

# Gesneriad Research Center at Selby Gardens

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### *What is the Gesneriad Research Center (GRC)?*

The GRC is the center in North America for botanical research on the plant family Gesneriaceae. The mission of the GRC is to increase and diffuse knowledge of the flowering plant family Gesneriaceae through exploration, research, professional collaborations, and education, and to facilitate conservation initiatives that benefit gesneriads and the tropical ecosystems where they occur.

### *Why study gesneriads?*

Formally recognized as the plant family Gesneriaceae in 1816, gesneriads have captured the attention of botanists, explorers, and plant enthusiasts for centuries. Gesneriads are often quite striking with a wide range of growth forms, flower colors, and fruit types. They are significant ecologically for their pollinators and seed dispersal interactions as well as for their adaptations to specialized habits such as epiphytism. Gesneriads comprise a major portion of diversity in tropical forests, and many are exceptional horticultural subjects.

### *Why is the GRC at Selby Gardens?*

Marie Selby Botanical Gardens (est. 1973) has been involved with gesneriad research since its inception, as is evident from the Gardens' official seal that illustrates a bromeliad, an orchid, and a gesneriad. Dr. Hans Wiehler was the driving force behind Selby's early gesneriad program, helping to build the living and preserved collections during his tenure there. In 2002, Wiehler donated the several thousand herbarium specimens, liquid-preserved specimens and other resources of the Gesneriad Research Foundation (GRF) to Selby Gardens. A dedicated gesneriad research program was established to curate, manage and utilize the newly acquired gesneriad resources at Selby Gardens and to further the legacy established by Dr. Wiehler.

### *How is the GRC funded?*

The GRC is currently funded through charitable contributions from individuals, an annual grant from The Gesneriad Society, Inc., and through competitive grants (most recently through an award from the Institute of Museum and Library Services). Selby Gardens, while not directly funding the GRC, generously provides essential overhead and space for GRC operations including office, lab, herbarium and greenhouse.

### *How are GRC funds managed?*

Contributions are managed in two ways: 1) Selby Gardens maintains a designated account for GRC related contributions and grants; all monies in this account are used exclusively for GRC related activities; 2) The Gesneriad Society has set up the GRC Fund to accumulate and distribute funds to the GRC; the goal of this fund is to ultimately raise enough contributions for the endowment of the GRC.

### *Who is the GRC?*

Director: Dr. John R. Clark; GRC Senior Advisory Committee: Dr. Larry Skog (Smithsonian), Dr. Eric Roalson (Washington State University), Dr. John L. Clark (University of Alabama); Selby Senior Staff Advisor: Bruce Holst; Core Volunteers and Supporters\*: Karyn Cichocki, Nancy Kast, Jeanne Katzenstein, JoAnne Martinez, Melissa McDowell, Donna Pound, Bill Price, Carolyn Ripps, Doug Rist, Marge Schmiel, Paul Susi, Jim Sciarrello, Anne Vidaver; Affiliated organizations: Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, The Gesneriad Society, Inc., Suncoast Chapter of the Gesneriad Society, Tampa Bay Chapter of the Gesneriad Society, Frelinghuysen Arboretum Chapter of the Gesneriad Society. \*Listed alphabetically; list includes volunteers and financial contributors of \$100 or more.

### *Who do I contact for more information about the GRC?*

Contact: Dr. John R. Clark, Director, Gesneriad Research Center, Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, 811 S. Palm Ave., Sarasota, FL 34236; 941.366.5731x256; [jrclark@selby.org](mailto:jrclark@selby.org) or [johnrobertclark@gmail.com](mailto:johnrobertclark@gmail.com).