

× *HEPPIMENES*, A NEW INTERGENERIC HYBRID
IN THE GESNERIACEAE

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× *Heppimenes*, a new intergeneric hybrid, is formed between *Heppiella* and *Achimenes*. The author's cross, × *Heppimenes* 'Tezli', was made in 1975 between the tetraploid *Heppiella viscida* (Lindl. & Paxton) Fritsch ($n=26$, acc. no. G-1300) and the diploid *Achimenes dulcis* Morton ($n=11$, acc. no. G-696).

This new intergeneric hybrid is but another example of the close affinity which exists among the neotropical Gesneriaceae with scaly rhizomes. In SELBYANA 1:405, "New Hybrid Genera in the Gesneriaceae," Hans Wiehler lists a number of these combinations. *Heppiella* has also been used in crosses with *Smithiantha* and *Gloxinia*; *Achimenes* has been crossed with *Smithiantha* and *Eucodonia*.

The female parent, *Heppiella viscida*, has viscid, glandular pubescent leaves and stems. The leaves are opposite or ternate with short internodes. The blades are about 5 cm wide and 8 cm long. The corolla is strong red (Nickerson 5R 4/12) with a white throat. The corolla tube is straight, 2 cm long, with the equal lobes 1.5 cm in diameter. The anthers are free.

The male parent, *Achimenes dulcis*, has silvery-green leaves with some red on the reverse side, 5 cm wide and 10 cm long. The white flowers have a strong yellow patch in the throat. The corolla tube is infundibular, 5 cm long, with the rounded lobes 3.5 cm in diameter. The 4 anthers are joined in a square.

The hybrid, × *Heppimenes* 'Tezli,' has ternate leaves with internodes of 1 cm or less. The petiole is 1.5 cm long, and the blade is 3 cm wide, 5 cm long, dark green on the upperside, pale green on the reverse, clothed with short, erect, non-glandular hairs. The leaf blade is ovate with an acuminate tip and oblique base. The margin is crenate. There are 5 pairs of veins. The inflorescence is umbellate, usually with 4 flowers subtended by a pair of small bracts. The peduncle and the pedicels are all about 5 cm long. The sepals are ovate, covered with short glandular hairs, some reddish, as are the stems. The corolla tube is slightly flared, about 2.5 cm long. The evenly rounded lobes are 2.5 cm in diameter. The corolla tube and lobes are deep purplish red (Nickerson 5 RP 3/9). The throat is white, unmarked with spots or stripes. The anthers are free. The ovary is red, surrounded by a low green disk. The stigma is red-tipped, somewhat irregular, with 2 or 3 lobes. There are often flowers with extra sepals and corolla lobes, to as many as 8, resulting in a larger size than the 5-lobed form. The cultivar name is from the Aztec word for hummingbird.

The hybrid resembles the *Heppiella* parent much more than the *Achimenes* parent, namely in the procumbent rather than erect growth habit and in corolla shape. It differs from *H. viscida* in the non-viscid foliage, in the longer pedicels and peduncles, and in the larger flower which is more purple in color.

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× *Heppimenes* 'Tezli' is an interesting experiment in hybridizing, but not an outstanding horticultural specimen. The hybrid sets many buds which are very slow to open. The eventual elongation of peduncles and pedicels results in a rather straggly appearance. Some of these undesirable characteristics may be due to culture under the author's growing conditions with a 14 hour day cycle of fluorescent light and average temperature of 18-20°C. Different growing conditions might produce better results. It is quite possible that further hybridizing, through backcrossing to the *Achimenes* parent or another species of that genus, could result in larger flowers and better plant habit. The hybrid is considerably more floriferous than the *Heppiella* parent.

Editor's note: A rooted cutting of the hybrid was kindly given by Mrs. Batcheller to me in 1976. It has flowered at SEL under the acc. no. W-2254. Hybrid pollen stainability is 0%. A herbarium specimen, the holotype of × *Heppimenes* Batcheller, has been deposited at SEL: Wiehler 77102, 25 Feb. 1977. H.W.

