

African Violet

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MAGAZINE

July • August 2009

Volume 62

Number 4



AVSA Information

FOR CONDUCTING BUSINESS WITHIN YOUR SOCIETY

FOR ACCURATE SERVICE, SEND YOUR INQUIRIES TO THE CORRECT PERSON. ALWAYS INCLUDE YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS.

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MEMBERSHIP DUES INCREASE EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2007:

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AVSA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION: Dr. Elmer Godeny, 11473 Denham Rd., Gonzales, LA 70737.

COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES AND COMMERCIAL SALES & EXHIBITS: Lynn Lombard, 790 Ridgecrest Dr., Colfax, CA 95713. For information on convention entries or sales room, contact Lynn Lombard, *Email* <lynn_lombard@worldnet.att.net>

CONVENTION AWARDS: Jan. issue. Send suggestions or contributions for convention awards to Judy Carter, 1825 W. Lincoln St., Broken Arrow, OK 74012-8509. *Email* <AVSAawards@valomet.com>.

CONVENTION PROGRAM: Send special requests for workshop programs or interesting speakers to Kathy Lahti, Convention Director, 4157 Oliver Ave. N.W., Annandale, MN 55302. *Email* <lahti@lakedalelink.net> If interested in sponsoring a national convention in your area, contact Convention Director.

FUTURE CONVENTION DATES: Raleigh, NC - April 11 - April 18, 2010.

JUDGE'S DUPLICATE CARD: Send self-addressed stamped envelope to Bill Foster, 3610 Gray Dr., Mesquite, TX 75150.

JUDGING SCHOOL: To register a judging school, send request to Ruth Loomis, 605 N. San Francisco St., Flagstaff, AZ 86001. A registration fee of \$15 is required. *Email* <ruthloomis@msn.com>

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MASTER VARIETY LIST:

MVL SUPPLEMENTS: Download from AVSA website, or order from AVSA office for \$1.00. Orders in writing only. Send any correction and/or description of new cultivars with hybridizer's name to: Joe Bruns, 1220 Stratford Lane, Hanover Park, IL 50130.

MEMBERSHIP CARDS: Sent to Associate Members. Renewing members receive card on white protective cover of AVM.

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RESEARCH: Send suggested projects for scientific research or names of interested, qualified, potential research personnel to Dr. Jeff Smith, 3014 W. Amherst Rd., Muncie, IN 47304.

SHOW SCHEDULE APPROVER: For information on Shows, AVSA Awards, and Approving Schedules write to: Meredith Hall, P. O. Box 370, Marlin, TX 76661. *E-mail* <mhall370@earthlink.net>. **Do not send Show Schedules by E-mail - this address is for information ONLY.** Please check for new prices on AVSA Show Packets.

Due to increases in shipping costs, the following rates for the SSA packet and AVSA collection rosettes are effective now: \$5.00 when requesting the SSA packet with no rosettes; \$12.50 when requesting the SSA packet and one or two rosettes; \$20.00 when requesting the SSA packet and two sets of rosettes; \$27.50 when requesting the SSA packet and three sets of rosettes.

AFRICAN VIOLET MAGAZINE INFORMATION

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ARTICLES BY MEMBERS, COLUMNISTS AND MEMORIALS: Send to Editor. **Please Note: Deadlines - Articles and Columnists:** Jan. issue - Oct. 1; Mar. issue - Dec. 1; May issue - Feb. 1; July issue - Apr 1; Sept. issue - June 1; Nov. issue - Aug. 1.

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Coming Events Deadlines: - Jan. issue - Nov. 1; Mar. issue - Jan. 1; May issue - Mar. 1; July issue - May 1; Sept. issue - July 1; Nov. issue - Sept. 1.

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BOOSTER FUND: Send contributions to Shirley Berger, 2822 S. Mainsail Dr., Avon Park, FL 33825-6032.

BOYCE EDENS RESEARCH FUND: Send contributions to Marlene Buck, 17235 N. 106th Ave., Sun City, AZ 85373-1958.

BUILDING MAINTENANCE FUND: Send contributions to Susan Hapner, 35 Ridge Point Dr., Chesterfield, MO 63017.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Send new address at least 30 days before it is to take effect, along with old address, to AVSA office in Beaumont.

TALLY TIME: Heather Menzel, 135 N. Main St., Yardley, PA 19057. *E-mail* <hmenzel@erols.com>.

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Broadway Star Trail

Best African Violet in Show
Best Trailer in Show
2009 National Show

Exhibited by:
Bill Price



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

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Every attempt is made to keep articles technically correct. Since the growing of fine African violets can be achieved in many ways, the methods and opinions expressed by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AVSA.

President's Message

By Ron Davidson, President

941 F. M. 2377 • Red Oak, TX 75154

Email: chiefrond@aol.com



he AVSA convention in Reno is history. In this issue, you will find the winners of the show, and the members receiving AVSA society awards. I want to thank each of the society award winners, and publications award winners, for their service to AVSA.

The show was fantastic with lots of beautiful African violets and designs. The Educational exhibit outstanding.

I understand that some members took home more than they brought, and I'm not talking just about African violets. The casino was very good to some members - but I was not one of the lucky ones!

The Reno tours were exceptional. My wife, Jan, and I really enjoyed the Lake Tahoe Cruise. The scenery was beautiful this time of the year. And, since the tour was after the convention was over, you could just relax and enjoy the time with your fellow conventioners. It was a great way to close out the convention.

The programs during the convention were very informative, from using the computer for the AVSA First Class and Entries Programs, to hybridizing African violets and episcias. After attending Dr. Bill Price's program on how to win with trailers, I expect there will be a lot of trailers in Raleigh next year. Bill proved you could win the show with a trailer. He had an outstanding and beautiful trailer 'Broadway Star Trail,' that won Best in Show and graces the cover of this magazine.

At the convention, this question was raised, "How is the Booster Fund money used by AVSA?" These funds are used to purchase items for the office that are not normally in the budget. This past year the major purchase by the Booster Fund was an up-to-date copy machine for the office. The old copier was purchased in the mid to late '90's and was no longer reliable. Jenny and Amy are very happy with the new copy machine!

The next question was, "What will the Booster Fund do in 2009?" The next major purchase from the fund will be a new computer for the Editor of the



AVM. Her old computer has been updated to the max and it has reached it peak. If you would like to help with this expense, just mark your donation to the Booster Fund "for the Editor's computer." I want to thank the number of members and affiliates that have already made a donation for the computer.

The AVSA Board of Directors has approved a new look for *African Violet Magazine*. The AVM, starting with the January/February 2010 issue, will be slightly smaller in the width and height; but **will double the amount of color pages in each issue**. The main reasons for the changes are that it will save AVSA thousands of dollars annually in the cost of printing, will reduce the cost of postage, keep the AVM intact with the same font, keep our dues at the current rate, and what most members have asked for "more color pages in each issue."

Have you looked at the web site lately? The Board of Directors has approved funds for the up-grade to the web site. The proposal from the Internet Committee that the web-site be upgraded. This up-grade will be completed under the guidance of the Webmaster, Internet Committee, and our Third Vice-President.

Kathy Bell, chair of the Membership and Promotion Committee is requesting assistance and ideas on ways to promote AVSA. So if you have ideas please pass them on to her.

Summer is here. When you make your travel plans, please look for our commercial members in the areas you will be visiting. Go by their shops and support our African violet commercial members and hybridizers. Their names, locations, and business hours are listed in the 2009 Vacation Guide in the May/June '09 AVM.

Have a safe summer!

Happy growing, good luck, and keep smiling,

Ron Davidson
President, AVSA

Editor's Notes

By Ruth Rumsey, AVM Editor

2375 North Street • Beaumont, TX 77702

Email: rrumsey@earthlink.net



Those of you unable to attend the convention in Reno, will find the list of show winners (page 17) and throughout this issue, photos of some of the gorgeous plants that were exhibited. Gracing our cover this time is Best in Show 'Broadway Star Trail,' exhibited by **Bill Price**. This is Bill's 3rd Best in Show at an AVSA national convention!



Next year the convention is going to be in Raleigh, North Carolina. It's been a long time since AVSA held an annual convention on the east coast, so I hope everyone takes advantage of this opportunity.

You may have heard from your affiliate club, or from those who joined us in Reno, that there will several important changes to this publication in 2010. Read the short article at the bottom of this page, and if you have questions, please send me an email or give me a call, and I will answer them.

The recipients of President's Certificates of Appreciation for articles published in the AVM last year are on page 8. If you have an article idea, please submit it. I am always looking for new material, and need articles from our members – whether novice or experienced in the world of African violets.

Our new Membership and Promotion Chair, **Kathy Bell**, is determined to grow AVSA's membership. Kathy has a lot of good ideas, and would like you to share your ideas for helping expand membership in your local clubs, as well as AVSA.

Kathy's article this issue is on page 19 – "AVSA Clubs! Our Times Are A Changin'!"

If you have plans to start a new affiliate club, you'll want to read **Carolee Carter's** "Getting a New Affiliate Off the Ground and Running," on page 50.

Brenda Petry, of the Violet Gallery, shares her experiences in working with an African violet club in the school where her sister teaches. "African Violets Go to School" is on page 52.

Have a great summer!

Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses has announced that they are introducing a Show Award for a Collection of Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses' registered plants at the 2010 AVSA Convention in Raleigh, NC.

This award will be offered each year, and has been approved by the AVSA Show and Judges Committee. No matter who the hybridizer, any Registered Lyon Greenhouses' plant is eligible, whether Standard, Semiminiature, Miniature, or Trailer.

Awards for the Lyndon Lyon Collections are \$200 for Best Lyndon Lyon Collection, and \$100 for 2nd Best Lyndon Lyon Collection.



To All AVSA Members: Exciting Changes are Coming in 2010!

Ruth Rumsey, AVM Editor

Your *African Violet Magazine* will soon have a new look. The AVSA Board of Directors has decided to reduce the width and height of the magazine by a small amount, **while doubling the amount of color pages**.

