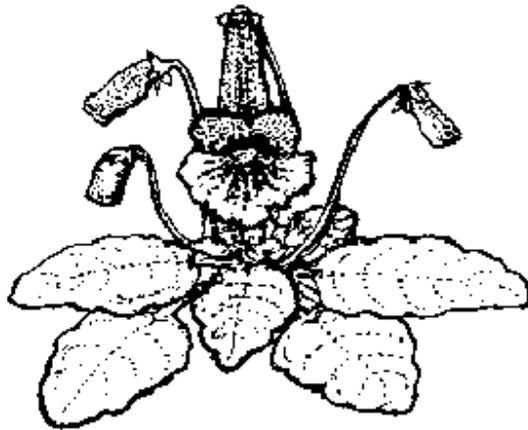


GESNERIAD

JUDGING STANDARDS



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GESNERIAD JUDGING STANDARDS

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NOTE: Within this publication "Gesneriads" refers to "Gesneriads other than African violets".

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GESNERIAD JUDGING STANDARDS

INTRODUCTION:

The Gesneriaceae is a large plant family comprised mostly of herbs and shrubs. The family includes many species that are epiphytic and grow on tree branches or moss-covered rocks. There are approximately 147 genera and these contain more than 2,000 different species

Gesneriads are mostly tropical plants, but some are from temperate regions (*Asteranthera*, *Mitraria*, *Rhabdothamnus*, *Sarmienta*) and there are a number of alpine species (*Conandron*, *Haberlea*, *Jancaea*, *Petrocosmea*, *Ramonda*). Many tropical species are from considerable altitudes and are semi-hardy.

Gesneriads occur in the Americas from Mexico to Chile, In East, West and South Africa, Madagascar, Southeast Asia, Polynesia, Australasia, China, Japan and Southern Europe.

There are six Australasian gesneriads species: *Boea hygroskopica*, *Cytandra baileyi*, *Feldia australis*, *Lenbrassia australiana*, *Negria rhabdothamnoides* and *Rhabdothamnus solandri*. *Boea hygroskopica*, *Cytandra baileyi*, *Feldia australis* and *Lenbrassia australiana* are found on the Australian mainland. *Negria rhabdothamnoides* is endemic to Lord Howe Island. *Rhabdothamnus solandri* is native to New Zealand.

Gesneriads are herbs and shrubs, rarely trees, with simple opposite or alternate leaves. Some gesneriads have basal leaves while several species have only a single leaf. The leaves are entire (smooth-edged) or toothed. All gesneriads have fibrous roots although the underground parts may include woody tubers or scaly rhizomes as storage organs which enable the plant to survive periods of dormancy. Some gesneriads produce stolons. The flowers are bisexual and borne in racemes, cymes or singly. There are five petals, fused at the base into a tube. The fruits are rounded or elongated capsules or berries and contain small seeds.

More species are constantly being brought into cultivation and the work of hybridists has given many thousands of cultivars in the past and will continue to add to them.

GROWTH HABITS:

Familiarity with the plants themselves is more valuable than any description in deciding what the growth habit of a particular species or cultivar should be. There is a wide variation, from trees, (*Negria*) to very tiny plants (*Sinningia pusilla*) and ground covers (*Episcia*).

Those which appear frequently in our shows may, for convenience of description, be grouped under the following headings, but it must be remembered that there are some which fall between two groups, and there are some genera whose species do not all have the same or similar growth habit.

Growth habits given are for ideal conditions, often outdoor, warm, moist climates. Where cold climate or season dictates indoor growth, there will be differences in the plants because of lower temperatures and less light. It will be seen that many different types of culture, including multi-planting and multi-stemmed growth, are permissible to produce a pleasing plant.

GESNERIAD JUDGING STANDARDS

1. ROSETTE OR ROSETTE-LIKE PLANTS:

These plants have short stems with leaves spreading successively from the centre. The leaves lie flat as in *Saintpaulia*, or arch up and outwards as in some *Gesneria*. Not all rosettes have leaves that radiate to make a definite circle of growth. Some have leaves in opposite pairs which produce a plant with more gap between the leaves.

