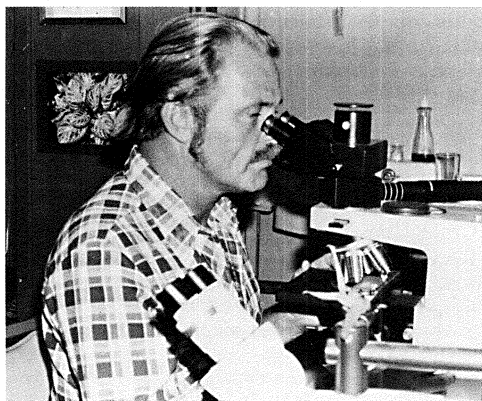


## IN MEMORIAM: HANS WIEHLER

1931–2003



The Selby Gardens seal (see next page) bears flowers of an orchid, a bromeliad, and the gesneriad *Columnnea erythrophaea*. The African violet family (Gesneriaceae) was among the first plant families studied at Selby Gardens, and this issue of *Selbyana* is dedicated to the memory of the internationally known taxonomist who developed gesneriad research at the Gardens—Hans Wiehler. One of the founding scientists on staff, he was associate editor and business manager of *Selbyana* 1975–1981, contributing 19 articles, many on new gesneriad species.

Born in Germany, he came to the United States as an exchange student. After earning a master's degree at Cornell, he began a doctorate at the University of Miami, working on epiphytes with Calaway Dodson. When Dr. Dodson became the founding director of Selby Gardens, he brought Hans Wiehler and Kiat Tan with him. In a 1977 interview for the Selby Gardens *Bulletin*, Wiehler noted, "Since we were all working on epiphytic plant families, it was very natural that I would come over and continue working on gesneriads." He arrived with his gesneriad collection packed in two moving vans. Rooted cuttings from Cornell, where he was in charge of gesneriads, came with him to Miami and from there to Selby Gardens, where he completed his doctoral research. An article on his dissertation appeared in *Selbyana* 6(1–4).

The Gesneriaceae contains 3000 species worldwide, and gesneriads occur in almost every ecosystem niche in the tropics. A fifth of them are epiphytes and thus of special interest to Selby Gardens. Among the showiest of plant families, gesneriads are valuable in horticulture, as a wildlife food source, and for medicinal use.

In 1982, Dr. Wiehler left Selby Gardens to establish the Gesneriad Research Foundation (GRF) in Sarasota. He and his volunteers devoted two decades to field research on neotropical gesneriads. Then, a year before his death, Dr. Wiehler donated the GRF collection to Selby Gardens, finding it the best repository for his life's work.

Today the Selby Gardens herbarium (SEL) has 5500 field collections of gesneriads, many greenhouse-collected specimens, 2000+ flowers preserved in alcohol, and 140+ type specimens. Most of the specimens were collected in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, and Venezuela; and many remain unidentified. These collections represent a wealth of information for gesneriad research and species distribution data vital to conservation initiatives. Selby Gardens is committed to this work to assure that the Hans Wiehler legacy is preserved and that ongoing research continues.

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Note: An article on the Selby Gardens/GRF collection will appear in *Selbyana* 24(2).