

Newsletter



Your committee that was elected at the show in Brownhills

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Some of the beautiful plants on display at the Brownhills show

British Streptocarpus Society Chairman's Comments

What sort of season have you had? Well by all accounts most of you seem to have done really well with your growing and flowering this year and the proof of this came at our own show at Brownhills in July.

Wow! What a show you put on, we asked you to come along and bring your plants, and my goodness didn't you just do that. My congratulations to every member who supported us as a society. I know a lot of you can't make it to the show for whatever reason and my commiserations go out to you for you missed a wonderful spectacle. All those Streptocarpus in one place at one time, Wonderful! I never fully got round the whole show in one go so many members wanting to talk of so many facets of growing it was non-stop all day long. Quite a number of members picked up prize cards who had never shown a plant in their lives before, this was very pleasing for me to see. It was also good to see members from really long distances away bringing along some real quality plants. One of the most pleasing classes for me to see was the seedling class, so many entries and all judged by yourselves. So many of these were from hybrid seed which is sold by us for the Society, the quality was very good and it proves more of you are succeeding growing from seed.

As for the rest of the show my thanks go out to all those who helped out at the show, especially the ladies in the kitchen who provided much needed sustenance and endless cups of tea and coffee all day. Jane Blois was a real stalwart here as an intrepid a lady as ever coming down from Shrewsbury, missed you at Shrewsbury Show Jane! Hope your health problems are not too bad. One more thing show wise, during judging we held our first real Annual General Meeting where you re-elected all the previous officials including myself, plus some new committee members from further afield. I thank you all for this show of confidence in us and wel-

come also the new officials who have joined us and hope we can continue to work together to further our Society.

One final thing now is a question I put to you in the "June issue" of our Newsletter regarding my batch of sick plants. Well I wonder if any of you suffered the same problem? My young plants in 2 ½ pots had been put on the top staging after potting in March. No new shading had been put on at that time of year; I was busy in the afternoons doing a little job down in Franks Greenhouses when we had that sudden spell of warm April sunshine. Going back in the greenhouse in the evening I failed to notice for a time what was actually causing my plants to look so sick! Then coming back early one day and going to check on my plants I suddenly realised they had a very bad case of "sunburn" would you believe, they were quickly moved to a more shady spot and new shading was also put on. The plants took a good six weeks to recover and were slow to come into flower. But in the end they made it, Streptocarpus are much more resilient than some people would believe. It does show though that we all can make mistakes!

My thanks once again to all you members that are making this Societies presence felt in the plant world.

Ken Jones
Chairman

Bob Counsell's Presentation at the AGGS Convention

By Dale Martens, League City, Texas

On behalf of the Gesneriad Hybridizers' Association, which celebrated its 25th anniversary this year, I invited Bob Counsell to speak during the July, 2002, AGGS convention. The large banquet-sized room was packed to standing room only capacity in anticipation! What an amazing presentation it was! He used a computer to display photos on the huge screen. The first photos were the incredible streptocarpus grown by the Dibleys. The audience gasped in delight at each photo! Years of careful genetic breeding have certainly resulted in spectacular hybrids!

The next set of photos showed Sue Long's marvelous hybrids including S. 'Gower Garnet', S. 'Gower Daybreak', and S. 'Gower Midnight'. Then came Chris Rose's gorgeous S. dunnii hybrids as well as his miniatures. The blossom count on those S. dunnii hybrids was fantastic! Many who live in the US prefer miniature streptocarpus plants, so Chris' little ones caused quite an interest. Frank and Mary Davies' smiling faces were in a photo which was wonderful because we're familiar with Frank's collaboration with Ken Jones to create the 'Franken' series of streps. S. 'Franken Kerry's Gold' has been entered in U.S. shows and is found on sales tables. Among the many streps grown by Frank, we saw pictures of S. 'Blue Ice', S. 'Border Line' and a couple of plants he

grew from my seed (S. 'Franken Kerry's Gold x S. Georgette), one of which Frank has named S. 'Texas Sunrise'. Then we saw Bob's own greenhouses and all the lovely gesneriads he grows which included chiritas, lush episcias, a variety of heavily blooming streps, and beautiful sinningias. Bob certainly has a green thumb!

Next were photos of the Chelsea show. There are very few from the U.S. who have seen that show, so you can imagine the "ohs" and "ahs" coming from the large audience. We could hardly believe what we were seeing! We sat there mesmerized by the beauty and size of the plants. The final photos were of the Malvern show, and those were stunning. It was a delight to see plants grown to their full potential with enormous numbers of blossoms in the Chelsea and Malvern shows.