Rosette plants are generally not multi-planted except the very miniature, such as *Sinningia pusilla*. Many are grown with multi-crowns, especially those which grow from tubers, (*Sinningia*), and care should be taken not to create an unduly congested or unbalanced plant.

Flower stems generally arise from the leaf axils, singly or in number. They carry either a number of flowers e.g. *Boea hygroskopica*, or one bloom, e.g. some miniature *Sinningias*. Some plants with rosette habit of growth are: *Saintpaulia*, *Gesneria*, *Sinningia eumorpha*, *Sinningia pusilla* and other miniature *Sinningias*, *Boea hygroskopica*, *Primulina dryas*, *Streptocarpus* (rosulate species and hybrids).

2. ERECT OR UPRIGHT PLANTS:

These plants have a strong stem which is self supporting in good growing conditions. Leaves are produced up the whole length of the stem, ideally with the larger leaves at the base, with their size decreasing towards the top of the plant. It should be remembered that in some plants (e.g. *Sinningia reitzii*) it is natural for the older, bottom leaves to be shed as the plant grows, leaving the base of the stem bare. Some erect plants are branching in their growth, rather than having one stem (e.g. *Sinningia* 'Apricot Bouquet'), producing a shrub-like plant.

Many of the upright plants produce several stems from soil level (e.g. *Sinningia cardinalis*, *Sinningia leucotricha*), and care should be taken to keep the growth even and not untidy or congested. Multi-planting can produce pleasing examples of *Achimenes*, *Eucodonia*, *Gloxinia*, *Kohleria*, *Seemania* and *Smithiantha* and some others, but it is hard to envisage a satisfactory effect if some of the tuberous types were so planted (e.g. *Sinningia canescens*).

Flowers on the erect plants are often produced at the apex of the stem in a tall raceme (*Sinningia sceptrum* and *Smithiantha*), a cluster (*Sinningia canescens*, *Sinningia leucotricha*) or are produced from the leaf axils either singly or in number, on pronounced stems (*Kohleria*) or on very short stems (*Corytoplectus speciosus*).

Some plants with an erect habit of growth are: *Corytoplectus*, *Gloxinia*, *Kohleria*, *Rhytidophyllum*, *Seemania*, *Sinningia tubiflora*, *S. incarnata*, *S. sceptrum*, *S. canescens*, *S. leucotricha*, *S. cardinalis*, *Smithiantha* etc.

3. TRAILING, SPREADING SEMI-UPRIGHT PLANTS:

These plants are often epiphytes, mostly have branched growth, and for ornamental use and for show, are most effective when multi-planted. Those with fairly thick stems usually grow more or less upright, but when the stems elongate and become heavy, will display a more spreading or even trailing growth (e.g. *Aeschynanthus speciosus*). Others have thin pendulous stems and are outright trailing plants (e.g. *Columnnea arguta*).

Multi-planting of these plants not only provides a fuller, more covered basket of foliage, it also acknowledges the fact that the response to tip pruning or to cessation of growth of a stem is often to produce more shoots from the base or below the soil, rather than to just branch.

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Aeschynanthus, *Codonanthe* and *Nematanthus* are plants which show this habit.

Flowers on these plants are often produced in the leaf axils, either in numbers or singly, commonly only on the current year's growth. Others, in particular a large number of *Aeschynanthus*, only produce clusters of flowers from the ends of the stems and rarely from the next leaf axil as well.

Plants with a trailing, spreading, semi-upright habit of growth include: *Aeschynanthus* (most types) *Columnea* (again, most types), *Codonanthe*, *Drymonia*, *Nematanthus*, *Neomortonia nummularia*.

These categories are, at best, somewhat artificial. Many plants do not fit comfortably into any category. Some of the numerous exceptions are:

Achimenes may be upright or spreading/trailing in their growth, dependent upon the variety, growing conditions and upon how long the plant has been growing and flowering (the stem elongation often leading to a more spreading plant). They are virtually always multi-planted to produce a pot of the necessary fullness for a satisfactory exhibit.

