

SCOTT WENTZ and JEREMY KEENE, Dept of Science and Mathematics, Glenville State College, Glenville, WV, 26351. Towards a Revision of *Diastema* Within Panama.

*Diastema* is a genus of plants within the subtribe Gloxiniinae (Gesneriaceae). Some of the key characteristics of *Diastema* are a racemose flowering axis consisting of solitary flowers in the axils of bracts on the stems with condensed internodes, nectary consisting of 5 finger-like glands, and a distinctive bi-lobed stigma. I am currently collecting morphological and molecular data and will complete field studies of the genus *Diastema*. Morphological studies will focus on taxonomically useful vegetative and reproductive characters with special emphasis given to trichome structure and fruit shape. Field work will be carried out in northern Panama. I will be observing the ecology and population structure of the local species. Field studies will provide an opportunity to obtain data that is not easily observed on herbarium specimens. The outcomes of this research will provide a baseline for conservation and governmental agencies to work from to protect the habitat where these species exist. Evolutionary studies will be completed following the field study to ascertain the relationships between the species present. My research will be used toward a more comprehensive study of the subtribe and genus.