The amount of pages will stay the same, as will the font size – so the text will remain at the current, easily-read size. What we will be losing is the need for fillers, when an article may not fill an entire page. We will have so many more color pages that we'll have room for many more color photos: those of show-winning plants, as well as more articles with color illustrations.

The first issue in this reduced size will be the January/February 2010 AVM. The ensuing months are needed to work out the changes to the production process. Also, your Board of Directors felt that it would be best for a change to come

at the beginning of a new year, especially for our members who save their magazines, keeping them in a collection. Change can be difficult. But this change will:

- save this organization thousands of dollars annually
- reduce the cost of postage
- keep the AVM intact
- keep our dues at the current rate
- double the amount of color pages in each issue.

Fortunately, we have a leadership and Board of Directors dedicated to keeping AVSA strong and dedicated to keeping the *African Violet Magazine* a high quality, informative, publication.

Please contact me if you have questions or suggestions. As I have stated often – this is YOUR magazine. I value your input very much.

Office Update

By Jenny Daugereau, AVSA Office Manager

2375 North Street • Beaumont, TX 77702

Email: avsa@earthlink.net



I just returned from Reno/Sparks, Nevada, after attending the 63rd Annual AVSA convention. What a great convention! There were so many gorgeous African violets, and the design division was great. Besides the beautiful African violets, my favorite thing about this convention was the tours. We visited Lake Tahoe on Saturday, and all of us had a wonderful day. I know I must have taken hundreds of pictures of the deep blue lake and the surrounding snowcapped mountains. In southeast Texas, we don't see very much snow on the ground, so I was in awe. Our tour bus drove the long and winding road through the mountains back to Sparks, as I took picture after picture. It was a wonderful opportunity.

Many of us also went to see the hilarious live musical comedy, "Menopause," after dining at the Eldorado casino buffet. It was a fun-filled evening.

When I wasn't touring, or checking out the show room and the sales room, I was behind the Registration desk. I would like to thank all those who helped me register the convention attendees. **Harry Webber** of Colorado was my "go to" guy. He was there to open the table in the early morning before most were out of bed. He was also the last to leave at night, carrying all the supplies back to our storage area. He was also there most of the time in between! Thanks again, Harry, I sincerely appreciate all of your help. **Patt Harris** was also there much of the time. She was taking care of the Information table but helped us, too. She also brought snacks, which were much appreciated, when we couldn't get away for breakfast. Thanks, Patt.

Many of our Board of Directors could also be found sitting

behind our desk. Our new AVSA Treasurer **Edna Rourke**, Secretary **Sue Ramser**, 2nd Vice President **Linda Golubski**, and 1st Vice President **John Carter**, all members of the AVSA Executive Committee, took time from their very busy schedules to assist with Registration. It takes many people to pull off a convention of this size, and AVSA is fortunate to have so many volunteer to help.

Lynn Lombard (local convention chair) and **Kathy Lahti** (AVSA Convention Director) deserve a very special thanks for all they did for this convention. Great job ladies! Our new tour directors, **Nancy** and **Richard Carr**, did a great job keeping up with all of us while out on tours and making sure every one got to the correct bus.

The summer is here, and things will slow a bit here in the AVSA office. Amy and I will be catching up after our busy winter and spring months. I would like to ask you all to play "catch-up" too. Make sure your dues are paid, get those "must have" orders for the new 2010 calendars into the office, and take this time to make sure your club information is current.

I know the economy has been a problem, but let's all make a commitment to help grow AVSA's membership and sign up a new member before September. Our society needs new members, and Ruth and I have challenged all of you, as well as every club, council, and regional affiliate to get as many new members as we can. Give your neighbor, friend, cousin, co-worker, or other family member a year's membership to AVSA. Be sure to put **Challenge** on the envelope, so Ruth and I can keep count. We really appreciate your help on this Challenge!



Irina Nicholson & Thad Scaggs



Pat & Gary Dunlap



B. J. Ohme & Pat Hancock



Steve & Donna Turner, Kathy Lahti

Question Box

By Sue Haffner

3015 Timmy Ave. • Clovis, CA 93612

Email: sueh@csufresno.edu

Dear Friends,



have to open my column with an apology: in mid-March I received a note in the mail from a reader who mentioned, in passing, planting a blueberry bush. I put the note aside to send a response – and I haven't been able to find it since then. I had just scanned the note, so I don't recall the question; perhaps it involved some cross-contamination from the blueberry bush to the writer's indoor plants? Believe me, I've turned over every pile of paper in my house, all in vain, so far. (I hope I didn't scoop it up with the papers going to the tax preparer!) If the question was in reference to cross-contamination from other plants, I think we all know how easily that can be done. If you've been outside working in the garden or flowerbed, be sure to wash up and change clothes before coming in close contact with your violets. Anyway, I hope the author of the note will get back in touch with me. I'm not usually so disorganized that I can lose something on my desk.

Q. I found a really neat violet at the grocery store; it doesn't have a name, but I don't care about that. I know the experts wick their plants, so I wicked this one by pushing a piece of yarn through the hole in the bottom of the pot. The plant seemed okay for a few months, but now it doesn't look good. The leaves are getting pale and the whole plant looks like its shrinking. What can I do?

A. What you need to do is repot the plant into a very light growing mix, one that is suitable for wick-watering. The medium used for the mass market violets is much too heavy for wicking. Be sure and check the roots when you repot, as root rot might be present. If so, cut away the bad roots and remove the old potting mix, then settle the plant in the new wick-ready medium. Water from the top to get the wicking action started. As with any newly-repotted plant, keep an eye on it to make sure it is adapting to its new conditions.

Q. I've heard that non-stick grills and other pans give off fumes that can be harmful to plants. I have violets on my kitchen windowsill and don't want to lose them. Do you think there is anything to this?

A. It is true that non-stick cooking ware does emit fumes that can be harmful to pets (especially birds) if used in an unventilated kitchen. I haven't heard that this damage extends to plants, however. If you haven't noticed anything untoward in how your plants are growing and blooming, I wouldn't worry about it. Plants are constantly re-growing their leaves and



roots, so they don't accumulate pollutants over the long term (unlike humans or animals.)

Q. I chanced upon the fact that there are two types of trailing violets while browsing through an old issue of the AVSA magazine: those with upright stolons and those with horizontal stolons. I've nipped the tips off horizontal stolons to encourage branching with success, but I had no success when I pinched the top of a vertical stolon. The stolon remains green and healthy, but it has produced no branches. It's about six inches long. What should I do to encourage branching and new growth?

A. Years ago, there used to be plants that we'd call "semi-trailers"; that is, they would trail, all right, but only in one direction and with one stem. Growers would have a heck of a time getting them to produce the three crowns necessary for entering them in shows. I wonder if your plant might be one of these recalcitrant hybrids. When you say you've pinched out the vertical stolon, do you mean the center of the plant? Pinching out the center has always been considered the best strategy for getting a trailer to produce crowns. I don't know if you've heard of the practice of sticking pins into the leaf axils in order to produce branching. I understand that it works, though I haven't done it myself: stainless steel pins poked into the leaf axils and left there until new growth begins to show. There also are growth hormones such as Keikigrow™ that are used by orchid growers, especially, to produce offsets or suckers. I don't know how they would work with African violets or if the growth they might produce would seem to be abnormal. Most of these products can be obtained from online sources, but if you have a local orchid club, you might ask them where they get their supplies. Also, check bonsai supply dealers, both local and online. The bonsai people are famous for manipulating their plants in all sorts of ways, and you might get some ideas there. I'm all for giving alternate methods a try; who knows, one of them might work.

Q. I enjoy the really large African violets. They seem to have an impact on me that the others do not have. Can you give some tips on how to grow the really large plants? Also, can you tell me if there are any statistics that tell what are the largest African violet plants and the largest African violet blossoms?

A. To produce a large violet, you have to start out with a variety that has the potential for growing large. The first thing to do is check AVSA's Master Variety List and note those plants which are designated as 'large'. A former member of

our club grew large specimens of 'Granger's Wonderland' for show every year. A number of the Granger varieties are large-growing, so you might try a few of them. The cultural practices required for optimum growth include: constant disbudding so that all the plant's energy goes toward the foliage; prompt removal of any suckers that form; removal of immature leaves; regular potting-up to the next largest pot as the plant grows; using support rings for the leaves; keeping the leaves clean by regular washing; giving the plant room to grow. This last point might seem self-evident, but violets do seem to be constrained by crowding

By "statistics," I guess you're asking for the maximum size a violet plant and blossom can attain. Well, in the past I've seen expertly-grown show standards that may have approached 18" in diameter. Or they might have been larger – your memory can play tricks on you. I'd like our readers to weigh in on this if they have any comments. As to blossom size, I'm not sure if the questioner means the size of individual blossoms or the size of the mass of blooms. Does producing a large plant translate into also producing large blossoms? I'm not sure. Presumably, a large plant would exhibit a large mass of blooms, but whether the individual blossoms would be larger than usual doesn't necessarily follow. It would depend on the variety. The largest violet blossom: I think I've seen some that were about 1 ½ inches in diameter. Again, readers, help me out here if you have additional information. This could be an ongoing discussion topic!

Q. A friend emailed me with this: I have an infestation of an insect I can't identify, so I can't figure out what to use on it. The bugs are only in the soil. They're not soil mealy bugs; they're not particularly afraid of light, so I can observe them for relatively long periods of time. They resemble very tiny ticks, with distinct antennae, six legs and "roundish" body. There are crawling all over the soil, and this morning some were on the outside of the pot. Any ideas?

A. Well, my first suggestion was to get this plant away from the others. Take it outside, knock it out of the pot, and check to see if any more of the bugs are in the soil. Their description doesn't match that of any of the common violet pests so I didn't have any ideas about that. I suspect that some eggs that had been in the bagged soil mix had hatched or that the mama bug had flown into the house on some occasion and laid them. They might not actually be harmful to the violet, at all. Still, you don't want to take that chance. My friend removed all the soil, washed the plant, put down the crown and treated her other plants with a systemic.

