



Toronto Gesneriad Society

Newsletter

We're not strangers - only friends you have not met!
Growing since 1977

Volume 34 - Number 1

www.torontogesneriadsociety.org

January 2010

*"There are two seasonal diversions that can ease the bite of any winter.
One is the January thaw. The other is the seed catalogues." ~ Hal Borland*

GARDENER'S REWARD



*Life is like a garden
And if we look around
Many fine examples
Of comparisons are found.
Plant the seed of kindness,
And it is bound to grow
If fertilised by friendship
To bring a special glow.
Call a spade a spade and learn
To dig out misery.
Transplant toleration
Where confusion used to be.
Life is like a garden
Of that, there's little doubt,
And even more so when the threat
Of worry's weeded out.*

J. M. Robertson

Sinningia sp 'Florianopolis'
From the Dec. Auction



You're invited to attend the next
TGS meeting on
Sunday, January 10, 2010
at the
Toronto Botanical Garden
777 Lawrence Avenue East at 2:00 P.M.
Studio 1 & 2 Please bring a guest

The program will include
Gesneriad Society CD
Presentation: Vincent Woo
also
Mini Show, Sales Table
Show & Tell

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Editor's Deadline:

Three weeks prior to the next meeting.

TORONTO GESNERIAD SOCIETY

is an affiliate of the
The Gesneriad Society, Inc.

We publish this newsletter monthly
except July and August.

Annual memberships are available at the
following rates: Individual: \$15.00

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Playback by The Listener

The weather forecast was scary, but as the temperature remained above that freezing mark, all that occurred was a light rain. This allowed many of our members to attend our Holiday Social on December 13.

Many thanks to Doris Brownlie who arranged for the tables and to Suzie Larouche for the refreshments and to all the others who helped. It ended up very cozy, delicious and practical.

Vincent Woo welcomed everyone and invited all to dig in to the food and socializing. Twenty-six members briskly lined up and filled their plates with a fine selection of foods and liquids.

Bill Price has renewed his membership as a Life Member. He is the third for our organization. Thanks Bill.

There were two fine plants for our mini show, and they gave the Judges a moment to make their decision for Best in Show.

Julie Thompson had a small pot of *Streptocarpus thompsonii* which appeared to have a swelling at the base or below the soil line. This is apparently typical for this specie.

Our Gift and Leaf exchange engaged all the participants while the names were picked and items collected and viewed with anticipation.

The Sales Table had many well grown plants and all went for a good price.

Patrick Smith, with his persuasive manner, auctioned a number of nice plants, keeping all who bid on their toes.

Gillian Smith has accepted a position as Director. Welcome to the Executive!

So ended another year of meetings with everyone exchanging

**Season's Greetings and
a Happy 2010.**



Vincent Woo and Deanna Belli drawing a name for the Gift/Leaf Exchange



Patrick Smith Auctioneer

**Gesneriad Mini Show
December 13, 2009**

Judges: Paul Lee
Deanne Belli
Clerk: Beverley Williams

Class 1

1st *Sinningia* 'Spellbound'
Best In Show Beverley Williams



**S. 'Spellbound'
flower from 2002**

Class 2

1st *Saintpaulia* 'ACA's Raspberry Rapture'
Doris Brownlie



Membership Renewal

Membership renewals for 2007 are now past due. If you haven't done so yet, please renew your membership at our January meeting and continue to receive the benefits of being a member. The February Newsletter will be the last one sent for anyone not renewing.

The annual membership is \$15.00 for an individual and \$18.00 for the family rate. We also have a Life Membership: Single: \$225.00 Family: \$270.00. Payment may be either by cash or cheque (but no post-dated cheques, please). You may send your payment by cheque to our Membership Secretary:

Emma Bygott

75 Dentonia Park Ave.,
Toronto, ON
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Happy New Year



*"The first of January rolls around
Like clockwork it appears
I find it's timing most profound
As it brings us each new year*

*Right on time, It's never late
Has never ever blown it
Apparently this wise old date
Refuses to postpone it*

*Drink a toast to January one
For annual consistence
It's coming means the old year's done
Let's drink to it's persistence."*

Stanley Cooper, Happy New Year, 1926

Holiday Social Pictures



Doris Brownlie
Emma Bygott
Julie Thompson
Vincent Woo

Rita McPhail
Marian Kerr
Ruth Schram
Michelle Edwards



Patrick Smith
Gillian Smith
Susan Smith
Erika Schroedersecker

John Hopkins
Roland Schwahn
Louise McPherson





Marilyn Crompton
Deanna Belli
Carolyn Conlin-Lane
Jim Bodnar



Suzie Larouche
Judy Zinni
Bruce Williams
Beverley Williams



Paul Lee
Barbara Brindza
Stan Sudol

"To shorten winter, borrow some money due in spring." ~ W. J. Vogel

Cheers to a new year and another chance for us to get it right. ~ Oprah Winfrey

Our Trip to New Zealand

by Paul Lee

During our Executive meeting, it was suggested by our esteemed president that members of the executive write an article for our newsletter, as Stan would greatly appreciate some new material. I volunteered to be the first, so that I can make mistakes and not be compared to other executive members.