There were many questions asked of Bob about fertilizer, soil mix, etc. Since Bob mentioned tomato fertilizer, some of us are going to try it to see if that makes a difference in our streps.

The applause Bob received at the end of his presentation was very enthusiastic! I had several people approach me to say it was one the very best presentations GHA's ever had!

Knowing and growing Members of the sub-genus Streptocarpella

By Chris Rose. Bristol

ABOUT STREPTOCARPELLA,

The genus *Streptocarpus* is divided into two main groups of plants considered sufficiently distinct to merit separate sub-generic status. As far as those in general circulation are concerned *Streptocarpella* are fairly 'typical' plants, caulescent – having a more or less woody stem - and with flowers arising from the leaf axils. In some the leaves are fairly ordinary, in others fleshy and succulent-looking. The more frequently grown sub-genus *Streptocarpus* plants have a rather more novel, usually stem less (acaulescent) growth habit. They show several identifiable variations based on the 'module' of a single monocarpic leaf that flowers and then dies, or a succession of them, with flower stems arising from what looks like a leaf stalk and is termed the petiolode. Some do in fact exhibit ascending, apparently 'stemmed' growth, but of these only *S. fanniniae* is found in amateur collections in Great Britain.

Streptocarpella flowers are relatively small in comparison with those of 'standard'-sized *Streptocarpus* but are often numerous. They appear towards the tops of the stems and may be quite flat-faced or largely tubular. Several have an 'L'-shaped side profile to the face, and where the flowers hang down, the three lower and larger lobes are held more or less vertically. Raised ridges mask the entrance to the tube in species such as *S. glandulosissimus*. The ground colour and patterning range, certainly of those forms currently available, is much smaller than in sub-genus *Streptocarpus*, ranging from predominantly white to pale, violetish blue, to dark blue, purple violet and deep purple, whilst *S. hilsenbergii* from Madagascar is said to have a vivid red form. There may be darker vein lines on the upper lobes and blotchy lines in the tube.

Streptocarpella have 30 chromosomes whereas all but one sub-genus *Streptocarpus* species studied have 32. The two groups will not cross breed. Recent genetic studies, reported in Moeller & Cronk 1997, "Origin and relationships of *Saintpaulia* (Gesneriaceae) based on ribosomal DNA internal transcribed spacer (ITS) sequences.", *American Journal of Botany* 84: 956-965 (available as a .pdf file at <http://www.botany.org/bsa/ajb/1997/jul-issu.html>), have shown that *Streptocarpella* are more closely related to African Violets than sub-genus *Streptocarpus* plants though this has yet to be reflected in their taxonomic status.

Hilliard and Burt's 'Streptocarpus – an African Plant Study' (University of Natal Press, 1971) states that the sub-genus *Streptocarpella* ranges across tropical Africa in a wide belt from Sierra Leone to the Indian Ocean and on to Madagascar, not being found south of Malawi on the mainland.

WHY GROW STREPTOCARPELLA ?

Many *Streptocarpella* can be used to provide a vertical accent amongst your other *Streptocarpus*. Several may be grown as hanging basket plants in otherwise unused

space. *S. 'Concord Blue'* and *S. saxorum* have been used by Phil Soderman (personal correspondence), a commercial grower from near Santa Barbara, California, which has a mild climate, in the production of large numbers of ten inch hanging baskets. In Queensland, Australia, baskets of *Streptocarpella* are sold in most nursery outlets as 'Nodding Violets'. In California 'Concord Blue' will grow very well on a shaded patio. If I remember rightly, the famous Christopher Lloyd once related in a *Royal Horticultural Society Journal* that he'd used *S. glandulosissimus* outdoors as a summer bedding plant.

These plants are certainly quick and easy from cuttings so can also provide fillers for unexpected gaps in your display. The colour and size of their flowers won't distract unduly from other plants. They generally tolerate cool conditions and a modest collection of those available in the UK will enable you to have one or more varieties in flower throughout the year.

HOW TO GROW THESE PLANTS.

The following basic approach is recommended from personal experience. The requirements of particular species and cultivars are dealt with under their descriptions below.

The types readily available here are true perennials. Four cuttings to a 3.5 inch pot will make a good show. Although self-branching, some varieties branch rather sparsely. They can be pinched out if desired. Some light staking may be required to keep plants within the allotted space. With the woodier types this is usually necessary in order to prevent plants that can become top-heavy from falling over. Lower leaves will gradually be lost, especially if subjected to unduly dry conditions. When plants get too big or too bare at the base cuttings with 4 or 5 nodes can easily and quickly be rooted in a pot of water. Species and new hybrids can also be raised from seed.