Q. A customer approached us at our club's plant sale last weekend at the mall. She had a plant she just loved, one of the 'Rebel' varieties with pink variegated foliage. She loved that plant not only for

its beauty but also for its name – as she thought of herself as a rebel, as well. The plant was limp and droopy. What was wrong with it?

A. One of the most enjoyable things about having our event in such a public place is the variety of people who stop by to chat and, we hope, shop. The plant this gal had was small, in a 3-inch pot. It had a wick, which made me wonder if she had bought it from us the last time we had had a sale. The outer leaves were very limp and, lifting the pot, I could tell it was waterlogged. What she had to do was take it home and get it out of that wet mix, remove the mushy roots and leaves, down to where the leaves seemed to be still crisp, then put down the crown in a very light mix, put a plastic bag over it and hope for the best. I couldn't really get from her what her watering practices were, so don't know how the plant came to be in such a condition. I could only advise – and hope – that she could be more attentive to how she watered. (And, yes, she bought a few more plants from us!)

Q. How do I know when my plants have thrips? And how do I get rid of them?

A. The usual sign of thrips is spilled pollen on the blossoms, though there are some violet varieties which do this naturally. If you notice also some silvery looking streaks on the blossom and/or foliage, you can be pretty sure thrips are present. If you blow into the blossoms of infested plants, you can sometimes see thrips moving around. Thrips are small insects with rasping-sucking mouth parts. They are slender, rarely as long as one-eighth of an inch, feeding on all plant parts, not just the blossoms. Thrips are, literally, everywhere. They can come into the house whenever you open the door, not to mention hitchhiking in on new plants you bring home. They are natural pollinators for some plants; they're also vectors for various plant diseases, such as impatiens necrotic spot virus. As such, they are a serious pest for commercial, as well as amateur, horticulture. The best way to deter thrips is by starvation: keeping your plants disbudded for at least six weeks at a stretch. If you do have the bugs, take infested plants out of their pots, wash all the soil off the roots, repot in a new pot with fresh soil to which you have added at least 1/2 tsp of a systemic insecticide. Just treating the plants with sprays can get rid of the adult thrips, but part of their life cycle takes place in the soil, so you need to discard that as well.

Q. I keep hearing that we shouldn't use peat moss because it's kind of an endangered material, or something. People keep talking about finding substitutes for it. What's the right way to look at this?

A. Yes, I also am aware of these views. Still, the Canadian Sphagnum Peat Moss Association wants us to buy their product, which comprises about 90% of all the peat used in this country. According to the Association, of the 279 million acres of Canadian peatland, less than .02 percent (42,000

acres) is being used for harvesting approximately 1.4 million tons of sphagnum peat each year. Supposedly this amount is "well within the sustainable allocation limits of natural resource availability," in the words of the Association's President (quoted in *The American Gardener*). Environmentalists disagree. Some substitutes for peat include coir, the fiber that surrounds a coconut. Some growers have been using this for several years. A product that will be rolled out later this year is RePeet™, created from processed dairy cow manure. It shares many traits with peat moss, including water retentiveness and porosity. With a pH of 6.5, it is closer to neutral than peat moss which has a pH of around 4.0. It should start showing up in stores later this year. I don't quite know what to say about this. Try new products conservatively. If you are satisfied with the peat moss available in your area, I wouldn't worry too much about the politics of buying it.

Q. I have a box of powdered (granulated?) AV fertilizer that has solidified. I guess I left it open - oops! Is it still any good? I'd rather not throw it out if I can still use it.

A. I've done that, too. As fertilizers are usually blended from the soluble metal salts of strong acids, some of them can

be hygroscopic (absorbing water from the air). I don't think they lose their potency, but it can be annoying to try to chip out and pulverize the chunks to measure out the small amount you mix per gallon. You might try doing what the professional growers do: make a bit of concentrated solution and then use a known volume of it per gallon. In the big commercial greenhouses, the concentrated solution is attached to a dilutor similar to the garden sprayers you can buy. You would have to be sure to be careful to measure and mix the right amount for this concentrated solution, and it should be kept in a dark, cool place.

Q. My violets sit on top of a tray of gravel that I try to keep wet - for humidity, you know. I never thought about keeping the gravel clean, but now the tray is showing signs of algae and looks unattractive. What should I do about it?

A. It's a good idea to remove the gravel at least once a month and wash it with dish detergent to reduce algae, bacteria, and any other impurities. Some people boil them, as well, and then microwave them for 5 to 10 minutes, or spread them on a baking sheet and bake for 20 to 30 minutes. You could also add a greenhouse disinfectant such as Physan 20™ to the water used for moistening the gravel.

2009 President's Certificates of Appreciation for Outstanding Contributions to the African Violet Magazine

Each year the AVSA Board of Directors and the Publications Committee select the five best articles published in the African Violet Magazine in the past year. The winners are awarded the President's Certificate of Appreciation for their contributions to

the African Violet Magazine. The winners are also presented with a one-year subscription to the AVM to be given to a non-AVSA member.

The following awards were presented at the 2009 AVSA Convention in Reno:

Sylvia Famum	Are Your Violets Ready for That Long Vacation?	Mar 08
Pierrepont Fisher.	The Things I Wish I Had Known as a Novice	July 08
Richard Follett	Cultivating the Next Generation of African Violet Enthusiasts	Sep 08
Kevin Jacobs.	Creating a Window Garden	Jan 08
Cheryl Johnson.	Please Raise Your Hand If You Know What Variable Means	Sep 08
Barbara Pershing	Understanding Fluorescent Lighting for African Violets - Which Type of Fluorescent Tubes to Choose	Nov 08
Bill Price.	Growing Kohlerias (or "How I learned to stop worrying and love the spots...")	Nov 08
Janet Stromborg	The Power of Green	May 08



Chico Fujii

The AVS San Francisco lost a longtime member and very dedicated worker in many areas of shows and plant sales, Chico Fujii. She joined our group in 1987 and served many years as corresponding secretary. She loved going to the

In Memory



national conventions and excelled with her underwater bubble bowl designs, as well as terrariums. In the last number of years, she produced our yearbook, always working hard for our club. A wonderful friend and lady will be missed by the many violeteers and others in our area.



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Ma's Cosmic Wonder

Best Standard

2nd Best African Violet in Show

Exhibited by: Catherine Thompson

Hybridized by: Olive Ma Robinson

Standard

In Search of New Violets

Dr. Jeff Smith, *The Indiana Academy*

Ball State University • Muncie, IN 47306

Email: JSmith4@bsu.edu



One of the fun but sometimes frustrating things that happens in plant genetics is when the results of a cross don't match up with what was expected. The models on the inheritance of various African violet traits are pretty good, but every once in a while you can get surprised. I found an example of this in a batch of seedlings I've been growing out. The cross was a self-pollination of my recently registered hybrid 'Yesterday's Eye Spy'. This plant is out of a cross of the wild species plant 5b. cl. *grotei* Mather No. 21 with the red thumbprint flowered cultivar 'Crimson Ice'. 'Yesterday's Eye Spy' is a trailer with dark blue thumbprint flowers. Since red flowers are a simple recessive to blue according to the genetic models, I expected 'Yesterday's Eye Spy' to carry the red color from 'Crimson Ice' and that this color would be passed on to the offspring. The model predicted that in the case of a simple recessive, 25% of the offspring should have red flowers. Since thumbprint pattern is a genetic dominant, I expected most of the offspring to have thumbprint flowers and about a quarter of them should have been in red. I was hoping for the same shade of red as in 'Crimson Ice'.

One part of the model was correct; nearly all of the offspring had thumbprint flowers. However, none of the offspring had red flowers like 'Crimson Ice'. The best I've gotten so far is more of a mauve color. So what happened? Are the genetic models wrong?

I think my mistake in using the genetic models was that I over-simplified the situation, assuming that the red flowers were the result of a single genetic trait. I'm now speculating that the red color of 'Crimson Ice' is the result of three recessive traits not just one. The three traits are: the red that is recessive to blue, a coral shade that is recessive to non-coral shades, and the lack of a bluing co-pigment. 'Yesterday's Eye Spy' is probably heterozygous for all three traits, having received a dominant for each trait from its species parent. The chance of getting the recessive back out for a trait when the parent is heterozygous is 1/4. The chance of getting the triple recessive to get the red color of 'Crimson Ice' would be $1/4 \times 1/4 \times 1/4$ or 1/64 or approximately 1.6%. If I grew out 100 seedlings, I *might* get one with the same red color as 'Crimson Ice'. I only grew out about 40 seedlings, and it looks like Lady Luck worked against me this time. Since I had thought the red was a single recessive, 25% of 40 seedlings was about 10 plants; plenty of chances to get a red offspring. However, if the true situation is the triple recessive, then the chance was more like 1.6%. Growing out 40 plants wasn't nearly enough to beat the odds.



So what to do now? I still like the idea of getting a red flower thumbprint trailer. It looks like my best path is to cross 'Yesterday's Eye Spy' back to 'Crimson Ice'. I may lose some of the trailing ability, but the odds of getting a recessive trait back out in the offspring increases from 1/4 to 1/2. This makes the odds of getting the triple recessive necessary for red flowers $1/2 \times 1/2 \times 1/2$ or 1/16 or approximately 6%. If I plant 60 offspring, about 3-4 should turn out with red flowers. It just goes to show that when planning genetic crosses, you must remember to take into account all of the traits, not just the most obvious one.

