

Petal Tones

The newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of
The Gesneriad Society

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Message from the President

As I sit and write this there is no doubt that winter has finally arrived here in Maryland. Sure, it could be a lot worse, but when I landed at Dulles on Tuesday morning after 10 days in Brazil, there was no doubt the vacation was over.

I was still going through customs when I got a call from the office asking me stop by on my way home from the airport. Nine and a half hours in the air, an hour to the office and then two hours there to take care of a problem... home sure looked good when I finally got there.

But rest was short lived. I had to go out and get the stitches out of my leg. They'd been in for 19 days (the doctor in Brazil said everything was healing nicely but he refused to take them out while I was down there). Ten days in Brazil, and the first time I got clearance to go into a pool or ocean was after I got home.

Oh, well. I still had a great time. I'll share a lot of pictures at the meeting this month. It's been almost five years since my last visit to Mauro's greenhouse and things sure have changed. The plants there are still fantastic to look at, but there seemed to be seed



Mauro, his sister, mom and brother-in-law at his Birthday party on Sunday the 25th.

...cont.

Next Meeting: Jim's Trip Report (Brazil)

Jim Roberts will be speaking about his visit to Brazil and to Mauro Pexioto's greenhouse.

Please remember to bring plants for the Little Show, raffle table contributions, and food.

Membership Dues

If you have not done so already, please give your dues to Larry Skog.

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(No one sent in a wish list this month.)

Upcoming Events and 2009 Meetings:

Next Meeting: Saturday February 14, 2009

Program:

10:30 – doors open

11:00 – program begins

11:45-12:15 – Raffle and Little Show Entries

12:15-12:30 – Little Show (everyone should bring at least one plant for show every month)

12:30-1:00 – Socializing & Lunch

1:00-2:00 – Business Meeting

Meetings are at the National Arboretum, Washington, D.C. New members are welcome – please introduce yourself for a free plant.

Meetings in 2009:

3/14/09, 4/11/09, 5/9/09

6/13/09 (pre-Convention meeting)

6/30-7/4/09 – The Gesneriad Society Convention (location: Silver Spring, MD)

9/12/09, 10/10/09, 12/12/09

...cont. from page 1

Pods everywhere to feed the Brazil Seed Fund. The greenhouse itself has been expanded and the roof repaired, but Mauro's friendly reception was what really impressed me.

We spent three amazing days exploring areas close to his home and seeing some great plants. I've got some wonderful pictures to go through for the plants growing in their natural environment class at the Convention this summer. We saw *Sinningia allagophylla*, *S. magnifica*, *S. aggregata*, *S. douglasii* (growing in trees), *Nematanthus fissus*, *N. fritchii*, *N. fornix*, *Codonanthe gracilis* and *C. devosiana* – all in just a few small areas within a couple hours of his home. Not to mention all the orchids, bromeliads and aroids that got in the way of seeing the plants we were hunting.

I don't want to spoil the program by putting photos here ahead of my talk, but I will be giving Ki a CD of photos to put in the March issue.

Mauro had some interesting hybrids that he's made with *Sinningia* sp. 'Florianopolis.' Does anyone have any seedlings growing from the seed that Carol shared last Summer? *S. sp.* 'Florianopolis' seems to transfer that great leaf texture into its hybrids, so if you have the plant, work with it.

Guess I'm going on a bit long but there's still a lot to talk about. There are still a few months left to pick up plants to enter in the Convention show. And there are still a few open meetings for us to pick up hints on what the judges will be looking for in show plants. Remember to bring plants to our Little Show.

Don't forget plants/tubers/rhizomes/leaves/cuttings/pots and other related materials for the raffle table. Now's the time to start small cuttings to grow on for dish gardens and terrariums, or for arrangements of growing materials. And don't forget to send your wish list to Ki each month.

Tell your friends about next month's special meeting. Tim Tuttle will be down to talk about his *Petrocosmea* plants and hybrids, a preview of his Convention talk.

Jim

What's Growing

Brian Connor sent in some photos!



©2008 Brian Connor.

From the top, left to right:

Top row: *Epicanthe* Don Herman 'Gold Rush' (An orchid, not a gesneriad - one whose parents have undergone some taxonomic changes, resulting in this relatively new name for the nothogenus.)

Row 2: *Streptocarpus* 'Shen Sugarplum', *Kohleria* 'Peridot's Potlach'

Row 3: *Kohleria* Peridot's 'Rolo', *Streptocarpus* 'Spin Art'

Row 4: *Petrocosmea minor*, *Streptocarpus* 'Inky Fingers'

Tsukuba Botanical Garden

<http://www.tbg.kahaku.go.jp/english/>
by Kyoko Imai

I've been meaning to share a few photos from my brief visit to the Tsukuba Botanical Garden in June of last year. It was a drizzly wet afternoon worthy of a movie, but I had a space in my schedule and it was time for some greenery.

