



# Toronto Gesneriad Society

## Newsletter

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

Volume 34 - Number 3

[www.torontogesneriadsociety.org](http://www.torontogesneriadsociety.org)

March 2010

*"If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant; if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome." ~ Anne Bradstreet*

### President's Message



up the great work.

I mention all the hard work that goes to our plants because it is that time of the year again. The annual show and sale at Sherway Gardens is just around the corner! This year we have a wonderful musical theme of "Ebony and Ivory: Gesneriads in Perfect Harmony" which was proposed by our

I've been watching the Olympics this week and have been so impressed by the dedication of the athletes. I think our growers have a level of commitment similar to those Olympians in training their plants, watering and grooming, weekly if not daily.

newsletter editor, Stan Sudol. It evokes the wonderful melodies of the 1980s as well as providing a creative outlet for our artistic classes. I hope to see some wonderful contrasting arrangements especially since we don't have a lot of flowers in Gesneriaceae that could stand in for something ebony.

Our March presentation will be "Plant Pests and Solutions" from Paul Lee, who certainly has the experience with battling the bugs as a commercial grower of sweet peas and lilies and greenhouse growing. Please come and join us in learning about how to control these critters.

Good Growing,  
**Vincent**

*Saintpaulia 'Irish Flirt'*  
Nancy Ley Dec 2003



You're invited to attend the next  
TGS meeting on  
Sunday, March 14, 2010  
at the  
Toronto Botanical Garden  
777 Lawrence Avenue East at 2:00  
Studio 1 & 2 Please bring a guest



The program will include  
"Plant Pests & Solutions"  
Presentation: Paul Lee  
also  
Mini Show, Sales Table  
Show & Tell

## TGS 2010 EXECUTIVE

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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

Inquiries to our:

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[www.torontogesneriadsociety.org](http://www.torontogesneriadsociety.org)

## Playback by The Listener

Anonymously known as DB



On a beautiful sunny day on February 7, 2010, twenty-seven people gathered at the Toronto Botanical Gardens for the Toronto Gesneriad Society meeting which was chaired by Paul Lee in the absence of our president, Vincent Woo.

Our first sight of Paul was to see him struggling with a new cupboard he had found for our kitchen articles. It is white and clean and it fits onto the cart and in the storage room, and only cost \$32.40.

Paul began the meeting with Show and Tell. Marina De Souza brought a sinningia she had obtained from Lee Stradley which had a huge tuber and three big colourful blooms but only one tiny, tiny leaf. Rita McPhail showed a plant of *Chirita* 'Peridots Tsuan' which was double crowned which looked like twin plants. On seeking advice about what to do with it she was told that it is the exhibitor's choice how many crowns to have but that three would be preferable to two. She was advised to split the plant and repot it as a single crowned plant, sacrificing one crown and keeping a small plant of it if possible.

The Mini show was judged by Julie Thompson, Brett Flewelling and Marina De Souza. They said it was of very high quality exhibits and it was difficult to choose the best in each class. There was much discussion about Julie Forbes *Chirita* 'Chastity' plant. Julie was advised to take off the small bottom leaves, cut the stem, scrape it gently and repot it in new soil, watering it carefully until it regrew roots. Another suggestion from the judges was to apply top dressing of aquarium gravel, stones or sphagnum moss as top dressing to show plants.

There was no auction, but at break time the plant sales table was cleared in no time. During the social time, while partaking of the feast of cheese and crackers, fruit and lots of sweet morsels, friendly persuasion for volunteering to judge or clerk at the show was being successfully practised.

After the break we all broke up into three groups for workshops. Paul Lee lead one on planting cuttings, Julie and Brett taught how to plant rhizomes and how to deal with rhizomatous plants and Bruce Williams showed how to change a light stand unit from T12 ballasts to T8 ballasts. Marina was the time keeper who saw that the people rotated through each activity on time. The discussion was lively and it was a great learning experience for all who attended.

### Good Luck to all exhibitors at our Spring Show!

# Gesneriad Mini Show

February 7, 2010

Judges: Julie Thompson  
Marina De Souza  
Brett Flewelling  
Clerk: Beverley Williams



**Best In Show**  
*Sinningia eumorpha* (white)  
Marina De Souza  
Photo by Prip De Souza

## Class 1 - Streptocarpus

- |                 |                              |                   |
|-----------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> | S. 'Orion'                   | Beverley Williams |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> | S. 'Little Gem'              | Beverley Williams |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> | S. 'Heartland's Baby Egrets' | Doris Brownlie    |
| HR              | S. 'Fleischle's Cantonia'    | Marina De Souza   |



**S. 'Little Gem'**  
Beverley Williams

*The following  
photographs are by  
Rosemary Dobson*

**S. 'Heartland's  
Baby Egrets'**  
Doris Brownlie



## Class 2 - Sinningia

- |                 |                                       |                 |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> | <i>S. eumorpha</i> (white) <b>BIS</b> | Marina De Souza |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> | S. 'HCY's Lady Lady'                  | Doris Brownlie  |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> | S. 'Kevin Garnet'                     | Emma Bygott     |