Q: *Sometimes I find leaves on my plants that look like two leaves fused together along an extra-wide petiole. I also recently found a funnel shaped leaf. What causes these unusual leaves and can I propagate a whole plant with leaves like these through leaf cuttings?*

A: There is an embryonic growing point at the very tip of the plant stem in African violets and most other plants called the apical meristem. Leaves are formed from clusters of cells that grow out of the apical meristem. Think of these clusters of cells as being similar to balls of cookie dough placed on a baking sheet. If you put the right amount of dough at regular spaces on the cookie sheet, you'll get a very regular pattern of cookies on the sheet when the baking is done. The regular placement of these clusters of cells out of the apical meristem gives the pleasing geometrical distribution of leaves seen in African violets.

Now imagine that a mistake occurs in the placing of the balls of cookie dough. Two balls are placed too close together. When they spread during baking, they grow together and overlap each other causing a single misshaped cookie. The same thing can happen when two clusters of cells from the apical meristem are positioned too close together. They can grow into each other and produce the strange double leaves with a single wide petiole.

The funnel shaped leaf you mentioned is probably caused by a similar problem. In this case, perhaps only part of the cluster of cells was placed down. When the leaf expanded, the structure was distorted because not all of the cells that should have been there were present. Going back to our cookie analogy, imagine that only half of the ball of cookie dough was placed on the sheet. The uneven spread during baking would give a misshapen cookie or leaf.

What causes the clusters of cells from the apical meristem to be incomplete or positioned too closely together is likely a

response to something in the growing environment. Perhaps a temperature change or damage to the apical meristem by a pest could throw things off. These events seem fairly random and may not always be traceable to a definite cause.

I doubt that leaf cuttings would be able to reproduce a plant with these strange leaves. The change that produced them in the first place is likely environmental rather than genetic. In order to get a whole plant of funnel shaped leaves (interesting idea by the way); the apical meristem of the new plant would have to consistently make the same mistake every time it produced a new leaf. Unless the problem was indeed genetic, not environmental, I doubt if the strange leaf shape could be passed on.

Q: The amount of crown variegation in a plant can



vary according to the growing conditions. If I make a cross on a plant when it is extremely variegated, will this increase the amount of variegation in the seedlings?

A: I don't think this would make a difference, but I've never made a cross to find out. Crown variegation as a genetic trait is more of a "potential" to be variegated rather than the actual amount of variegation. The actual amount of variegation as you point out is often dependent on the environment. The seedlings should only inherit the "potential", not the actual amount of variegation. It shouldn't make a difference how variegated the seed parent was.

This experiment would be an easy one to try. If anyone has tried crossing to a plant when it was highly variegated compared to when it was mostly green, I'd be interested in hearing about your results.

Registration Report

By Joe Bruns

1220 Stratford Lane • Hanover Park, IL 60133

Email: jbruns@qwip.net



name reservation costs \$1.00 (\$5.00 for non-members) for each plant, and is valid for two years, after which time it may be extended two years for an additional \$1.00 (\$5.00 for non-members). Registration of the plant is \$5.00 (\$25.00 for non-members) unless completed within the reservation period, in which case the balance is \$4.00 (\$20.00 for non-members).



Chimera variegated light and dark green, heart-shaped. **Standard**

'Shadow Magic' (10030) 03/31/2009 (R.J. Miesemer) Double dark purple pansy/dark cerise shading. Medium-dark green, longifolia, wavy, serrated/red back. **Standard**

'Simple Pleasures' (10031) 03/31/2009 (R.J. Miesemer) Single indigo pansy/darker veins. Medium-dark green, longifolia, pointed, quilted, wavy, serrated/red back. **Standard**

Marie Burns – Baltimore, MD

'Ruffled Romance' (10026) 02/10/2009 (M. Burns) Single-semidouble light pink ruffled star. **Variegated** dark green and cream, heart-shaped/red back. **Standard**

Linda Nesvacil – Wisconsin Dells, WI

'Rrav's Irish Flames' (10027) 03/09/2009 (L. Nesvacil) Single-semidouble white/variable fuchsia streaks and mottling. Medium green, plain, quilted, glossy, scalloped/red back. **Standard**

C. Craig Coleman – Greensboro, NC

'Coleman's Cleopatra' (10028) 03/16/2009 (C. Coleman) Single-semidouble purple star. **Crown variegated** medium green and rose-pink, serrated. **Standard**

R.J. Miesemer – Jersey City, NJ

'Rusty Tin Silk' (10029) 03/31/2009 (R.J. Miesemer) Semidouble-double white pansy/variable green edge.

REGISTRATION CHANGES

The following description has been changed at the request of the hybridizer:

Jolly Peach (10021) Change from **Miniature** to **Semiminiature**.

NAME RESERVATIONS

Dolores Harrington – Minneapolis, MN

* Brooke Lyn * Dolores' Blue Angel * Dolores' Cherish * Dolores' Dazzler * Dolores' Elf * Dolores' Jack Frost * Dolores' Moonbeam * Dolores' Pink Kisses * Dolores' Purple Clouds * Dolores' Purple Parasol * Dolores' Royal Purple * Dolores' Sassy Frass * Dolores' Tango * Dolores' Thunder Clap * Dolores' Tiny Rubies * Kezia June *

Valerie Despres – Aylesford, NS, Canada

* Valerie's Averie * Valerie's Chelsea *

Richard Gray – Port Saint Lucie, FL

* Karissa * Rachael Michelle * Rick's Karyn * Treasure Coast *

Ode to Grace

From 2nd Best Collection - Minis & Semis

Exhibited by: Beverley Williams

Hybridized by: Y. Lambert

Semiminiature



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Kentucky Gooseberries

Exhibited by: Penny Wichman

Hybridized by: David Rollins

Semiminiature



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Definitely Darryl

Exhibited by: Kathy Lahti

Hybridized by: H. Pittman

Semiminiature

AVSA Annual Society Awards

Marge Savage, Chair Society Awards Committee 2009

JOHN (JACK) WILSON

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CERTIFICATE

Jack Wilson once said "Membership is a problem. Membership solves all problems." In fact, he was Chair of Membership and Promotions during his "early" years. He has grown African violets and other Gesneriads for over 50 years; he has supported AVSA over 40 years.

He has supported clubs, judges councils, and is a charter member of Mid-Atlantic AVS. He is a judge and teaches judging schools. He served us as Third Vice-President and First Vice-President. And, he served as your 31st President.

Most recently, we know Jack as "Mr. Moderator." Year, after year, after year, Jack has served the Society as moderator for the popular convention opener, "Growers Forum," supplying an informative panel of growers. Following the Annual Membership Meeting, Jack is the man with the microphone who helps members voice their concerns during the "Open Forum."

Finally, Jack has served as head auctioneer for the yearly Convention Auction Luncheon, coaxing us to give tens of thousands of dollars for the benefit of AVSA. The African Violet Society of America appreciates and applauds the selfless devotion of John E. (Jack) Wilson and awards him the Distinguished Service Certificate.

JIM TOMS

MABEL AND GLENN HUDSON MEMORIAL AWARD

This very quiet person always sets up affiliate meetings, always arrives first, and leaves last. He served many years as president, secretary, and newsletter editor. He willingly accepted any responsibility, like assuming the presidency, when an emergency arose.

As a grower and member of AVSA for over twenty-five years, he shows prizewinning African violets and other Gesneriads. He shares this knowledge through numerous programs on every aspect of growing and showing, illustrated with his expert photography. For local, regional, and national shows, he prepares membership promotion, detailed AVSA promotions, and educational displays.

This generous man holds memberships of long standing in the Judges Council of Ontario, the New York State AVS, and the Toronto Gesneriad Society, in which he served as Secretary and Newsletter Editor. He writes for *African Violet Magazine* and *Chatter*, of which he is the editor.

During a time of trial, Jim served an additional year as president of the African Violet Society of Canada. For our sister organization, Jim served as Show Awards Chair, lead the revision of the show manual, and created the AVSC website and managed it.

Jim Toms is a member of Lakeshore AVS, Ontario, Canada. The member nominating Jim, said, "He is very often in control of an activity without being noticed." The African Violet Society of America notices and applauds Jim Toms for his consistent generosity and awards him the Mabel and Glenn Hudson Memorial Award for outstanding leadership activities within an affiliated chapter.

JOYCE STORK

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Joyce Stork taught AVSA members how to grow African violets by way of the 'For Beginners' column in the AVM. I actually met her at the St. Louis Convention, working the booth with her favorite hybridizer. She was also helping a club member present worthy entries in their very best light for an AVSA Collection. Then, as now, she worked to promote and enhance AVSA and our favorite plants. During conventions Joyce is seen in the halls, in the presentation rooms, keeping a finger on the pulse of the proceedings. Joyce cares deeply for this organization, serving as Third Vice-President, Second Vice-President, First Vice-President, and our 34th AVSA President.

Joyce is also a member of a team, working closely with her husband Kent. Together, they accepted the Bronze Medal in 1989.

The African Violet Society of America expresses gratitude and praise to Joyce Stork for her years leading up to and including her time as President, and awards her the Honorary Life Membership.

DR. JEFF SMITH

MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD

Dr. Jeff Smith writes the popular column, "In Search of New Violets," in the *African Violet Magazine*. We are most grateful for the longevity of this column. In recent years, he helped bring us the important news that the many species we have been growing are, probably, only six with an additional ten sub-species. We were as fascinated with his article, "How Many Species Are There?" as we were with his Tulsa Convention presentation, "Understanding the New Species Classifications," presented with others.

A member of his own affiliate, Indy African Violet Society, Muncie, Indiana, said, "Jeff is the consummate teacher. [He] clearly answers our basic and complex questions. He shares freely with us all."

The African Violet Society of America continues to be thankful for his scientific research, expertise, and generosity of Dr. Jeff Smith, and awards him the Meritorious Service Award.

JOHN CARTER

HONORARY ONE-YEAR MEMBERSHIP

After many years in Texas, where he was active in our society, John Carter moved north of us to Oklahoma, working for the benefit of AVSA all the while. John agreed to Chair the AVSA 2008 Tulsa Convention. Due to John's timely planning, team coordinating, publicity, and months of plain hard work, we certainly got our "Violet Kicks on Route 66."