While *Kohleria* is a genus of principally upright growing plants, the small hybrid 'Flirt' has a thin, somewhat lax stem and to grow it strongly upright past 12 cm or so presents a challenge. Depending upon culture, other *Kohlerias* may exhibit the same habit.

Aeschynanthus are mostly spreading or trailing plants, but the species *A. evrardii* and *A. hildebrandii* are more upright than not. The same applies to a number of *Columneas*.

Episcia is a genus with a number of different growing methods. It is essentially a ground covering stoloniferous plant, often presented in a shallow pot with many rosette growths from the stolons growing out from the original plant and covering the soil completely. It may be grown in a large shallow dish, a hanging basket or pot with pendulous stolons trailing from it, or in a single rosette with all the stolons removed. Some varieties may need the protective environment of a terrarium.

Alsobias have a similar habit of producing stolons (and were at one time classified as *Episcias*), but they are usually planted and exhibited in hanging baskets or pots.

The plant forms already mentioned provide no place for the unifoliate *Streptocarpus* which produces one leaf (sometimes very large). From the stem/midrib area arise successions of flower stems, sometimes with very large numbers of flowers. The leaf may take a year or more to grow to the stage of flowering. After flowering, unifoliate die off and seeds should be collected for propagation. It is their habit to respond to winter conditions by the abscission (dying off) of sections of the leaf, progressively from the tip. It is permissible to exhibit with the leaf trimmed to remove the part which has died. This also applies to the plurifoliate, which bear several leaves, one of which is often much larger than the others. Plurifoliate do not grow as a rosette.

The *Streptocarpella* subgenus of *Streptocarpus* have a caulescent growth habit. They are semi-upright, shrubby, branching plants which equally well suit baskets and pots. Some have a more upright growth habit than others.

GESNERIAD JUDGING STANDARDS

QUALITIES OF A SHOW GESNERIAD:

Overall, prize-winning plants should exhibit the following characteristics:

1. The plant should be a true representative of its type; be it a species or hybrid.
2. It should be in good health, with no evidence of pests or disease, either present or at an earlier stage of growth.
3. There are many different forms of growth in the plants of the gesneriad family, but they should each be grown for all-round effect. Their shape and flowering should be balanced and even, in keeping with the species or cultivar exhibited.
4. Flowering should be abundant, colours clear and fresh, and flowers of good size and substance, according to variety.
5. Multi-planting of suitable gesneriads is permissible. Very miniature varieties and most rhizomatous plants are suitable for this form of planting.
6. In most multi-stemmed plants and in multi-planting, all parts of the exhibit should show a similar degree of maturity.
7. The exhibit should be fresh and not wilted. There should be no coarse or soft growth.
8. Plants may not have oiled, waxed or artificially treated foliage and/or flowers. Leaves may be wiped, sponged, washed or brushed.
9. The pots should be of suitable size and shape for the requirements of the particular plants. Pots should also be of neutral colour so as not to distract attention from the plants.
10. The plant should be clean, its leaves, stems and flowers being free from dust, dirt, spray residue, particles of potting mix or any other foreign matter. Note that some plants, e.g. *Sinningia cardinalis*, produce such copious quantities of pollen that some may appear on the foliage.
11. Pots should be clean, with no build-up of fertiliser around the rim or the drain holes. Smears of dust, dirt or adhesive from old labels should have been removed.
12. The surface of the potting mix should be neat and free from debris, fertiliser salts and mould. There should be no foreign growths in the pot (weeds, other plants). The surface of the potting mix may be mulched with sphagnum moss or pebbles etc. if the exhibitor feels this is suitable for the culture of the plant or enhances its appearance. This is not, however, a requirement.
13. Various plants requiring a protected cultivation may be staged in terrariums, e.g. some *Episcias*, some miniature *Sinningias*, some *Phinaea*, some *Nautilocalyx*, *Pearcea*. Such terrariums should be well cleaned.
14. Careful grooming should be evident in the plant. Dead leaves and flowers, flower stubs, dead stems and stubs of earlier pruning should be removed.
15. Stakes may be used where appropriate, but should be unobtrusive, no thicker than necessary and distinctly shorter than the plant. Ties should also be as unobtrusive.
16. Name labels should be as accurate as possible in keeping with the reference books available to the exhibitor or group.

