Fahrenheit). Most plants will tolerate, and some plants actually benefit from, a sudden change in temperature. However, it is advisable to try to maintain an even temperature, although it is normal for the temperature to be somewhat cooler at night than during the day. A sudden change in temperature, hot or cold, can have a dramatic and sometimes detrimental affect on some plants.

Sometimes, for comfort or economic reasons, it may be necessary to reduce your thermostat at night to a setting that may result in an unacceptable temperature for your plants. This can be mitigated by running your plant lights at night instead of during the day and also by enclosing your plant stands in clear plastic sheeting. This will help to conserve the heat and keep the temperature at a level that will not affect your plants.

Adequate humidity, or the amount of moisture in the air, is imperative for most indoor plants. Quite often it is one of the more difficult conditions to provide. In the temperate areas our central heating systems produce dry air in the winter, and in the summer our air conditioning extracts the moisture from the air. To keep humidity at a level that is most beneficial to plants, we will find it sometimes becomes uncomfortable for us. For comfort in the winter, our

houses average 40% humidity while the acceptable level for plants is closer to 60%.

The following are ways and means of increasing the humidity in the plant room without affecting the other areas of the house:

- *Set plants on trays or individual saucers filled with pebbles, keeping water level below the top of the pebbles. Water will evaporate and rise, providing humidity.

- *Place a humidifier in the room. An inexpensive vaporizer from the pharmacy is ample.

- *Jars of water placed among the plants on the plant shelf will also increase the humidity.

- *If you have deep plant trays, cover them with egg crating as a base on which to place your plants. Fill the tray with water which will gradually evaporate and increase the humidity.

- *Cover your plant stands with clear plastic sheeting. This will increase the temperature as well as contain the moisture which is being emitted by the plants.

Misting is another means of increasing humidity, but it is quite labor-intensive and not very effective. Automatic misting, as is done in some greenhouses at regular intervals, might be beneficial, but when it is done by hand on an occasional basis, the benefit is not worth the effort. Should you decide to mist, please ensure that the water is as hot as possible. Cold water will damage the leaves. If your water is lukewarm to start with, it will be cold by the time it passes through the air and reaches the plant. One other thing to remember is that misting is not spraying. Misting is very fine and almost fog-like, while spraying is a shower of droplets.

Most gesneriads dislike dry air and will not hesitate to show their displeasure. Leaves will turn yellow and fall, leaf tips will dry out and become parched, the development of growth and blossoms will be retarded, and buds will blast (fail to open).

Good air circulation is essential. This can be provided by installing a small fan near the plant stand, but not where it will directly blow on the plants, or by leaving the circulating furnace fan running perpetually. Plants will do less well in an area with static air. Lack of ventilation and poor air movement may result in mildew as well as crown rot on some plants. *Saintpaulia*, *Sinningia*, and *Episcia* are some of the genera that are susceptible to crown rot. Good ventilation will

also help afford a more even temperature in the plant room. On the other hand, plants should never be exposed to drafts or have direct hot or cold air blowing on them. The ventilation should be indirect.

Basic Tips for the Beginning Gesneriad Grower

- * Keep it simple when you start out.
- * Avoid the tendency to get lots and lots of different plants. There's plenty of time for that later. Begin with a few plants and see how well you can grow them. Learn what their needs are. If one plant struggles or dies, concentrate on growing others that do well for you, then later move on to more difficult ones.
- * Try gesneriads in different conditions, whatever is available to you: various windowsill exposures, under lights if you have them, at home or at work, outdoors if it is warm enough. Learn about the microclimates in your living area.
- * Read about gesneriads and learn about them. Read some back issues of **THE GLOXINIAN** and **GESNERIADS**. Explore the Gesneriad Society website <https://www.gesneriadsociety.org>. This site will lead you to other Internet resources such as Ron Myhr's Gesneriad Reference Web <https://gesneriads.info> and the email correspondence group Gesneriphiles.

This article appeared originally in *THE GLOXINIAN* Vol. 50, No. 3, Third Quarter 2000, Jeanne Katzenstein, editor. Read other interesting articles like this about gesneriads by becoming a member of The Gesneriad Society and receiving our quarterly 64-page journal, *GESNERIADS*.