This man is a member of a team, working closely with his wife, Judith. John and Judith are members of the African Violet Society of Greater Tulsa, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

The African Violet Society of America recognizes and thanks John Carter, awarding him the Honorary One-Year Membership.

CINDI NOFZIGER

HONORARY ONE-YEAR MEMBERSHIP

Cindi Nofziger served the Society as Director until the close of the 2009 Convention. Appointed Chair of the *African Violet Magazine* Advertising Committee in June 2006, she proceeded to move – to Oregon. After settling in her new home, Cindi has displayed "outstanding ability, knowledge, and expertise." As a result, the advertising income for the magazine has increased, which decreases the cost of printing. Cindi is the founder of the Willamette African Violet Society in Albany, Oregon, and currently serves as its President.

The African Violet Society of America recognizes and appreciates the leadership and dedication of Cindi Nofziger and awards her the Honorary One-Year Membership.

PATRICIA SUTTON

HONORARY ONE-YEAR MEMBERSHIP

Pat Sutton approached me last year, as I was tweaking my design, early on judging day. One of the Generous Violet People, she engaged me in conversation about our design exhibits. I finally looked at her name tag, glanced at my watch, and knew instantly that time for tweaking was over, and that I was chatting with the former AVSA Schedule Approver, now Show Chair of the 2008 Tulsa Convention! Pat put her knowledge and experience to work and provided

us with a colorful and well-organized Show Room. Pat is a member of the African Violet Society of Greater Tulsa, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

The African Violet Society of America recognizes and appreciates the dedication and work of Patricia Sutton and awards her the Honorary One-Year Membership.

RICHARD NICHOLAS

HONORARY ONE-YEAR MEMBERSHIP

I met University Vice-President, Richard Nicholas, at my first AVSA Convention in St. Louis, where he was showing all who would listen how to earn a rosette.

Most recently, he established the By-Laws and Standing Rules for the Frank and Anne Tinari Endowment Fund, a permanently invested fund which generates income annually for the financial security of AVSA. Richard also established and currently chairs the AVSA Legacy Society, which consists of members who have made bequests of at least one thousand dollars from their estates. Richard is a member of First African Violet Society of Denton, Texas.

The African Violet Society of America recognizes and appreciates the work, knowledge, and expertise of Richard Nicholas and awards him the Honorary One-Year Membership.

SUSAN HAPNER

HONORARY ONE-YEAR MEMBERSHIP

Susan Hapner came to convention one year with a 'Persian Prince.' In fact, her Prince walked away with Best in Show. Always ready with a laughing smile, she realizes the bills must be paid – at the AVSA Office in Beaumont, Texas. Chair of the Building Maintenance Fund, she faithfully writes a column for each AVM issue, actively raises funds, and promptly responds to donors. In the aftermath of Hurricane Rita, Susan worked long hours receiving donations for the repair and rebuilding of our office. Susan is a member of Amethyst African Violet Club, St. Louis, Missouri.

The African Violet Society of America recognizes and appreciates the work and dedication of Susan Hapner and Awards her the Honorary One-Year Membership.

AVSA DONATION FUND LEVELS



Thumbprint (Under \$25)



Geneva (\$100-\$499)



Two-tone (\$25-\$49)



Fantasy (\$500-\$999)



Multicolor (\$50-\$99)



Chimera (Over \$1000)



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Foster Trail

From Best AVSA Collection - Minis & Semis

Exhibited by: Bill Price

Hybridized by: H. Pittman

Semiminiature trailer

AVSA 63rd National Convention and Show

April 12 - 18, 2009 • Reno, NV

“African Violets Around the Biggest Little City”

Amateur Horticulture

- Best African Violet in Show
Broadway Star Trail
Won by: Bill Price from Vancouver, BC
- 2nd Best African Violet in Show
Ma's Cosmic Wonder
Won by: Catherine Thompson from Cedar Falls, IA
- 3rd Best African Violet in Show
Lyon's June Bug
Won by: Lorna Russell from Nepean, ON
- Best AVSA Collection - Standards
Senk's Snowy Egret, Senk's Try the Decaf, Tinari's Royal Blue Trailer
Won by: Bill Price from Vancouver, BC
- Best AVSA Collections - Species
Saintpaulia 5f.clone orbicularis, Saintpaulia 5f.clone orbicularis var purpurea, Saintpaulia 5b clone magungensis
Won by: Bill Price from Vancouver, BC
- Best AVSA Collection - Minis & Semis
Foxwood Trail, Fiery Trail, Foster Trail
Won by: Bill Price from Vancouver, BC
- 2nd Best AVSA Collection - Mini's & Semis
Plumberry Glow, Von's Small Gift, Ode to Grace
Won by: Beverley Williams from Brooklin, ON
- Best Holtkamp Collection
Optimara Rose Quartz, Optimara Little Crystal, Optimara Little Opal
Won by: Kathy Lahti from Annandale, MN
- 2nd Best Holtkamp Collection – *Optimara New Mexico, Rhapsodie Rebecca, Rhapsodie Cora*
Won by: Catherine Thompson from Cedar Falls, IA
- 3rd Best Holtkamp Collection
Optimara Little Crystal, Optimara Little Amethyst, Optimara Little Moonstone
Won by: Beverley Williams from Brooklin, ON
- Best Robinson Collection
Rob's Fuddy Duddy, Rob's Lucky Stroke, Rob's Strobe Light
Won by: Kathy Lahti from Annandale, MN
- 2nd Best Robinson Collection
Rob's Inner Orbit, Rob's Match Point, Rob's Zoot Suit
Won by: Andrea Worrell from Downers Grove, IL
- Best AVSA Registered Russian Hybrid Collection
EK-Shedevr Khudozhnika, Ian-Selena, Lubimaia Dochka
Won by: Catherine Thompson from Cedar Falls, IA
- Best Standard African Violet
Ma's Cosmic Wonder
Won by: Catherine Thompson from Cedar Falls, IA
- Best Miniature African Violet
Orchard's Bumble Magnet
Won by: Lorna Russell from Nepean, ON

- Best Semiminiature African Violet
Lyon's June Bug
Won by: Lorna Russell from Nepean, ON
- Best Trailer
Broadway Star Trail
Won by: Bill Price from Vancouver, BC
- Best Standard Trailer
Tinari's Royal Blue Trailer
Won by: Bill Price from Vancouver, BC
- Best Species African Violet
Saintpaulia 5f.clone orbicularis
Won by: Bill Price from Vancouver, BC
- Best Vintage Violet
Sunset Trail
Won by: Bill Price from Vancouver, BC
- Best Vintage Violet – Mini
Pixie Blue
Won by: Beverley Powers from Richardson, TX
- Second Best Vintage
Blue Girl
Won by: Judy Carter from Broken Arrow, OK
- Best Standard Chimera
Sweet Tea
Won by: Barbara Burde from Simi Valley, CA
- Best New Cultivar – Amateur
Yesterday's Evidence
Won by: Bill Price from Vancouver, BC
- Best Unusual Container
Optimara Little Ottawa
Won by: Penny Wichman from Petersburg, KY
- Best Other Gesneriad
Sinn. cardinalis 'Innocent'
Won by: Bill Price from Vancouver, BC
- Horticulture Sweepstakes
53 blue ribbons
Won by: Catherine Thompson from Cedar Falls, IA
- Runner-Up to Hort. Sweepstakes
28 blue ribbons
Won by: Bill Price from Vancouver, BC

Design Division

- Best Design in Show
“Place Your Bets”
Won by: Heather Morgan from San Mateo, CA
- 2nd Best Design in Show
“Lake Tahoe”
Won by: Dolores Gibbs from San Marcos, TX
- 3rd Best Design in Show
“Lights, Glitz and Glamor”
Won by: B. J. Ohme, Perfect Petals from Lincoln, NE
- Design Sweepstakes
7 blue ribbons
Won by: B. J. Ohme from Lincoln, NE
- Runner-Up to Design Sweepstakes
7 blue ribbons
Won by: Heather Morgan from San Mateo, CA

Commercial Division

- African Violet in Show – Comm.
Eternal Orbit - New Cultivar (Sport)
Won by: Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses from Dolgeville, NY
- 2nd Best African Violet in Show – Comm.
Optimara Colorado II
Won by: Kent's Flowers Stork, Kent from Fremont, NE
- 3rd Best African Violet Society in Show – Comm.
Saintpaulia ionantha subsp. Velutina
Won by: B. J. Ohme, Perfect Petals from Lincoln, NE
- Best AVSA Std Collection – Comm.
Serenade, Optimara Chagall, Optimara Kentucky
Won by: Kent's Flowers Stork, Kent from Fremont, NE
- Best AVSA Mini/Semimini Collection – Comm.
Rob's Kitten Caboodle, Rob's Calypso Beat, Rob's Suicidal Squirrel
Won by: The Violet Barn from Naples, NY
- Best Holtkamp Collection – Comm.
Optimara Chagall, Optimara Colorado II, Optimara EverGrace
Won by: Kent's Flowers Stork, Kent from Fremont, NE
- Best New Cultivar – Comm.
Eternal Orbit - New Cultivar (Sport)
Won by: Lyndon Lyon Greenhouse from Dolgeville, NY
- 2nd Best New Cultivar – Comm.
Cosmic Blast
Won by: Lyndon Lyon Greenhouse from Dolgeville, NY
- 3rd Best New Cultivar – Comm.
Breaking News - New Cultivar
Won by: Kent's Flowers Stork, Kent from Fremont, NE
- Best Other Gesneriad – Comm.
Sinn. “Ozark Razzmatazz”
Won by: David Harris Bill from Springfield, MO
- Commercial Horticulture Sweepstakes
10 blue ribbons
Won by: B. J. Ohme from Lincoln, NE
- Runner-Up to Comm. Hort. Sweepstakes
9 blue ribbons
Won by: Kent's Flowers Stork, Kent from Fremont, NE
- Publications**
- Best Yearbook
San Mateo County AVS
Won by: Heather Morgan from San Mateo, CA
- Best Newsletter
Lonestar AVC Newsletter
Won by: Marjorie Bullard from Corpus Christi, TX
- Best Magazine
Empire Violet Magazine - NY State AVS
Won by: Kathy Garbarino from Vernon, NY

Congratulations on a Very Successful Auction!