**S. 'HCY's Lady Lady'**  
Doris Brownlie



**S. 'Kevin Garnet'**  
Emma Bygott

## Class 3 - Petrocosmea

- |                 |                     |                |
|-----------------|---------------------|----------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> | <i>P. forrestii</i> | Doris Brownlie |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> | <i>P. flaccida</i>  | Emma Bygott    |



## Class 4 - Saintpaulia (miniature)

- |                 |                 |                   |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> | S. 'Silly Girl' | Beverley Williams |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|



**S. 'Kevin Garnet' flower**  
Emma Bygott

## Class 5 - Saintpaulia (species)

- |                 |                   |                 |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> | <i>S. confusa</i> | Marina De Souza |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|

## Class 6 - Saintpaulia (standards)

- |                 |                       |                |
|-----------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> | S. 'Optimara Ontario' | Doris Brownlie |
|-----------------|-----------------------|----------------|

## Class 7 - Chirita

- |                 |                           |              |
|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> | <i>Chirita</i> 'Chastity' | Julie Forbes |
|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------|

## Class 8 - For Display Only

- |                 |                                   |                |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> | <i>Saintpaulia</i> blossom stalks | Doris Brownlie |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|

## **Ebony and Ivory: Gesneriads in Perfect Harmony**

**Annual Gesneriad Flower Show at Sherway Gardens – March 27 & 28**

**Etobicoke, Ontario – January 13, 2010** – The Toronto Gesneriad Society celebrates their 33<sup>rd</sup> anniversary with ***Ebony and Ivory: Gesneriads in Perfect Harmony***, their annual judged gesneriad flower show, at **Sherway Gardens** (Hwy 427 and the QEW) on Saturday, March 27 from 11:00am to 6:00pm, and Sunday, March 28 from 11:00am to 6:00pm in Sherway Square. Visit [www.sherwaygardens.ca](http://www.sherwaygardens.ca) or [www.torontogesneriadsociety.org](http://www.torontogesneriadsociety.org) or call 416-621-1070 for more information.

“The annual judged show of the Toronto Gesneriad Society, ***Ebony and Ivory: Gesneriads in Perfect Harmony*** provides a great opportunity for people to see some rare and exotic gesneriads that are seldom seen in florist shops or garden centres, and only available from other growers and gesneriad societies,” states Beverley Williams, Entries Chairman, Toronto Gesneriad Society.

Toronto Gesneriad Society members will be at Sherway Gardens to answer questions about growing gesneriads. Plants that have been propagated and grown by members of the Toronto Gesneriad Society will also be on sale.

The annual Toronto Gesneriad Show at Sherway Gardens, is the largest judged gesneriad show in Canada and the second largest in the world (second only to the International Show of The Gesneriad Society). Plants and other exhibits are entered by the society's members from across Canada and the U.S. The show's reputation for the variety and quality of its exhibits regularly attracts visitors from across Canada, the U.S., and overseas.

***Ebony and Ivory: Gesneriads in Perfect Harmony*** features four divisions:

- ! The Horticultural Division features individual plants in flower, or grown for foliage.
- ! The Artistic Division showcases arrangements of cut plant materials, growing plants, terrariums, and other artistic plantings.
- ! The Art Division features art, crafts, and photography featuring Gesneriads.
- ! The Educational Division includes information about Gesneriads.

Growers select their show entries based on what they have been growing this year and what is blooming at showtime.

### **GESNERIADS EXPLAINED:**

The Gesneriad family of plants – pronounced either "jez-NARE-ee ad" or "guess-NARE-ee-ad" is named for Swiss botanist Konrad Gesner. Native to the tropics and sub-tropics, these are "miracle houseplants" with many that thrive in home growing conditions. While the name "gesneriad" may not be familiar, many of the most popular houseplants are in fact gesneriads. There is a wide variety of plant sizes, shapes, flowers and colours.

Gesneriads provide blooming plants throughout the year and vary in size from that of the miniature *Sinningia pusilla*, the blossom of which is seldom larger than a shirt button, to that of the trailing *Columnnea*, which if left to grow unchecked, could reach a length of 5 metres. Most of them are of a manageable size and are known to the home grower as African Violet (*Saintpaulia*), Florist Gloxinia (*Sinningia speciosa*), Lipstick Plant (*Aeschynanthus*), Goldfish Plant (*Nematanthus*), Cape Primrose (*Streptocarpus*) and Flame Violet (*Episcia*).

### **GROWING GESNERIADS:**

“The first step in growing gesneriads is to determine if the plant will be grown as a hanging basket, a potted plant, a

terrarium or dish garden and then select a gesneriad which is suited for the particular effect," adds Beverley Williams.