I use a compost consisting 6 parts coconut fibre (or 3 parts peat plus 3 parts composted bark), 3 parts John Innes No. 2, 1 part vermiculite and 1 part silver sand. In the run up to and during flowering plants are fed with quarter strength tomato food at every watering.

Some direct sunshine and bright indirect light the rest of the time will result in good growth and flowering. *S. glandulosissimus* and *buchananii* have tolerated temperatures down to between 0 and +2 degrees Centigrade. My impression is that the fleshier-leaved the species, the less cold tolerant it is. I used to have problems getting *S. pallenscens* through the winter at low temperatures and gave up on *S. saxorum* after poor flowering and losing it twice to cold.

Streptocarpella plants are not especially troubled by pests. At one point I had flower thrips – now eradicated - in one of my rooms and these went for the flowers of 'Boysenberry Delight'. *S. thompsonii* is susceptible to white-fly.

WHAT'S AVAILABLE ?

Knowing and growing Members of the subgenus *Streptocarpella* (continued)

There are only a modest number of subgenus *Streptocarpella* varieties readily available in the UK at the present time.

Those that I have grown are :

S. 'Boysenberry Delight' (raiser Strickland) – Obtained from Dibleys. Stems becoming woody towards the base. Leaves are lanceolate, quite big, to 72 x 40mm, and fairly fleshy. Flowers are relatively large, to 25 x 30mm, and somewhat imperfectly-shaped. They are an uneven, slightly red, purple with a whiter zone below the mouth on which are a couple of broken bars of darker colour. Up to 6 per flower stem. This hybrid is 'self-cleaning' in that spent flowers fall off easily of their own accord. It can be had in flower from spring and throughout the summer.

S. buchananii – From Isobyl la Croix (who no longer sells *Streptocarpus*). Stems paler, leaves larger, more pointed and much hairier on the upper surface than the superficially similar *S. glandulosissimus*. It will self-branch fairly well but the plant I bought reached a height of 3 feet in a 3.5" pot with no sign of stopping. And it didn't flower until I was getting was on the verge of throwing it out in exasperation. Mine flowers in November, December and January with up to 9 flowers per peduncle. The basic flower colour is paler but more of a purple violet than in *S. glandulosissimus*. The upper side of the tube is purple-violet, the underside white. The limb is raised (pinched) with darker-than-ground colour patches and spots on either side of a white groove. This runs out from the mouth of the tube, leading to a slightly convex centre lobe that sits higher than the side lobes. There are four darker-than-ground-colour vein lines on each of the upper lobes. The flowers readily self-fertilise to produce seed. A growing regime that I have found produces satisfactory results is to plant 3 or 4 cuttings in a 4" pot, pinch out at 8-10" and then pinch out again after another 8" or so – but not too late in the year as flowers are produced towards the tops of the stems. Staking is necessary. Cuttings of around 8" long are then taken in spring to early summer, rooted in water, and the whole process repeated. Keeping the thing very pot-bound inevitably results in drying and loss of lower leaves, which isn't so obvious when set amongst other plants. This could be as good as it gets or there might be 'better' clones out there somewhere.

S. 'Concord Blue' – From a Saintpaulia and Houseplant Society member. Self-branches well. Develops a woody base. I lost this hybrid some time ago, but according to my records I've had it in bloom in late December, April and August so it will probably flower throughout most of the year. Flower light blue with a white patch and a couple of darker blue bars below the throat.

S. glandulosissimus – From Dibleys. Naturally compact and self-branching. Stems red-brown. Leaves are a good mid green, up to 40 x 32mm, somewhat rounded and with a pointed tip. Dead leaves do hang on, but as long as you keep the plants well watered they are few and far between, individual leaves seeming to last a long time. There shouldn't be a prob-

lem with the stems going bare at the base. Numerous L-shaped fairly dark violet-blue flowers are borne from December through to late spring / early summer. Spent flower stems are spindly and not very prominent.

S. 'holstii' – From Brian Hiley's nursery (now closed). Darkish violet-blue flowers from late spring to June or July. Like Dibley's *S. glandulosissimus*, but smaller in all parts and with glossier leaves (to 27 x 17mm) and a larger area of white at the base of the upper lobes. I'm not convinced that this is correctly named.