I decided to write about my search for gesneriads in captivity in New Zealand. My wife, Evelyn, and I set off for Auckland in September. Being new to long distance flying, we did not know what to expect. We were gently broken in by our first leg of the journey from Toronto to Los Angeles-- that was easy. A fairly long lay over (actually an eternity) in Los Angeles was followed by another eternity on Air New Zealand. They gave us a couple glasses of wine and a good meal, and we settled down to try and sleep. After seven hours –only five more hours to go!

Finally, after breakfast we landed, having lost one whole day completely to the International Date Line. We went through the usual screening, and then to our surprise, another check for any banned foods, soil on shoes, anything that could cause problems with the environment. After seeing the beauty of the country, we could understand why they want to try and protect it.

We walked out to find my cousin, John (and wife Janet) waiting at 5:30 a.m. to greet us. What a welcome sight as it had been a long day!

Our base was Auckland at John's house.

From there we went north to the end of the Island. We stayed at Pahia which is a subtropical paradise. I did not see any gesneriads that I could recognize, even though the climate would be wonderful for gesneriads to grow outside in planters all year round.

After thoroughly exploring the northern tip of the North Island, we returned to Auckland. From there we drove south to visit cousins in Taranaki. They have a dairy farm which looks out on Mount Egmont, a beautiful snow-capped cone of a mountain. It is all by itself looking like a typical Japanese mountain picture.

We moved onto Wellington, the capital of N.Z., and spent the night with another cousin. The next day we took the ferry across Cook Strait to South Island. It was very rough (waves in the 7-metre range), but thankfully you travel through Queen Charlotte Sound at the top of the South Island for about a third of the trip under millpond conditions. We disembarked at Picton, and drove on for a while, staying overnight in Kaikoura. After viewing the seal colony there, we drove onto Christchurch.



Chirita eberhardtii now known as *Chirita tamiana*

Our motel was about three blocks from the Christchurch Botanic Gardens. Spring had sprung, and the rhododendrons and azaleas were in full flower. We came upon the main display greenhouse, and as soon as we went in the door there was the 'wow' of colour and smell of primroses. A door led to another display house with waterfalls and many tropical plants. It had a continuous balcony around the greenhouse on an upper level, which is where we saw the Gesneriads – chirita,

nematanthus, aeschynanthus, streptocarpella, saintpaulia, columnea and a few streptocarpus.



Kohleria lindeniana is now *Gloxinella lindeniana*

That was the only gessie fix I got except for a garden centre which had a couple of nematanthus for sale. Neither, Wellington Botanical Garden nor Auckland Botanical had any gesneriads that I could find. Gesneriads seem to be used as specimens for botanical study, rather than for commercial use, or as house plants as in North America and England. It seems to be because the culture in New Zealand is to not grow many houseplants, although the conditions, like England, would be very conducive to growing them.



Columnea arguta 'Golden Regalia'

Because of time, we headed back to the North Island, and up to Tauranga via Taupo and Rotorua. We had three more first cousins to visit and to stay with my second cousin who has an organic Kiwi fruit orchard.

From there, we went back to Auckland to stay with cousin John for a few days and then return to

Canada.

New Zealand does not look very big so you think you can get to places fairly quickly, but as we found out the roads twist and turn around mountains and up and down. A thirty kilometer "as the crow flies" journey may be fifty in fact. The roads were excellent but when the sign said 25 kph at a corner, it meant it. The other thing we noticed about driving in New Zealand, is there are no shoulders and no safety barriers, even on sheer drops -- a bit scary!



It was a wonderful trip, and interesting to see the plant diversity, including the very few gesneriads they grow in New Zealand. It amazed us that more gesneriads were not grown outside, especially on the North Island which is more moderate.

If you go away on holiday

*Enjoy yourself on holiday,
Wherever you may be,
In busy streets or countryside,
On hills, or by the sea.
But spare a thought and prayer today
For all those who at home must stay.*

Francis Gay - Friendship book