



# Gleanings

a monthly newsletter from The Gesneriad Society, Inc.

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

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Judy Zinni photos

Welcome to the latest issue of **Gleanings!** This issue includes Dale Martens' photos of gesneriads at the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens and Jim Roberts' article on *Gasteranthus*.

Hope you enjoy **Gleanings!**

**Mel Grice**, Editor

Judy Zinni, from Mississauga, ON, Canada, visited Hunte's Garden in Barbados last June and found *Chrysothemis pulchella* 'Black Flamingo' peppered about the garden. "The yellow flowers are beautiful, but don't last too long; however, the orange calyces are quite persistent, giving wonderful contrast to the dark leaves making this tuberous gesneriad a plant with long-lasting appeal," she said.

Reprinted from TAVS/TGS Newsletter, Vol. 41, No. 9, Stan Sudol, editor.



# Dale Martens' Visit to Selby Botanical Gardens

Dale Martens [dalemartens@mchsi.com](mailto:dalemartens@mchsi.com)  
Sherrard, Illinois, USA



Dale Martens recently visited Marie Selby Botanical Gardens in Sarasota, Florida, USA. Thanks Dale for sharing your photos of blooming gesneriads with us!

<https://selby.org>

Jeanne Katzenstein photo

Jeanne Katzenstein wrote, "Marian Yeager is our Tampa Bay Gesneriad Society chapter member who volunteers at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens in the greenhouses mainly caring for the gesneriad collection (and also is our chapter newsletter editor). Addie Worth, who was with us for part of our visit, is the Selby Collections Horticulturist who is responsible for maintaining many of the live collections in the greenhouses, including the gesneriads."

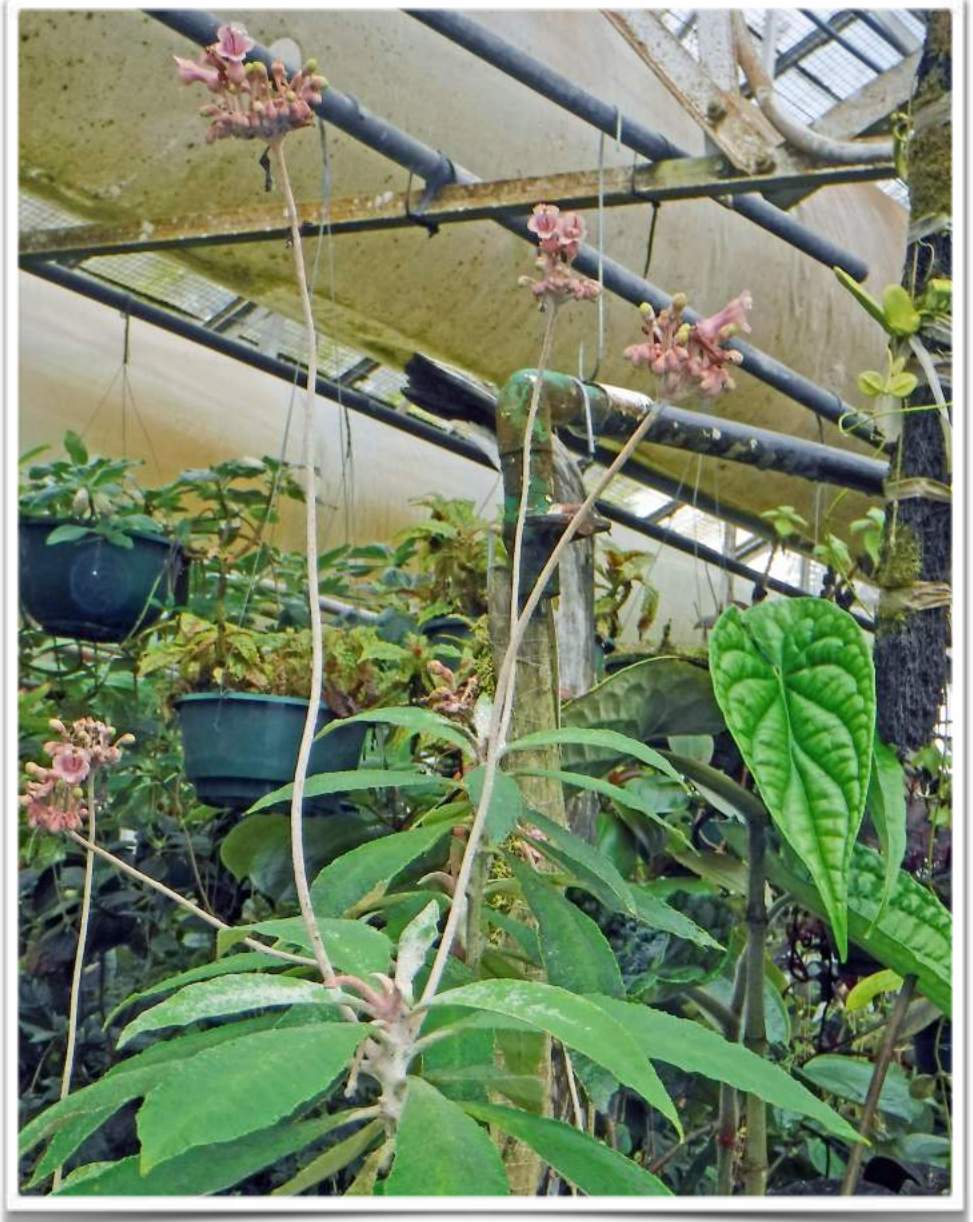
"In the photo, I'm up front, Marian is behind me, then Mollie Howell wearing dark colors and Addie Worth is wearing the hat", said Dale.