Streptocarpus 'Dale's Scarlet Macaw'

The Gesneriad Society Annual Appeal

The [Annual Appeal](#) helps support gesneriad research, education, and conservation by ensuring that grant money is available for eligible applicants. The target fund for 2019 is **The Conservation Fund**. This fund promotes the conservation of gesneriads through education, research, exploration, ex-situ propagation and habitat preservation. The Gesneriad Society, Inc., promotes and supports the conservation of gesneriads by providing grants from the Conservation Fund to individuals and institutions who seek to conserve gesneriads. This can be accomplished through a variety of actions and projects that directly or indirectly affect the conservation of gesneriads. Donate now! You may make a donation online by using the link above.

The Gesneriad Society, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) U.S. tax-exempt corporation.
The full amount of a donation is tax deductible for U.S. members.

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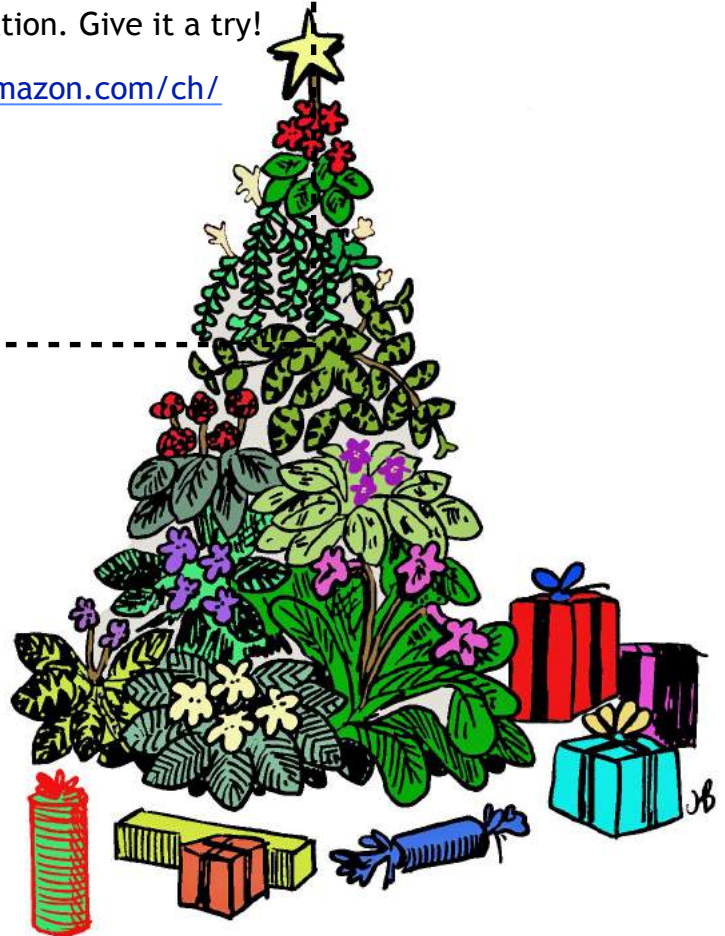
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Austin Grevious
Development Chairperson
The Gesneriad Society, Inc.
aagrevious@gmail.com

Happy Holidays!

John Beaulieu created this holiday tree originally in black and white and Stan Sudol added the color a few years later.

Thanks to both for sharing!



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. You may also send your donation (check payable to The Gesneriad Society) to:

Austin Grevious, Development Chairperson
4932 88th Ave. W., University Place, WA 98467
For additional information, contact: aagrevious@gmail.com

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.



From the editor —

For those of you who have been following my efforts to get my van into the garage for the winter, I am happy to report that it is mission accomplished!

If you have suggestions, comments, or items for possible inclusion in future issues, please feel free to contact me at melsgrice@gmail.com

Mel

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.

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For application online: www.gesneriadsociety.org

Consultants
Alcie Maxwell
Judy Zinni
Vicki Ferguson
Mary Jo Modica
Dale Martens

Internet
Communications
Julie Mavity-Hudson
Paul Susi

Newsletter
Editor
Mel Grice
2019 Crosswind Ct.
Englewood, OH
45322 USA

melsgrice@gmail.com

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