S. kirkii – From Isobyl la Croix. Erect at first, becoming woody at the base and ultimately trailing under its own weight. Leaves somewhat fleshy, to 70 x 43mm, the soft hairs on the upper surface contributing to the palish green appearance. The flowers are tubular, typically pale lilac – though sometimes a deeper shade - with darker, broken lines and blotches up the tube. Flowers over a long period and readily self-fertilises.

S. pallescens – From Dibleys. I've lost this due to cold and threw out my last specimen on account of deformed flowers and a suspicion of virus infection. Self-branches and sets seed well. Slightly fleshy leaves. Smallish white flowers with violet lines on the upper lobes, but the ground colour can, apparently, also be pale violet.

S. saxorum - Doesn't seem to tolerate temperatures much below 5 degrees Centigrade for very long, although better drainage might help. For notes on this species, including cultivation details, see the article by Ken Jones on page 5 of the June 2002 BSS Newsletter.

S. thompsonii – Grown from seed collected in Madagascar by a German botanist, the plants were growing between mosses on the boulders of a small waterfall where it was quite shady and very humid. Germinated in about 3 weeks at a soil temperature of 17 - 20 degrees Centigrade. The plants are erect, need little or no staking and may attain a height of 650mm with the stem swollen - up to 23 mm diameter – and dark red-purple at the base. There are concentrations of red-purple at the nodes also. The stems are otherwise lightish green, somewhat translucent, with red-purple green-centred 'spots'. These become increasingly ovoid with pointed ends higher up the plant. This patterning has led to the common name 'Giraffe Plant'. The growth pattern is very symmetrical with pairs of ascending primary branches set at 90 degrees to one another up the main stem. The leaves are up to 60 mm long and 36 mm wide, lightish green with fairly strongly red-purple flushed undersides in some clones, not fleshy, strongly blunt-toothed and with white hairs on both surfaces. The flowers, prolifically-produced, mainly in winter and spring, are small, bell-shaped, small-lobed, 5mm deep by around 4mm diameter, angled downwards and light violet with dark violet at the base. My largest plant has carried 591 'normal' flowers with up to 33 per peduncle in a season. Most peduncles also carry 1 to 4 tiny 'abortive' buds that fail to develop. The thin peduncles and small flowers impart a light, airy appearance to the plant, though some may consider it rather 'weedy' looking. A drawback is that that the myriad spent flowers readily fall off and into other plants where they are difficult to clear up. In addition the great majority of 'normal' flowers self fertilise, producing an abundance of seed which will germinate if it lands in other pots.

Some of the above plants are circulating amongst Society members.

Knowing and growing Members of the sub-genus Streptocarpella (continued)

S. buchananii, *kirkii* and *thompsonii* have recently appeared in the Society's seed list.

>>>>>> [**TO BE CONTINUED**
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Also available in the UK (from Dibleys) are :

S. 'Blue Moon' – Described by Dibleys as having an upright habit with flowers of a cornflower blue that are said to be the 'largest yet' amongst *Streptocarpella*.

S. saxorum (compact form) – said to flower more freely than the 'standard' clone.

S. stomandrus – I have seen this exhibited by Dibleys once so it might be obtainable on request. Pale violet flowers.

The following, with descriptions edited from on-line catalogues, have been, or appear to be readily available in the USA but not here, and would need to be imported with the relevant phytosanitary certification :

S. 'Blue Angel' – No information found. The official *Streptocarpus* Register rejects this as a valid name as no official description exists.

S. 'Blue Horizon' (Brumpton). - Patrick Worley of the USA has told me by e-mail that breeder Richard Brumpton was English.

S. 'Butterfly' (Strickland) - A dwarf, compact plant with big, deep blue flowers. Has large blooms.

S. 'Butterscotch' – Light purple flower with new (crown) leaves bright yellow.

S. 'Concord Midnight' (Bart Schwarz). *Streptocarpus* Register says this is a *S. stomandrus* x *S. saxorum* hybrid with an abundance of deep violet-purple flowers.

S. 'Good Hope' (Saylor) - A cross of *S. saxorum* and *S. stomandrus*. Light green, velvety foliage with a continual array of sky-blue flowers on black, wiry stems. From correspondence it is not clear that this differs greatly from 'Concord Blue'.

S. 'Sassy' (Strickland) Deep violet-blue flowers over heart-shaped leaves. Compact and self-branching. A prolific bloomer.

S. saxorum 'Blueberries and Cream'. - A variegated form of the species. Two US sources have told me that it retains variegation better at lower temperatures.

S. 'Sparkle' (Strickland) – Said to be a 'chronic bloomer' with rosy-purple blossoms over compact, self-branching foliage. Rated the best of the hybrids by top Californian gesneriad grower Jon Dixon.

