

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

*Diastema* is a genus of flowering 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. There are currently only twenty described species and there has been very little research performed on the genus. I am currently collecting morphological and molecular data to delineate species. Any new potential new species are then compared to the appropriate type specimens to determine circumscription. Morphological studies focus on taxonomically useful vegetative and reproductive characters with special emphasis given to trichome structure and fruit shape. Molecular studies are focused on nuclear and chloroplast genes to ascertain if any hybridization has occurred. 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. My research will be used toward a more comprehensive study of the subtribe and genus.