GESNERIAD JUDGING STANDARDS

Plants exhibiting all these characteristics would be close to perfection, but exhibitors should not be discouraged from staging their plants. The perfect plant is rarely, if ever, encountered, and the following Pointing Scales are used to determine which of the plants in a class has the least faults.

POINTING SCALES:

For the convenience of Judges and Exhibitors alike, the one basic pointing scale is used for almost all gesneriads other than African violets. For those exhibited as foliage plants, Ornamental Value is substituted for Quantity and Quality of Bloom, the points remaining the same. There is an additional pointing scale for use where Collections of Gesneriads are exhibited

GESNERIADS IN FLOWER:

CULTURAL PRFECTION	35 Points
CONDITION	30 Points
QUANTITY OF BLOOM	25 Points
QUALITY OF BLOOM	10 Points
TOTAL	100 Points

GESNERIADS GROWN FOR FOLIAGE:

CULTURAL PERFECTION	35 Points
CONDITION	30 Points
ORNAMENTAL VALUE	35 Points
TOTAL	100 Points

GESNERIAD COLLECTIONS:

CULTURAL PERFECTION	35 Points
CONDITION	25 Points
BLOOM / ORNAMENTAL VALUE	30 Points
CHOICE OF MATERIAL	10 Points
TOTAL	100 Points

GESNERIAD SEEDLINGS:

CULTURAL PERFECTION	35 Points
BLOOM OR ORNAMENTAL VALUE	20 Points
CONDITION	15 Points
DESIRABILITY OF PLANT	15 Points
DISTINCTIVENESS	15 Points
TOTAL	100 Points

GESNERIAD JUDGING STANDARDS

CULTURAL PERFECTION:

This relates to the general horticultural care accorded to the plant throughout the growing cycle. A show plant should show evidence of skilful culture by having good form, consistent colour, shape and size of leaves and compact, short inter-nodes, with even arrangement of leaves, according to variety. Good form includes achieving a pattern, shape and size that is proportionate to the species or cultivar.

In erect growing plants the main stem should be firm and vertical. Bare stems are generally indicators of poor culture, either in trailing or upright plants, though with some plants, such as *Sinningia reitzii*, the older leaves do normally fall.

Extreme heat may adversely affect some gesneriads, e.g. *Columnnea*, *Corytoplectus*, *Neomortonia*, *Primulina*, *Streptocarpus*. Heat may also have a detrimental effect on genera which occur at high altitudes (*Asteranthera*, *Briggsia*, *Conandron*, *Cordallodiscus*, *Jancaea*, *Loxostigma*, *Mitraria*, *Opithandra*, *Oreocharis*, *Platystemma*, *Ramonda*).

Cold conditions (particularly cold snaps) may adversely affect some gesneriads, e.g. *Aeschynanthus*, *Boea*, *Columnnea*, *Neomortonia*, *Episcia*, *Streptocarpus*.

PENALTIES: All point deductions should be made by considering the proportion of the plant which is at fault and by the degree to which the plant falls short of the ideal.

1. Immaturity, i.e. plant too small (young) to be an adequate representative of its variety; newly planted cuttings.
Deduct up to 10 Points.
2. Irregular, small, spindly or inconsistent growth.
Deduct up to 10 Points
3. Asymmetry in rosettes, 'one-sidedness' of plants, leaves not radiating regularly from the stems, according to variety.
Deduct up to 10 Points
4. Bare stems, distorted leaves.
Deduct up to 10 Points.
5. Leaves failing to achieve correct colour or variegation.
Deduct up to 10 Points

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CONDITION:

This relates to neatness, cleanliness of plant and pot, careful attention to removal of faded flowers and leaves, suitability of pot in size, colour, type, etc. These are mainly matters of grooming and can be corrected by the exhibitor immediately prior to benching the plant.