A couple of other hybrids are reported from Australia, namely 'Lemon and Lime' (bicolor foliage) and 'Pee Wee', but neither are listed in the *Streptocarpus* Register.

The following species are sometimes available from the American Gloxinia and Gesneriad Society or Swedish Gesneriad Society seed funds :

S. caulescens - Flowers deep violet purple.

S. muscosus – Has small pure white flowers. Native to Madagascar.

S. nobilis – A widely distributed species with weed-like characteristics, including the production of a proportion of cleistogamous (self-fertilise without ever opening) flowers. Normal flowers are deep purple.

S. thysanotus - From photographs on the Internet this appears to have small, attractive, light purple flowers with a prominent white centre.

For pictures of various *Streptocarpella* see the Gesneriad Reference Web page <http://www.gesneriads.ca/genstrep.htm>. A search on 'Streptocarpella' using a good web search engine which will turn up various nursery catalogue photographs.

HYBRIDIZATION.

Despite having hybridized *Streptocarpus* for 16 years, I have done little work with *Streptocarpella*, and this has been a complete failure. I have made the following crosses, but in each case few fertilisations have been attempted, so a more determined effort might produce successful results.

- 'Boysenberry Delight' – self-sets pods which contain seed, but I have not managed to get any germination.
- 'Concord Blue' x self – one 'take' from one attempt, but the flower stem died prematurely. Seed present, but failed to germinate.
- 'Concord Blue' x *glandulosissimus* – one 'take' from several crosses, but the flower stem died prematurely. Seed present, but never sown.
- *glandulosissimus* x *buchananii* – appeared to have taken, but pedicel gave way.
- *glandulosissimus* x 'holstii' – failed to take.
- *glandulosissimus* x *kirkii* – seed obtained but didn't germinate.
- *kirkii* x *glandulosissimus* – what came up were *kirkii*.
- *pallescens* x *glandulosissimus* - seed pods developed but were totally empty.

No one seems to be doing any serious breeding work within the sub-genus at present, though I believe there is scope for developing a larger-flowered white.

ACT NOW - BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE !

A small selection of *Streptocarpella* can provide useful accent plants and welcome extra bloom for much of the year, including the winter months. Grow and enjoy them soon – before they get reclassified and end up falling without the remit of the Society !

Streptocarpus in Ireland

By Ken Canning

I don't really know why I am writing this, because I still feel I am very much a beginner and still learning about Streptocarpus growing.

Living where I do, here in Londonderry at the north of Northern Ireland I find that plants start to flower for me about 3 or 4 weeks later than members in the Belfast/Bangor area which is 75/100 miles further south, but its worth the wait once they start.

I have found for me, the most important secret to growing Streps. is BOTTOM WATERING either from a saucer, on the kitchen windowsill, giving them a drink only when they need it, or by capillary matting in the greenhouse.

All of my plants are in a 12'X8' greenhouse which is bursting at the seams!! I have it lined with bubble which I keep on all year round, and usually in April, I add a coat of Cool-Glass, white paint-on shading along the sunny side of the greenhouse. Then come the end of May, or beginning of June, I put up green shade netting inside, just along one side which gets the sun. This all helps to cut down scorching, still lets in plenty of light, and keeps the plants happy when the sun does occasionally decide to shine in this part of the country!

I also have another 12'X8' greenhouse in the garden which I try to keep for raising bedding plants and some pelargoniums, but am finding the Streps. are working their way in there and I think there could well be a takeover by the Streps. next year!!!!!!

Underneath the staging on the floor, I have a long metal box containing sand and soil-warming cables at 75 degrees for bringing on cuttings and seedlings which I find very useful. I take leaf cuttings both ways i.e. cutting the leaf across in either 2 or 3 pieces, or the other way of taking out the centre rib and planting the 2 long pieces. Both methods work for me and I try to take leaf cuttings of all my favourite Society varieties during the summer months, so that I have a back-up should I have a loss of the main plant in the winter.

Last June, I had the pleasure of going to Burntwood and seeing Frank and Mary's wonderful collection and learning so much from them on growing these plants. I also visited Gardeners World Live in Birmingham the next day, and as well as meeting Frank and Mary again, I also met other Society celebrities Sue and Gordon Long, Don Corfield and Pat Laskey and her daughter Sarah who had come up from Exmouth. How great it was putting faces to the names and how friendly and helpful they all were. As well as learning a lot from the new friends I had made, I stood

amazed at Mary's arrangement of the plants on the Society Stand - a wonderful sight !