The Tsukuba Botanical Garden is a research branch of the National Science Museum of Japan. It is located within Tsukuba Science City, a 45 minute ride via express train (a little over 30 miles/50 km) from the northeastern edge of Tokyo. Occupying some 14 ha. (36 acres), the collection includes vascular plants of central Japan, East Asian ferns, Cycadaceae, Colocasia, and South American orchids.

The garden has three greenhouses: the Tropical Resource Plants House; the Tropical Rain Forest House which has two rooms for Lowland and Montane climates; and the Savanna House.

This is the Tropical Resource Plants House. (You can see it was raining.)



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According to the online database, the Tsukuba Botanical Garden has quite a number of gesneriads, but I only spotted three in the Tropical Resource Plants House.

Rhytidophyllum tormentosum, a few feet tall:



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Episcia 'Acajou':



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Aeschynanthus.



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Despite the rain, I spent a couple of hours wandering through the outdoor areas. There are some dozen sections such as a Cool-Temperate Deciduous Broad-leaved Forest Section, Marsh Plants Section, and Hygrophytes and Aquatic Plants Sections.



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The "most interesting" plants were marked for the public, and on this day an *Agave atrovirens* was #1 in the Savanna House. You can see one spike in flower, and another taller spike with buds. I'd guess it was over 20 feet tall: this photo cuts off the adult standing next to the plant, and even standing at the very edge of the greenhouse I had to tilt the camera to get most of it into the frame. (I wasn't carrying a wide angle lens.)



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I hope some day I'll be able to visit the off-limits areas – I saw some interesting things behind the walls and fences.

Close-ups: Petrocosmea
by Kyoko Imai

As next month's program will be on Petrocosmea, I took my macro lens up close to a couple of leaves, and then decided to include a bit more on this genus.

There are quite a few species and hybrids in cultivation in the U.S., such as *Petrocosmea forrestii*, *P. begoniifolia*, and *P. rosettifolia* (there is some question as to whether what is circulating as *rosettifolia* is named correctly).



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P. flaccida at the Mid-Atlantic African Violet Show 2008.



© 2007 Laurie Gray Bounsall.

P. forrestii.

Petrocosmea species are native to areas of Asia including Thailand, China, Burma. Some are from higher altitudes and therefore grow and bloom

better with a cool, relatively dry winter. Some such as *P. parryorum* are from lower elevations.¹



© 2008 Kyoko Imai.

P. rosettifolia in a planting shown at the NCAC 2006 show.



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P. rosettifolia in the same planting.

¹ The Gesneriad Reference Web,
<http://www.gesneriads.ca/genpetro.htm>.

Most grow beautiful rosettes of leaves, such as this *P. begoniifolia*:



© 2007 Laurie Gray Bounsall.

Propagation from leaves is easy and relatively fast – just as with *Saintpaulia* – and can also be done in long fiber sphagnum.



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© 2006 Kyoko Imai. *P. flaccida*.

I discovered that they can be extremely resilient to drought when I left some *P. 'Momo'* babies (each with only a few leaves) in 0.5 oz cups without water for 3 months. They had shrunk but all were still alive and are growing.

The leaves of some species are covered in hair, such as with this species being distributed as *P. sericea* 'HT-1':



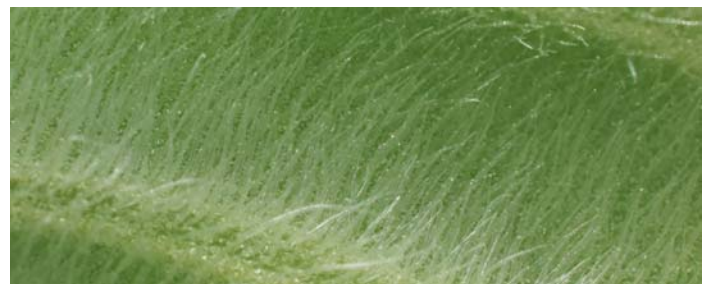
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A closer view of the hairs from the side:



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And this is the back of a leaf:



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In contrast, the leaves of my *P. minor* have shorter hair ("fuzzy") with some longer hairs at the edges:



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And this photograph shows the bumps and hairs on *P. menglianensis* leaf:



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I find that during the dry winters, my *Petroselinum* grow better in enclosed environments such as a terrarium.

National Capital Area Chapter (NCAC)

A chapter of the Gesneriad Society, Inc.
www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

"The purpose of the chapter shall be to afford a convenient and beneficial association of persons interested in gesneriads; to stimulate a widespread interest in the identification, correct nomenclature, culture, and propagation of gesneriads; and to encourage the origination and introduction of new cultivars." (NCAC bylaws, revised April 1981.)

NCAC meets several times a year on the second Saturday of the month in the Administration Building of the U.S. National Arboretum. For details, please refer to the latest issue of *Petal Tones*, the website, or contact one of the people below. All are welcome and new attendees are invited to adopt a free plant.

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