By Edna Rourke • *Auction Chair*

I can't begin to thank the many very generous donors and bidders who continue to make our auction such a great success. Your generosity is sincerely appreciated. Without your enthusiasm and generosity, this auction wouldn't have been possible!

My thanks to our donors: Lillian Tinari Ager, Shirley Berger, John and Judy Carter, Bob Clark, Barbara Elkin, Sue Hapner, Patt Harris, Lori Hilfer, Sue Hoffman, Paul Kroll, Gabriella Liberty, Lynn Lombard, Ruth Loomis, Bill and Kathryn Paauwe, Bill Price, Reno/Sparks AVS, Marge Savage, and Catherine Thompson.

Special "thank you" to Vladimir Kalgin who, year after year, has been so very supportive and generous; to Commercial members Dave Harris and Pat Hancock who continue to support this event, and to B. J. Ohme, and the

Petrys, of the Violet Gallery, for their generous donations. My thanks as well to Jan Selleck for taking charge of the shipped items.

Once again, our auctioneer, Bill Price, made the Reno auction so fun, lively, entertaining, and successful. To our auction staff: Charlene Boyce, Bob Clark, Laurel and Winston Goretsky, Dale Martens, Bill Price, Harry Weber, and Roger Wheeler, my gratitude for your continued help and support. Last and certainly not least, my thanks to Ruth Rumsey, our AVSA Editor, and to Jenny Daugereau, our AVSA office manager, who so kindly help record, collect, and kept track of the bidding process; and very special thanks to Charlene Boyce and my husband Al Rourke, for their continued, tireless, "behind the scenes" help all year long.

See you in Raleigh!



Pre-Show Schedule

From Pauline Bartholomew's "Growing to Show" and the African Violet Society of America, Inc.

About three months before a show, the critical timing for final plant growth and inducing floriferousness begins. These steps *cannot* be taken at the grower's convenience. If plants are to be at their peak condition at show time, the procedures must be implemented at the proper times. The weekly sequence should be recorded on a calendar so that the grower will be reminded to check the pre-show schedule and follow the recommendations given in this chapter.

The grower walks a cultural tightrope in the months before a show; the methods used to increase growth and blossoming must be carefully balanced against the risk of spoiling symmetry by creating off-sized rows of leaves, or in burning or spotting sensitive foliage.

About three and a half months before the show, foliage should be washed in preparation for the final potting procedures that will take place. The foliage is then fresh and dust-free, and prepared to put out the energy required for the new growth that is activated by the potting procedures. Double check for the presence of pests, particularly the more common ones such as thrips and cyclamen mites. If they are discovered at this time, they can be eliminated without damaging show plants and future blossoms. Try to avoid bringing any new plants into your collection during the next three months.

SHOW CALENDAR Count back from the show date and mark the dates for 12 weeks prior, 10 weeks prior, etc. on the calendar.

12 WEEKS: Remove leaves, re-pot, pot down if there are necks, or pot up. If you choose to do it, foliar feed once in

addition to regular fertilizing program.

10 WEEKS: Completely disbud all plants except perhaps miniatures and trailers. Put one new tube in each fixture. Start "bloom booster" (5-57-17, 20-60-20) fertilizer formula.

9 WEEKS: Increase light time by one hour. *Disbud heavily-variegated varieties and double varieties for the last time.* Continue to disbud all other varieties. Continue "bloom booster" fertilizer.

8 WEEKS: Increase light time by one hour. Disbud doubles and lightly variegated varieties for the last time. Continue to disbud semi-double stars and singles. Check for suckers. Continue "bloom booster" fertilizer. Foliar feed once more (optional).

7 WEEKS: Increase light time by one hour (to 15 hours). *Disbud semi-double stars for the last time.* Change to 12-36-14 or 15-30-15 etc. fertilizer formula for the remaining weeks.

6 WEEKS: *Disbud singles for the last time.* Check for suckers. Wash foliage.

1 WEEK: Remove spent blossoms, peduncles, and pedicel stubs. Check for suckers. Brush away soil particles, etc. Pot down necks, or pot up (only if necessary).

1 DAY: Again, remove spent blossoms, etc. Remove leaf support rings. Place plants in transporting boxes so that the foliage is supported.

Ed. Note: To purchase your own copy of this book, contact the AVSA office (409) 839-4725, or visit the AVSA web site <www.avsa.org>.

AVSA CLUBS! OUR TIMES ARE A CHANGIN'!

By Kathy Bell

AVSA Membership and Promotion Chair

Email: bellkk@peoplepc.com

Phone: 520-574-1367

I was a member of this committee several years ago, so I have an idea of what I have got myself into!

I am looking for some great ideas to make our clubs, and AVSA **GROW!** Also a few more committee members would be nice. So far, we have Susan Anderson, Sylva Leeds, Beverly Powers, and Leonard Re.

If you told me your membership ideas in Reno, please email or call me, and less discuss them.

Something I think we need to do to increase membership is make our club meetings more convenient to the public. What does that mean? A little more work! I truly believe we need to have more meetings a month, a day meeting for the people who don't drive at night, and a night meeting for the people who work. Weekends are not always the best time for a meeting.

My club has had two meetings a month for over twenty years, and now we have four. Our city, Tucson, is very spread out, so we have a morning and a night meeting on the East side of town, and an afternoon and evening meeting on the Northwest side.

All four meetings are the same, there are just different people attending, and giving the program. It is very interesting how various people do the same program differently; a real learning experience.

If our members cannot make one meeting, they may be able to attend the another, and not miss out. We could have two or four different clubs, but so far we like it this way and it works. Each group has a Secretary and Vice President, but there is one Treasurer and President - a total of ten officers. Vice Presidents can run the extra meeting(s). en officers is a lot, but it is a good thing when you are trying to make decisions for your club. We have a potluck dinner in December and May, a sale in September, and in March a show and sale. During the summer, we have Summer Programs once a month, bringing all the groups together, several times during the year.

For many years we have been one of the largest clubs in

AVSA, and I believe it is because we make meetings convenient for people to attend. Remember, our growing conditions are different than most clubs, as we are in the desert. It's a dry heat!

With multiple meetings each month, how do we bring in the new members?

- Advertise meetings; when, where, and program information in your local paper (usually free).
- If possible, have a website that links to and from the AVSA website.
- Have sign up sheets for new members at your sales and put signs up about your meetings on the sales table. Contact them at least two or three times (months).
- Have a business card that has information about your club meetings and who to contact. Hand out to people you see at any plant event or garden center. (This idea is from Carolee Carter.)
- When you have that **yard sale for AVSA this year** have old magazines with the membership application to give away, or just the application if you don't have old magazines.
- Have a club member be the AVSA representative and give a five-minute or less report about the magazine/AVSA at every meeting.
- Have free old or new magazines at your sales and shows with the membership application in it.
- How do you get old magazines? Ask your club members and contact the AVSA office.
- Contact your local schools and see if a teacher would be interested in their class growing violets. I'll give more information on this in another article.
- Our new President's club is going to be working with home-schooled children and parents. Another great idea.

If you would like to have more information on having more than one meeting a month, or any other membership growth ideas, please feel free to contact me.

Coming Events



August 27 & 28 MINNESOTA

"The Great Violet Get-together"
AVSM 38th Annual Minnesota
State Fair Judged Show
1265 N Snelling Avenue

St. Paul, Minnesota
Hours: 9:00 am to 9:00 pm
Info: Kathy Lahti 320-274-1157
Email: violetsrusmn@gmail.com

Humidity *The Secret Weapon*



ometimes it feels like there are way too many elements you have to control to grow happy, blooming African violets.

While it's true that there are many factors contributing to the health and beauty of the African violet, there is one important fundamental we have a tendency to overlook – humidity. No matter where you live, humidity is one of those thorny conditions. You either can't get enough or you have much too much.

What's up with humidity?

Believe it or not, humidity in the air is just as important to African violets as moisture in the soil. While you won't see the impact of a lack of humidity as quickly as a plant crying for a drink of water, the right level of humidity promotes bloom and long term plant development. That's because African violets draw moisture from both the air and the soil.

Think about it. In their native Africa, environmental conditions offer African violets plenty of moisture to thrive in the wild. It's logical that the plants need moisture from the air to keep their thick foliage in tip-top condition. Fortunately, here in the home environment, our favorite plant is able to survive in a pretty wide range of humidity levels – from 40 to 70 percent. However, they seem to prefer levels closer to 60%. Funny, so do we humans.

Here's the rub. Every day plants lose water through their leaves – the process is called transpiration. This process speeds up when humidity levels are too low. Problems occur when the plant loses more moisture than the root system can deliver to the plant tissue. That's why controlling humidity can become the missing link to growing fabulous looking, heavy blooming plants.

Raising or lowering the bar on humidity levels

Almost every grower experiences shifts in humidity levels. Most people in my neck of the woods have difficulty keeping humidity at a consistent level during the winter months. We experience a significant drop in moisture levels inside the home once we fire up our heating systems. On the flip side, many people located in warmer climates have the opposite situation during the summer months. They must deal with too much moisture in the air making both plants and people uncomfortable.



No matter what your condition, here are a few ideas to satisfy the need for the right level of humidity.

Got too little?

Group plants – cluster plants in a growing area to create a bit of a microclimate. That doesn't mean crowd your plants. Good air circulation is critical to maintain at all times. While grouping will only create a slight increase in moisture level, nearby

plants can take advantage of the process of moisture being released into the air by their neighbors.