What a great time I had for those couple of days, but now its back to wet Ireland and tending my own plants. I grow them in 3/4 pots I get in Homebase in a mix which Westland have of Multipurpose Peat/John Innes and Perlite. To this I add a good quantity of grit to keep it all open. I usually start to feed in May when I see the first buds starting to appear using 1/4 strength Tomorite. It works for me, so I stick with it. I repot when I see the roots coming through the holes in the bottom of the pot, as I know they like to be a bit pot-bound to flower well.

I have experimented with adding a good quantity of sand to the compost when potting on young seedlings and they seem to love it. I also potted on some young seedlings, 1/2 of them in a ordinary plastic seed tray and the other 1/2 in a polystyrene dish which I made holes in the bottom. The extra bottom heat from the polystyrene dish made them romp away! Its experimenting all the time for the best results.

I have made many friends from Society members, exchanging leaves with them and have become quite adept at wrapping leaves in damp paper kitchen towelling and popping them in a plastic bag for sending them off in the post. All the work in looking after these wonderful plants is so worthwhile when they start to flower from May/June to Christmas time in a greenhouse (maybe 2) bursting with colour. For me - just magic !!

Ken Canning
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Ken Canning with some of his plants



Secretaries report

It's working the swap shop. No one told me but apparently you are swapping leaves and plants quite frequently.

I was greeted at the N.E.C. (Gardeners World live) by one member 'has he been yet?' 'Who' I said. 'Ken' he replied, 'Ken who?' 'Ken Canning, he has a box of leaves for me'. 'Not yet, but I'm sure he will be' I replied.

After the confusion, Ireland met Exmouth who in turn met Norfolk and so it went on. The moral is to use the swap shop, and to make new friends.

We received a R.H.S. Silver medal at Tatton Park again; we were very pleased with this as this year the plants were not up to their usual standard that week.

Brian Grieve looked after the stand for 3 days, with the help from others, **Thank You** all very much.

Brian being a retired teacher put on a very good display table with cuttings, seedlings, composts, pots etc. He sat on a stool behind the table and demonstrated the way to take cuttings, potting etc. most of each day for 3 days.

Seeing this and also seeing the results on the seed sales and leaflets we have decided to adopt this method at all our shows.

Quite a few people joined the Society at both the N.E.C and Tatton. Also at Tatton we had 2 more juniors and another junior at Shrewsbury (with the help from mum!), making our junior total now 4.

Some reports are coming back regarding the mini's I sent out, but could do with more from you even if you have lost them please let us know, with the mini (M) number, if you possibly can.

So far this year my seasons been a bit down, I have lost quite a lot of plants through over watering with this very hot weather we have been having. This brings me to a few questions that we have been having at shows and over the phone.

The first one is **SHADE**.

I shade my greenhouse with 50% shade net (Netlon), but on the sunny side of my greenhouse this year I have had to use double the thickness. I find this easy to put on and take off, on my aluminium greenhouse I use clothes pegs and on the wooden one a staple gun.

Fit 2/3rds or up to the windows on the outside, to do the inside put it across the eve struts on the upper side, again on the wooden ones fixing with a staple gun and with aluminium fixing studs on the inside.

Also an idea for fixing winter insulation on your aluminium greenhouse (Bubble). Get 2 x 1 wood cut to size from inside the guttering to the base (tight fit). Tap into place and staple your bubble to it, keeping it as tight as possible, the best time to do this is on a warm day. This will cut out the condensation you get from the bubble being on the inside, it is also better insulation being on the outside, and will keep the heating bill a little lower.

No 2 is **BOTRITIS** (Powdery Mildew)

(This is the white spots you get on the leaves). We should only experience it in the spring if we are going to get it at all, due to sudden changes in heat. **BUT** owing to June and July being what they were this year quite a lot of you seem to have been having problems. Even in the house you can spray with Systhane systemic fungicide. Use at the rate for roses. I mix only ½ sachet at a time with 2 pints of water and spray downwards-keeping spray off the flowers every 3 days for 3 applications.

Both Ken and myself have had odd plants with it on this year in June, July and even August.

No 3 **Mealybug** is back.

Cotton wool in the base of the plant and on the flower stems. Methylated spirit dabbed on with a cotton wool bud is the only cure for this; all other applications have been taken off the market. It takes time but it's worth it and it does work.

The last thing I would like to say to you all is that we have succeeded in having an A.G.M. and have now got a committee, and a set of Society rules. (Copy will be sent to you if required). This was achieved at the show on 27th July during judging.