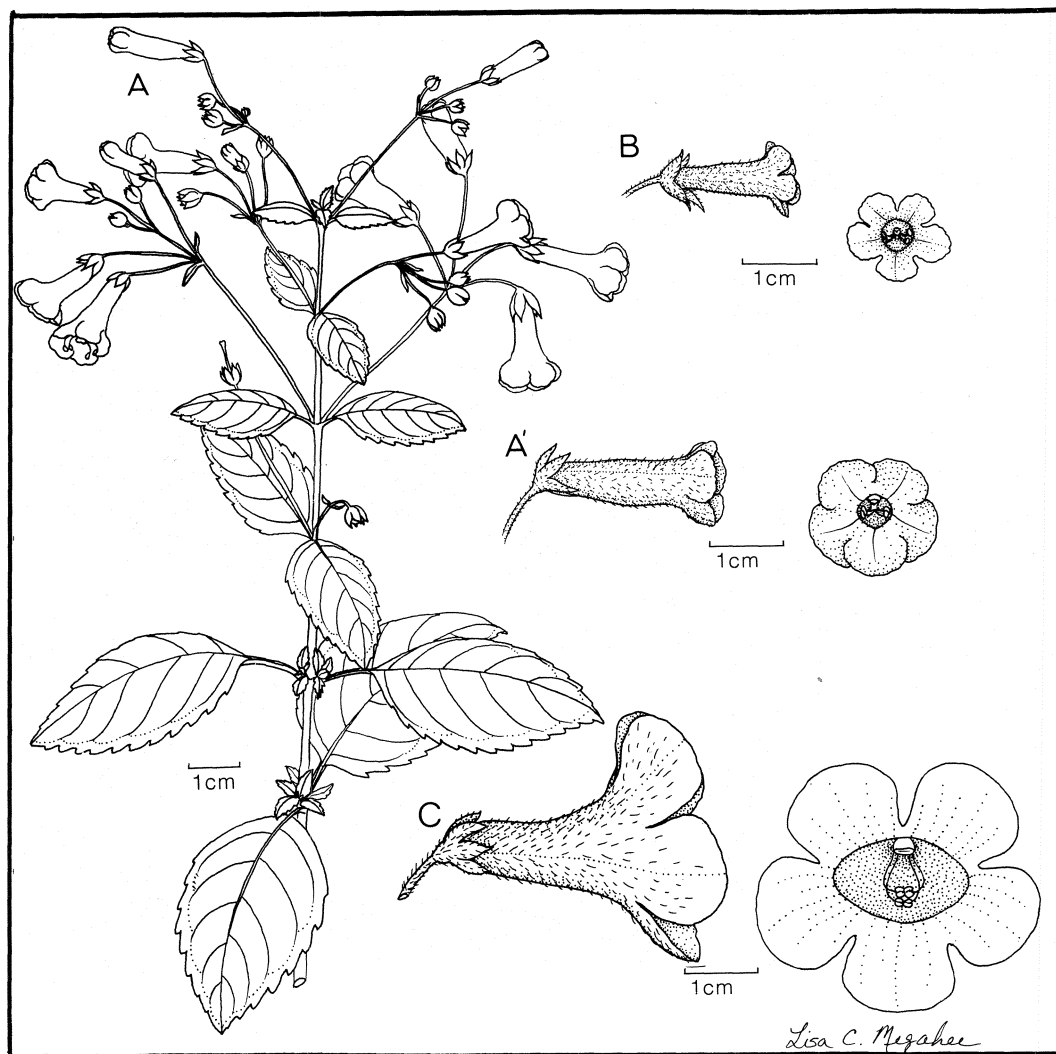


Plate 1: The habit of the intergeneric hybrid × *Heppimenes* 'Tezli' (A) and a comparison of corolla shapes and sizes of the parental species, *Heppiella viscida* (B) and *Achimenes dulcis* (C) with the hybrid (A').