Pebble trays – a simple solution for a finite collection. Place plants on a tray containing stones or pebbles at the base. Fill the tray half way with water. Care must be taken to make sure plants never sit in water – that can create a set of different problems. The plants should sit well above the water line. The idea is to have the water evaporate into the air around the plants to increase humidity. Rinse the trays and pebbles periodically to avoid any salt build-up, or place the pots on saucers to avoid direct contact.

Capillary matting – line a tray with capillary matting or a thick, absorbent and washable material. Keep the mats moist without becoming soggy. Wash the mats periodically to avoid any salt, soil, or fertilizer build-up. You can also place the pots on saucers to avoid direct contact with the matting.

Misting – use a fine spray to add humidity to the growing area. This is the least effective, but most often practiced approach. Be careful to use warm water when misting. It is important that water does not build up on the foliage or in the crown of the plant. Remove any excess water that collects on the foliage and be especially watchful of moisture in the crown. Please make a distinction between spraying and misting – there is an important difference between the two.

Humidifier – a very effective approach that tackles a designated area. During the colder months, use a warm water system. If needed during warmer months, use a cool water system.

Got too much?

Dehumidifier – this system is effective when water needs to be drawn out of the air in an effort to reduce humidity levels. In my basement growing area, a de-humidifier offers relief when summer temperatures heat up and humidity levels increase.

The humidity factor: signs to notice

As you regularly monitor your plants' performance, recognize some of the effects humidity levels can have on your plants.

Brown Tips on Foliage – I was wondering why some of my plants had developed brown tips on the younger leaves during the cooler months. After eliminating a number of potential conditions that could have caused the problem, I realized that a lack of humidity was the culprit. New growth consistently produced damaged foliage until moisture levels changed.

Bud Dropping – this condition is probably the most frustrating symptom of the lack of humidity. Fully formed or emerging buds turn brown and drop before opening when humidity levels are low. If you're like me, I look forward to watching the plants put on their show.

Dull foliage – when your evaluation has eliminated all the other factors of lackluster foliage color, consider lack of humidity as a contributor.

Powdery mildew – this white powdery disease enjoys changes in temperature and humid conditions. In my growing area, I use plastic plant stand covers to control winter temperatures. At times, the combination of added moisture, warmth and limited air circulation gives powdery mildew the environment to form. Managing the temperature change from lights-on to lights-off is the key to maintaining control.

Tricks of the trade

I was comparing notes with a fellow New England African violet grower as we were preparing to get plants ready for

show. Some of her plants were covered with buds, but the blossoms weren't showing signs of opening. She searched for solutions and found one that I found germane. The advisor recommended increasing the level of humidity to move the buds along.

You probably want to know if this worked. Well, yes and no. By slightly warming up the growing environment and increasing the humidity level, she was able to get the blossoms to move a little faster. There just wasn't enough time for these stubborn plants to achieve full bloom. Now, here's the fine print warning. Significantly changing conditions, even temporarily, can backfire. Whenever you try to "move things along," be aware that your plant may react unexpectedly and not always the way you've envisioned.

However, the advice to increase humidity is well grounded. Giving plants the proper humidity level throughout the growing cycle ensures production of plenty of lovely blossoms.

Final note

Establishing consistent growing conditions offers the most benefit to your African violets. Humidity is typically a condition we growers find troublesome to control. Yet, our plants are harbingers of indoor conditions. When they are happy, we are happy (or should that be the other way around?). Extreme levels of humidity – too much or too little – cause each of us to be less comfortable. Think of controlling indoor moisture levels as a way to improve the comfort zone for all. Your reward will be very happy plants, and people too.

Grow smart. Grow well.

SEPARATING PLANTLETS

By Sheila Walton

Our May meetings held workshops on separating plantlets. Everyone is encouraged to participate in these sessions as a way of learning a way and for the more established growers to help our newer members. Leaves of standard African violets were put down in January and had grown to approximately one inch (3cm), ready for transplanting. It is a good idea to let the potting mix dry out slightly before removing from the pot. This enables easier separating of the plantlets with less damage to the roots.

All the plantlets were assessed as to the suitability for potting up. Some very small ones are not worth keeping. Plantlets should have good center leaves, as this is the growing point for the plant. Some of the outer leaves needed removing – baby, or immature leaves which were the first to appear, have now been taken over by newer, stronger leaves. Roots are also important for the plantlet to establish itself in its individual pot.

Some leaves had produced only one or two "babies," while others had four or five. It is often better if there are less plantlets, as they will most likely be stronger. Small pots were labeled with

the plant name and the date, a wick was inserted, and then the plant potted into the center of the pot. When planting, it is important to keep the center of the plant clear of potting mix. Some of our newer members enthusiastically put in potting mix over the little leaves! The leaves needed to be carefully brushed. Also, some were planted a little low in the pot, and had to be adjusted so that the bottom of the leaves were level with the top of the pot. Some plants were a little 'wobbly' and needed a short time support of a toothpick or hairpin until they became established. (This is one time when recycling is not the best - do not re-use the old potting mix!) Potting mix was then moistened with water and members took their plants home for care. We look forward to seeing the new plants when they have grown. All these procedures make for interesting conversation among growers as they learn or exchange ideas and experiences.

From the *Newsletter* of the
Early Morn AV Group, Inc., Australia

“And the winners are ...”

By Mary J. Corondan

434 Plumwood Way • Fairview, TX 75069

Email: mcorondan@yahoo.com



THE FIRST AVS OF DENTON, TX –

Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Ma's Soiree, Lime Jewel, Designer Dress; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Serena's Charm, Jolly Devil, Rob's Blue Socks; Best Miniature: Orchard's Bumble Magnet; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Ken Muzalewski**. 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Boo Man, Rob's Combustible Pigeon, Rob's Scrumptious; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Delicious, **Anne Nicholas**. Best in Show/Best Standard: Ness' Candy Pink; Best Species: *Saintpaulia rupicola*; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Ice Wine', **Richard Nicholas**. Best Trailer: Rob's Boolaroo; Best Design: Design Sweepstakes, **Eunice Curry**.



AVS OF GREATER TULSA, OK – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Ness' Candy Pink, The Alps, Ma's Watermelon; Best Standard: Ness' Candy Pink, **Carol Rice**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Cutie Pie, Optimara Little Turquoise, Texas Space Dust; Best Design: Design Sweepstakes. **Pat Sutton**. Best in Show/Best Semiminiature/Best Trailer: Skyward Trail, **Jacque Northrup**. Best Miniature: Precious Purple, **Sherry Whitmer**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia ionanatha* subs. *grotei*; Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Star of Bethlehem', **Judith Carter**. Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Anna Katherine Harris**. **AVS OF MINNESOTA, MN – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Rhapsodie Clementine, Optimara Manitoba, Optimara North Carolina; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Ness' Crinkle Blue, Rob's Boogie Woogie, Rob's Dodo Bird; Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Rob's Dodo Bird; Best Miniature: Jolly Orchid, **Terry Klemesrud**. 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Ode to Beauty, Rhapsodie Clementine, Melodie Katy; 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Little Pro, Ness' Cranberry Swirl, Aunt Irene; Best Standard: Melodie Katy; Best Gesneriad: *Kohleria* 'Dragon's Blood', **Ken Rein**. Best Trailer: Milky Way Trail; Best Species: *Saintpaulia ionanatha*, **Kathy Lahti**. Best Design, **Jinean Schofield**. Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Jude Neumann**.

CENTRAL FLORIDA AVS, FL – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Lucien Croteau, Buckeye Incognito, Ma's Debutante; Best in Show/Best Standard: Lucien Croteau; Best Semiminiature: Snuggle's Busy Bee; Horticulture Sweepstakes; Design Sweepstakes, **Elvie Blakely**. 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Raspberry Crisp, Pink Summit, Winter Smiles; Best Miniature/Best Species: *Saintpaulia velutina* lite; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Crimson Blaze', **Elizabeth Zaorski**. Best Trailer: Rob's Boolaroo, **Lauretta McElwain**. Best Design, **Cheryl Luna**.

DALLAS METRO AVS CLUBS, TX – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Rebel's Rose Bud, Buckeye Country

Gal, Suncoast Lavender Silk; Best in Show/Best Standard: Rebel's Rose Bud, **William Sugg**. 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Rebel's Rose Bud, Designer Dress, Lime Jewel, **Ken Muzalewski**. Best AVSA Species Collection: *Saintpaulia ionanatha* subsp. *velutina*, *Saintpaulia confusa*, *Saintpaulia orbicularis* var. *purpurea*, **Meredith Hall**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Honey Blue Ace, Jolly Orchid, Texas Space Dust; Best Miniature: Jolly Orchid, **Ray Pittman**. 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly

Dear, Jolly Frills, Jolly Fire; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Combustible Pigeon; Horticulture Sweepstakes; Best Design, **Hortense Pittman**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia ionanatha* subsp. *velutina*, **Jerry Quicksall**. Best Gesneriad: *Chirita USBRG 98-083*, **Ron Davidson**. Design Sweepstakes, **Sylvia Leeds**.

DESERT SUN AV AND GESNERIAD SOCIETY, AZ – Winners: Best Species Collection: *Saintpaulia ionanatha*, *Saintpaulia rupicola*, *Saintpaulia tongwensis*; Best Semiminiature: Aunt Georgia, **Marty Anderson**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Beca's Pink Crochet, Optimara Little Ottawa, Ness' Satin Rose; Best Miniature: Optimara Rose Quartz; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Thelma Heinrich**. Best in Show/Best Standard: Rhapsodie Clementine, **Sarah McGaha**. Best Trailer: Trail Along, **Gloria Arquette**. Best Gesneriad: *Smithiantha gebrina*, **Darlane Joshlin**. Best Design, **Annette Wyckoff**. Design Sweepstakes, **Susan Anderson**.