The show I am speechless about, the following wraps it up from the three Yorkshire lasses, thank you ladies and thank you **ALL**.

Frank Davies.



Some of the plants on display at Brownhills together with some of the entrants viewing their successes

Show Report

By Mary Davies (Show secretary)

Well what a show Frank was overwhelmed we had a full room, in fact it was a little cramped in the end, we had to move classes a couple of times to accommodate the plants.

By 8am on the 27 July 2002 the hall at Brownhills was ready, tables up and ready to be filled with plants.

Jane Blois and daughter from Shrewsbury had kindly offered to do the kitchen and the pot was on, 8.30 am. no plants! Ken came across, is anyone coming we had people here this time last year. Kitchen staff soon had help, thank you.

Well within an hour (9.30) people were coming in, and with their plants we had 139 entries with 191 PLANTS plus the 2 entries in the 6-foot table display class.

With the selling tables on one side of the room and Sue with the seed fund between the table entries it was a full room the main classes being straight down the middle of the hall.

I hope you all enjoyed the day and with the AGM and rules all done during judging, we are now a proper society.

THANKS TO ALL OF YOU WHO TURNED UP EVEN IF YOU DIDN'T SHOW, PERHAPS YOU WILL NEXT YEAR.

We have already rearranged the room on paper to accommodate more plants so start thinking it's not long to the 26 July 2003 this is the date for the next show.

Before the results of the show I must quote this letter we received thank you ladies.
13-8-02 mem. no 590.

Dear Frank & Mary.

Two weeks have passed since the show at Brownhills which we visited.

I just had to write and thank you and all your helpers for such a wonderful show. We travelled down from Lancashire and we all agreed what a wonderful day we had spent with you. Everyone was so friendly. I also had a bonus! I received two second prizes which I never expected.

We admire the work you put in to the society, thank you all so much for such a memorable day.

Mrs Betty Holden. (One of the three Lancashire Lassies)

Thank you Betty for coming with your plants and the other two L Ls.

Greenhouse Grown.

Class 1. 1 Plant 3.1/2 in (9 cm) pot.

- 1st Keith Capper.
- 2nd Sue Long.
- 3rd Geoff Hughes.
- 4th Keith Capper.

Class 2. 3 Plants 3.1/2 in (9 cm) pot.

- 1st Keith Capper.
- 2nd John Spires.
- 3rd Mary Smith.
- 4th Peter Pinches.

Class 3. 1 Plant 6 in (15 cm) pot.

- 1st Geoff Hughes.
- 2nd Keith Capper.
- 3rd Brian Grieve.
- 4th Peter F Cooke.

Class 4. 3 Plants 6 in (15 cm) pot.

- 1st Keith Capper.
- 2nd Keith Capper.
- 3rd David & Linda Hackett.
- 4th Peter F Cooke.

Class 5. 1 Plant any size pot grown anywhere.

- 1st Keith Capper.
- 2nd Betty Holden.
- 3rd Keith Capper.
- 4th Mrs M R Green.

Grown in House or Conservatory.

Class 6. 1 Plant 3.1/2 in (9 cm) pot.

- 1st Mrs M R Green.
- 2nd Kath Joiner.
- 3rd Alan Darkins.
- 4th Alan Darkins.

Class 7. 3 Plants 3.1/2 in (9 cm) pot.

- 1st Mrs M R Green.

No other prizes awarded.

Class 8 1 Plant 6 in (15 cm) pot.

- 1st Jane Blois.
- 2nd Mrs M R Green.
- 3rd Barbara Harrison.
- 4th Barbara Harrison.

Class 9. 3 Plants 6 in (15 cm) pot.

- 1st Jane Blois.
- 2nd Betty Holden.
- 3rd Mrs M R Green.

Class 10. Any Species any size pot.

- 1st Brian Grieve.
- 2nd Sue Long.
- 3rd Sue Long.
- 4th Peter Pinches.

Class 11. Table Display (6ft x 3ft)

- 1st Mrs M R Green
- 2nd Sue Long.

Letters from Members

Dear Mr Davies

I have just finished reading your June Newsletter. Noted the 30 August deadline and decided to write some of my experiences down on paper before I change my mind and before I shoot off to work.

I have been growing streptocarpus since I was given a leaf from my GP trainer (in Montgomery, Mid-Wales) in 1985. A large leafed plant with deep blue flowers on a long stem. He had been given it from a patient who had a superb specimen growing on her dining room table in the middle of a not-so-well lit room. It had always impressed him.