Feed gesneriads with a balanced fertilizer such as 20-20-20 or 15-30-15 every time you water. Dilute it to avoid burning the roots, as most fertilizers recommendations are too strong for gesneriads.

### **CHOOSING THE RIGHT GESNERIAD FOR YOU!**

Do you think that because it is too hot or cold in your house that you can't find the right gesneriad for you? The gesneriad family is extremely varied with plants coming from many regions of the world even though most come from humid tropical areas.

For people who live in warm apartments or houses there are a variety of gesneriads that will thrive. Try growing African Violets, these popular houseplants are part of the gesneriad family and will tolerate a wide range of temperatures. If you want to grow something different, Columnea, Aeschynanthus (Lipstick Plant), or Nematanthus (Goldfish Plant), are all trailing plants that look magnificent hanging in windows. Their bright yellow, orange or red flowers bloom all year round.

Even though most gesneriads are very adaptable and are well suited to our warm heated homes, some actually come from cooler areas of the world. Alpine gesneriads are very adaptable to cooler homes. A cool windowsill is an ideal place to grow Streptocarpus, Chiritas or Petrocosmea, and other cooler growing gesneriads. Streptocarpus commonly called 'Cape Primrose' and native to Africa can even be grown outside in a garden and are sometimes available in local garden centres. They have very showy blooms, which come in a wide range of colours and patterns, and are held high on long stems over lush green foliage. Chiritas from China have more fleshy foliage, which is sometimes marked with patterns and lavender, blue, pink or yellow flowers.

### **About the Toronto Gesneriad Society:**

The **Toronto Gesneriad Society**, now in its 33rd year, is an affiliate of The Gesneriad Society. It has an international membership, with about two-thirds of its members from Toronto and the GTA and others from across Canada and New York State. Members from the **Toronto Gesneriad Society** are excited to be attending the Gesneriad Society Convention in Vancouver, BC from June 28-July 3, 2010 as it has been many years since The Gesneriad Society Convention has been held in a Canadian city.

### **About Sherway Gardens and Cadillac Fairview:**

**Sherway Gardens** is owned and managed by The Cadillac Fairview Corporation Limited, one of North America's largest investors, owners and managers of commercial real estate. For more than 50 years Cadillac Fairview has been leading the way in commercial real estate with innovative design, development and management. Cadillac Fairview focuses on developing and managing high quality office properties and regional shopping centres in Canada and the United States, as well as international investments in real estate companies and investment funds. With a portfolio valued at more than \$17 billion and nearly 50 million square feet of leasable space, Cadillac Fairview and its affiliates own and manage 86 properties across North America, including some of Canada's landmark developments, such as Toronto-Dominion Centre, Toronto Eaton Centre, Pacific Centre and Chinook Centre. Cadillac Fairview is wholly-owned by the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, which invests to secure the retirement income of 284,000 active and retired teachers in Ontario.

For additional information, and interview requests, please contact:

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## Hospitality

*Hospitality: Cordial and generous reception of or disposition toward guests.*

Rita McPhail has volunteered to do the refreshments as far as the set up at the meeting and letting us know of supplies needing to be replenished. Gillian Smith has volunteered to bring milk and cream. Thank you, ladies.

This does not diminish the need for help in the setup and cleanup, or to bring treats. Please do your part.

Spotted in the Long Island Gesneriad Society Newsletter "Gesneriad News." Sounds like a good idea for our environment.

HOSPITALITY NOTE: PLEASE TRY TO REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR OWN MUG TO THE MEETINGS. WE ARE TRYING TO NOT USE SO MUCH PLASTIC. THANK YOU.

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### Members Update

Suzie Larouche has moved.

#### Suzie Larouche

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### Patrick Smith on Plants for Donation

#### Bring Lots!

1. Name tags (hybrid if not named)
2. Colour of flowers if not in bloom
3. Picture if you have a spare
4. Information on table or tag: (If an exceptional plant)
  - growing conditions
  - fertilizer
  - soil type
  - light requirements
  - temperature
  - outstanding needs
5. Outstanding characteristics of the plant

## Showtime Reminders

1. Please bring your plants on Friday after 3 p.m. If you are not carrying your boxes you are required to enter the Mall on the south side just to the East of the doorway into Sporting Life. There will be a sign on the industrial type door where you are to enter. Follow the passage to the exit near the Centre Court.



**Main entrance showing the secret door.**



**The secret door**

2. Please bring plants for the sales table on Friday also. This is our main money making opportunity of the year. Please have plants and cuttings clearly marked.
3. People who have volunteered to judge or clerk, please be at the mall by 7.30 a.m. on Saturday, March 27th. '10 for breakfast.

I would like to make note of the fact that I was not solely responsible for the Artistic Schedule of this year's TGS show. In reality, it was Judy Zinni and her creative, innovative mind that came up with many of the challenging classes we have to offer. Many thanks! Paul Kroll