Right – *Rhytidophyllum leucomallon*

Photos by Dale Martens

Bottom left –  
*Nematanthus tessmannii*

Bottom right –  
*Drymonia macrophylla*





*Drymonia rhodoloma*



*Episcia hybrid*



*Drymonia stenophylla*



*Anna submontana*

Photos by Dale Martens



*Cyrtandra erectiloba*



*Chrysothemis adenosiphon*



*xRhytidoneria 'Ako Cardinal Flight'*

Photos by Dale Martens



*Drymonia coriacea*



*Drymonia candida*

Photos by Dale Martens



*Gesneria celsioides*



*Cobananthus calochlamys*

# Gasteranthus

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*Gasteranthus* is one of my favorite genera in the gesneriad family. They're generally relatively small growing, which is good since most won't grow outside of a terrarium with 100% humidity. There are about 35 species which have been named and described in the literature, many by our own Larry Skog. The genus has many species which are in danger of extinction and at least one is extinct in the wild. Hans Wiehler introduced *Gasteranthus atratus* to cultivation in the early 1980s. When he returned to the location where he originally collected it, the entire area had been developed and no other collections have been made. It is presumed gone. However, it was such a nice species and relatively easy to grow and flower, that it has survived and actually thrived in hundreds of private collections in the United States. As long as it is enclosed in a high humidity chamber, it will keep its nice rich dark brown glossy foliage and produce large bright yellow flowers. Flowering will start when the plant is only 6" tall, but will continue until the plant is over 18" high (if you can find a terrarium that big to keep it in).

Other species are not necessarily more difficult to grow. However, they usually get taller and the foliage isn't usually as showy as that of *G. atratus*. Therefore they aren't as widely grown and many are in danger of real extinction, not just in the wild, but total extinction.

On our recent trip to Ecuador, Drew and I found 8-12 *Gasteranthus* species, most in flower. Quite a few that we think were different species were not in bloom and therefore unidentifiable. On our second day, Drew saw a bright yellow patch by the side of the road as we were driving along. Usually it was our driver/guide Gilberto who noticed plants that we were passing by. But Drew saw this one and Gilberto backed up the car. The yellow patch turned out to be the flowers on a two-foot tall *Gasteranthus leopardis*, a beautiful species that had been described but never grown in the United States. The plant was growing by the side of the road in tall grass (its only shade). Plants found further into the woods behind this open location had more of the maroon spotting, which is where the name *leopardis* obviously came from.



Unknown Colombian gasteranthus that Gilbertos is growing in his shade house.

Another interesting find was the elusive pink gasteranthus. I know many years ago Elizabeth Varley was on one of Hans Wiehler's expeditions in Ecuador and they came across a pink flowered gasteranthus. She was working at Longwood Gardens at the time and told me about this pink flowered gasteranthus that she was trying to keep alive. She failed and so did Hans. Well, we found it and hopefully it's in our new

collection of *Gasteranthus*. I showed Elizabeth a picture of what we collected and she got really excited. “That’s it! That’s Little Pink!” Little Pink and another plant called Big Pink have reddish stems and a pink pouch shaped flower.



Little Pink with the red stems

Many of the other *Gasteranthus* we collected were plants that we know are already in collections, but we didn’t have them before. Typical orange pouches, either in clusters on the flower stem or singly, with smooth pouches or bumpy. We didn’t see any of the open tube types such as *G. atratus* or *G. venticosa* until we got to Gilberto’s greenhouse. There we saw a beautiful, low growing *Gasteranthus* with large leaves and a large white flower with very heavy

and distinct striping on the face and into the throat of the tube. Most of the plants we found were not along the road, but deep in the shade along the banks of the many small streams flowing down the mountain sides. It’s hard to imagine that any would be optimal sites for development. The banks along the stream sides were steep and tall, and there was not much above the steep banks except for more muddy steep banks. They were far enough off the road that even if the road were widened to four lanes (from one in some places) the plants still wouldn’t be disturbed.

A bit more about *Gasteranthus* in general: They are closely related to *Besleria*, which I think tend to get bigger with more woody stems. The major differences are that *Gasteranthus* get a fleshy capsule whereas *Besleria* form a berry containing the seeds. Also, the stomata – kind of like breathing tubes on the undersides of the leaves – are clustered on the backs of *Gasteranthus* leaves but spread out on the backs of



*G. leopardus* in the sun

*Besleria*. They are found in a very wide area from southern Mexico all the way down to Bolivia in South America. The individual species however are all located within a very small natural range. What’s found along one stream on one mountain may not be found anywhere else. That’s what makes them so subject to extinction. The stream that they grow next to may not be directly damaged by construction. But if a dam is constructed that stops that little stream and many other little streams entire populations of a species may get wiped out. Finally, there are two groups of *Gasteranthus*. The group with white to yellow bell or tube shaped flowers



is probably pollinated by euglossine bees. The other group with orange, red or pink pouched flowers is probably pollinated by hummingbirds.



Top left - Notice the typical long spur at the back of the flower.

Top right - Large clusters of round pouches on very short stems. In Gilberto's shade house.

Bottom right - Large extended pouch on a long pedicel.

Photos by Jim Roberts

This article appeared in a slightly different form in **Petal Tones**, Vol. 48, No. 9, September 2017, Donna Beverin, Editor. **Petal Tones** is the newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of The Gesneriad Society, [petaltones@gmail.com](mailto:petaltones@gmail.com)

## Gesneriad Society Webinars

Webinars are a great way to learn about gesneriads, how to grow them, show them and hybridize them. See all that are available at: <https://the-gesneriad-society.myshopify.com/collections/webinars>



**From the editor —**

The shows are over for the year. Now it is time to think ahead and plan for next year's shows. I look forward to time working with my plants while the snow flies.

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)

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**Membership and Changes of Address**

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**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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