I grew a cutting from this plant in an East facing bedroom window – set back from the window on a table. I counted 45 flowers on it at one point! I still grow it. Encouraged by this, I started to buy other streptocarpus from Dibleys whose stand at Chelsea impressed me greatly. I now have around 15 varieties as I am fairly rigorous of disposing of those which don't "do" or no longer impress or please. Streptocarpus have to face a lot of competition in the greenhouse from other plants in which I am interested.

We have a 20 x 10 foot lean-to greenhouse on the south side of our house. It leans against the sitting-room which has French doors and a large picture window looking into it. We thus have a spectacular view of this lush and colourful growing environment from within the house and it is easy to nip into so as to attend to plants at any time of the year. It is kept at a minimum of 9°C all year at night and 14°C during the day. Shade is provided by *passiflora antioquiensis* and *racemosa* trained along wires along the roof. There is automatic ventilation and a large cooling fan.

Under this window, there is a raised bed growing *brugmansia*, *Strelitzia*, *Fuschia thalia*, *Begonia fuschiodes*, a ginger and two varieties of the tropical climber, *Mandevilla*. As these have stems, there is room underneath for more! This is where the streptocarpus come into their own. I saw some good specimens of streptocarpus *primulifolia* in a similar position in a "natural" planting in one of the glasshouses at Edinburgh Botanical Garden.

I have four cultivars in the 10 foot length of raised bed and they have grown and spread and flowered and flowered. The most spectacular are Falling Stars and Gloria which provide a superb show for 5 months. The flowering season starts about a month after those in the house, but keeps on for about as long. Crystal Ice puts

up a few flowers during the winter. There is automatic drip-watering for the bed and they don't dry out, but being south-facing and despite the shade from the other plants, some of the longer leaves do still get sun scorch.

I planted six cuttings of streptocarpus saxorum in a 12 inch hanging basket and for the past three years have enjoyed a hanging basket every bit as good as the one Ken showed in the June newsletter. However, this summer it was time to re-pot and it looks a little feeble at the moment. At Bicton Park in Devon, I saw a similar plant, but with larger blue flowers. It was named "Blue Angel", and I have never seen it for sale. I would like a plant, so if anyone knows of a source.....

Last year, I had great success with streptocarpus *candidus*. This species has large (2 to 3 feet) leaves and took up a large part of one of my greenhouse benches! However, this presumptuous claim on hotly contested greenhouse space was rewarded with a vast 18 inch cauliflower-shaped cluster of bell-shaped, sweetly scented cream flowers. Timing was perfect for the Norfolk and Norwich Horticultural Society's Summer show and it duly won first prize in its class.

Whilst they compete for space in the greenhouse, streptocarpus have the window-sills almost to themselves in the house. A row of five Falling Stars fills an 8 foot East window and there is a constant hedge of nodding pink flowers for several months of the year. I grow them in 7.5 inch terracotta half-pots. These provide a bit of weight to keep the plants on the sill and are sufficiently porous to prevent water-logging if I inadvertently over-water.

I was bought 8 plants as a birthday present this year and am eagerly awaiting their first flowers. How will they fare against the competition. Will they be among the 15 next year?

Best wishes

Yours sincerely, **Alistair Lipp**

alistair@lipp.org.uk

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From Mrs S. Gilmartin No 634.

Dear Mr Davies.

Just writing to say how wonderful the show was on the 27 July.

People were very kind in helping with tips on how to propagate from leaf cuttings, and it was a memorable sight to see all those beautiful streptocarpus.

Thank you all very much.

Swap Shop and Wants

WANTED.

Chris Rose, 26 Devonshire Rd., Bristol BS6 7NJ, Tel. 01179 421481, donated seed of a white-flowered *S. haygarthii* with a violet-blue patch below the mouth to the BSS seed fund some time ago. If anyone has been growing this and has fresh seed he would very much like some as his remaining supply is several years old and has not germinated.

Membership No. 518

Mrs Pat Norton. 4 Bamford Close. Dodworth. Barnsley. South Yorkshire. S75 3SL.

I am only a beginner and have nothing to swap as yet but would like some leaves if anyone can spare them for cuttings.

Thank you.

Addresses for mail or
articles for publica-
tion in next issue

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Boney Hay
Burntwood
Staffs
WS7 8PB

Frank Davies
9 Wharf Lane
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Or e-mail
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Deadline for articles,
questions or letters is
31/12/2002

If you have pictures
you want printed in
the Newsletter please
send photos, 35mm
negs or slides to Tom
Causer or Ken Jones
these will be returned
after publication.



The Societies stand at Tation Park 2002