PENALTIES: All point deductions should be made by considering the proportion of the plant which is at fault, and by the degree to which the plant falls short of the ideal.

1. Dirt, dust or spray residue on plant and pot, fertiliser salts build up on soil and/or pot, presence of foreign growths.
Deduct up to 10 Points.
2. Spent flowers and seed pods not removed (showy calyces, as on *Columnea*, and some decorative seed pods and fruits, as with *Chrysothemis*, *Codonanthe* and *Columnea* may be left on the plant).
Deduct up to 10 Points.
3. Marked and faded leaves not removed.
Deduct up to 10 Points.
4. Peduncles from fallen flowers or stubs of peduncles or petioles not removed, stubs from pruning of branched growths not cut back to new growth.
Deduct up to 5 Points.
5. Relation of pot to plant, size and suitability of pot, incorrect soil level in pot, off-centring of plant, unsatisfactory spacing of plants in multi-planting.
Deduct up to 5 Points.
6. Unnecessary or conspicuous staking, presence of other training aids. Stakes are permitted for tall, erect plants to help them present a neat appearance on the show bench. They should be shorter than the plant, of inconspicuous colour, no thicker than necessary, and the plant should be fastened to them with ties which are unobtrusive. All other training aids should be removed.
Deduct up to 5 Points.

QUANTITY OF BLOOM:

Points or quantity of bloom must be calculated proportionately to the ability of particular species and cultivars to produce flowers, and to retain them so that a number of blooms may be present at once. Each flower on, for instance, a *Gloxinella lindeniana*, would rate more highly than each flower on a modern *Achimenes* hybrid, which flowers more freely. Some gesneriads have fleeting blooms which last only one day, so the presence of even one or two fresh flowers on these plants is a triumph.

When counting bloom, disregard all faded flowers and flowers which have fallen from the plant since entry. Decorative calyces and seed pods may be left on, and each considered in evaluating Quantity of Bloom, as also are buds which are showing colour. However, the majority of points awarded must be for open flowers, which rate more highly than calyces, pods, etc.

The best reference to determine the flowering potential of the plants is personal growing experience, but standard reference books should be consulted about those plants not known

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personally to the Judge.

QUALITY OF BLOOM:

This relates to size, colour and substance, and overall trueness to variety. Just as some gesneriads have fewer flowers than others, some have flowers which are naturally small, pale, of thin texture, or just simply inconspicuous. The plant should not lose points for these characteristics.

ORNAMENTAL VALUE:

Plants will be judged upon how well the particular variety shown fits into the category of Foliage Plant. The plant should not be merely a gesneriad with no bloom, but should have some particular characteristics which fit it for exhibit as a Foliage Plant. These characteristics may be: interesting pattern of leaves, texture and form of leaf, colour of leaf, colour contrasts in the leaf and overall decorative shape of the plant.

Plants are thus directly compared and not so much scored according to variety. To score well, the plant still must be a good example of its variety.

Some suitable plants to be exhibited as Foliage Plants are: *Aeschynanthus* 'Black Pagoda', all *Episcias*, *Nautilocalyx*, *Primulina dryas*, *Sinningia canescens*, *Smithianthas*, etc.

Plants exhibited for their foliage would be expected to have no flowers, but if a plant in this class does have a few flowers it should not be eliminated from judging.

CHOICE OF MATERIAL:

Points should be awarded for the way plants exhibited in a collection give a picture of the variation available in the genus or family. They should be of different growth habit, need different culture, etc.

DESIRABILITY:

Desirability of a plant is concerned with the plant's good qualities: attractive growth habit, abundant bloom, unusually marked foliage.

DISTINCTIVENESS:

Distinctiveness relates to the way this plant differs from others in cultivation. Is it merely a lookalike for plants already available? Look for characteristics such as new bloom colour, unusual markings of bloom or foliage, differing plant size, increased bloom size, more compact growth, new growth pattern.

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