FIRST AUSTIN AVS, TX – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Blue Dragon, Granger Gardens' Ebb Tide, Ma's Silk Flower; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Outer Orbit, Rob's Inner Orbit, Ness' Crinkle Blue; Best Standard: Blue Dragon; Best Semiminiature: Handmade; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Susan Kautz**. 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: The Alps, Night Fever, Woodland Sprite, **Cynthia Pecore**. Best in Show/Best Miniature: Orchard's Bumble Magnet; Best Gesneriad: *Petrocosmea forrestii*, **Penny Smith-Kerker**. Best Trailer: Yesterday's Child, **Dolores Gibbs**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia grotei* Silver Clone, **Debra Mischel**. Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Susan Storey**.

MEMPHIS AVS, TN – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection; Optimara EverGrace, Blue Dragon, Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Peedletuck, Rob's Fuddy Duddy, Rob's Jee Jim; Best in Show/Best Standard: Wrangler's Dixie Celebration; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Fuzzy Navel; Best Miniature: Cloud Puff; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Brenda Brasfield**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia ionanatha*; Best Design, **Geneva Stagg**. Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Checkerboard', **Ann Shirley**. Design Sweepstakes (tie), **Iona Pair and Geneva Stagg**.

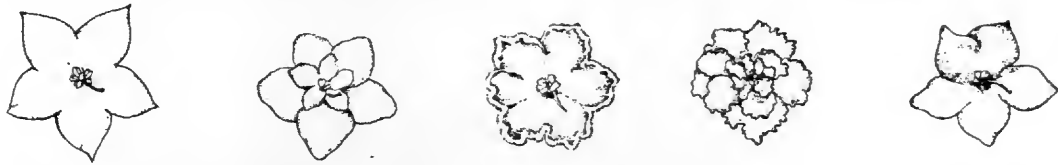
OMAHA AV AND GESNERIAD SOCIETY, NE – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Kathe Denise, Buckeye Love's Caress, Serenade; Best in Show/Best Standard: Buckeye Love's Caress; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Combustible Pigeon; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Kent Stork**. 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Smooch Me, Cinnamon Gumdrops, Rebel's Splatter Kake, **Joe Ondracek**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's June Bug, Rob's Jitterbug, Persian Prince; Best Miniature: Rob's June Bug; Best Species: *Saintpaulia ionantha*; *Streptocarpus* 'Iced Pink Flamingo', **B. J. Ohme**. Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Joyce Stork**.

SEATTLE AVS, WA – Winners: Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Definitely Darryl; Best Gesneriad: *Epsicia* 'Pink Brocade'; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Bob Clark**. Best Miniature: Rob's Cherry Soda, **Marigene Cole**. Best Standard: Enterprise, **Jean Chin**. Best Trailer: Rob's Boolaroo, **Cathleen Graves**. Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Pat Shandrow**.

SOUTH COAST AVS, CA – Winners: Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Pink Dove, Petite Jewel, Shiril's Hawaiian

Lei; Best Gesneriad: *Kohleria* 'Mango Martini', **Leonard Re**. 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Orchard's Bumble Magnet, Everdina, Optimara Little Ruby; Best Semiminiature: Thunder Surprise; Best Trailer: Milky Way Trail, **Hans Inpijn**. Best in Show/Best Miniature: Rob's Twinkle Pink; Best Standard: Suncoast Paisley Print; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Jacquie Eisenhut**. Best Design, Design Sweepstakes, **Elaine Re**.

TUCSON AVS, AZ – Winners: Best Species Collection: *Saintpaulia confusa* Mather, *Saintpaulia magungensis* var. *minima*, *Saintpaulia grotei* Silver Clone; Best Miniature: Orchard's Bumble Magnet; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Allen Reith**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Bogeyman, Optimara Little Blackfoot, Optimara Little Maya, **Rose Garcia**. Best in Show/Best Trailer: Rob's Miriwinni, **Terry Jennings**. Best Standard: Buffalo Hunt, **Jan Shrader**. Best Semiminiature: Pink Skies, **Janet McMullen**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia rupicola*; Best Design, **Anne-Lee Tomczyk**. Best Gesneriad: *Epsicia* 'Tiger Stripe', **Kathy Bell**. Design Sweepstakes, **Cindy Baker**.



Thoughts on Show Entries

By Pamela Veley

The first weekend in April was show weekend for the Windsor African Violet Society, in Windsor, Connecticut. As usual, there were the super-growers who needed two or three car trips to bring all of their plants. And there were many others whose entries numbered in the tens or twenties. Still others (including me), showed up with four, or three, or two. . . or even just one plant. And so, an amazing display was put on - violets of every possible size, from those I couldn't put my arms around, to those that would fit in the circle of thumb and forefinger; streps of every color; petrocosmeas, sinningias, and many other Gesneriads, gorgeous designs, and delightful arrangements.

Of course, many could not, or chose not, to bring plants. Many different reasons were given for not entering plants in the show, but they seemed to boil down to this: "My plants are only beautiful to me."

I think all of us feel this way sometimes. Some of us only grow on our window sill, and we feel a little intimidated by the incredible size and beauty of plants grown under lights. Some of us are novice growers, still learning what it takes to bring a plant to show. Some of us are experienced growers who know so well what a show plant can look like, that we become our own worst enemies and hesitate to show our

plants because we judge ourselves so harshly.

But, let's think about our violet collections for a second, and think about why we grow them and other gesneriads. I know for me, the answer is simple: Looking at them makes me happy. I'm find delight in a window full of *Streptocarpus* plants, all flowering in the spring sunshine. Not being much of an outdoor gardener, I'm thrilled to grow flowers in my home year round. A guest saw my violets merrily blooming in December last year and said, "But it's winter!" Exactly! Winter, summer, spring, and fall our African violets and their many relatives give us joy.

So let's take another second and think about choosing plants to bring to show. This year, the President's Challenge plant that I brought to our show was the smallest one on the table and had the fewest flowers. But, I suspect that that little window-grown baby had made me just as happy as the others on display had made their growers. As we gain experience, we can strive for that perfect plant - or those three carloads of perfect plants. Or not. But, I hope all of us can look at our collections come show time and bring to show a plant or two, or more that *make us happy*.

And what's the point of the show, if not to share the joy our unique hobby can bring?

Kill the thrips – The 2009 method

By Neil Lipson

Email: lipson@att.net

I wrote my last article on thrips in 1993 (available on the AVSA website) and was really amazed at how effective the results were. Well, I got thrips six months ago, and those methods didn't work anymore. Here's how I solved the problem.

I first tried all of the sprays, including Raid, Conserve SC, and Avid. It didn't work. It did slow them down quite a bit, but then they returned. I disbudded for about a month, but that also failed.

Now keep in mind that Conserve SC has to be used in a certain way, or the thrips will acclimate to it. I wasn't as strict on this, which may have caused its failure, as many people have very good luck with Conserve SC.

I watered the soil with a diluted Malathion solution. My reasoning was: as long as it was not sprayed, I wouldn't have much exposure to it. Well, it still did have an odor, but I used about ten drops total. I was sure it would kill the larvae in the soil, but it didn't. The new strain of thrips is a real problem.

I then tried Orthene spray, approved for violets, and that didn't work either. This was a last resort as orthene really isn't supposed to be used indoors. It was a spray, the old Whitmire PT-1300, not the oil based orthene which should never be used on violets.

After much discussion with my friends at the Springfield African Violet Club, I decided to disbud for two months instead of one. That was tough, as there is no incentive to growing violets if there are no blooms.

Well, I stuck with it, and just disbudded and did barely anything else. I did use Marathon on the soil to kill the larvae. It worked. Once in a while I would spray with indoor Raid. It was explained to me by Marian Meschkow that some thrips would bury themselves in the leaves, giving them a little longer life. However, they can't live forever on this.



The key to success on this is that the pollen is their food. Nothing else will keep them alive, so you have to be diligent and remove every bud, every flower, and leave no traces of them at all. If you spray with any of the above, you improve your success, but a two-month disbudding will really do the job. Nothing else substitutes for that.

I did have one idea, which can be pursued by many of you: you can cover the soil of all the plants with cellophane to prevent the thrips from producing new larvae, but keep in mind, you couldn't leave any openings at all. This would be a lot of trouble, but it should work. Also, I got a tip from Tea at teazviolets.com to use Marathon in the soil and be diligent in keeping it up to date to kill as many larvae as possible. The trick is to apply the Marathon a little more often than the directions say, as it does not last as long as you may think. This will cut your risk of thrips by a huge amount. By the way, Tea sells one of the largest collections of chimeras I've ever seen, many of them new ones that no one has, for you chimera growers.

I think the main failure of many growers is not disbudding for as long a time as needed to be successful. Some people say six weeks is enough, but eight are just about a guarantee.

I would like to thank the AVSA club in Springfield, PA, one of the best clubs in the East Coast, for their assistance and help in this problem. There are about twenty-five members, and they have extensive experience in growing African violets and seem to be able to solve all of my unsolvable problems. The meetings are always interesting, and the shows are blockbusters - year after year, at the Springfield Mall. If you live in the area, I would recommend you visit the club meetings at the Springfield Township Building, located at 50 Powell in Springfield, PA, the first Tuesday of every month.




Convention Attendees from Canada with our 3rd Vice President, Winston J. Goretsky.

A Family Portrait

By Georgene Albrecht

101 Oak Heights Drive • Oakdale, PA 15071

Email: georgena@verizon.net

 All is the ideal time to show *Achimenes*. This darling variety was purchased at Lyndon Lyon's table two years ago when it was a tiny 2.5 inches. Notice the extra petals in the center that make it look like a rose form. When the extra petals become smaller and the color becomes lighter, it indicates that it is receiving less light and phosphorous fertilizer in cooler temperatures. Blooms may become almost white, and the entire plant will droop when it is cold. When days become cooler, bring the plants inside to lights, or place it in an east window. As temperatures go down, they will become dormant.

Bringing the pots inside, placing them under lights, and keeping them warm will extend the growing season. They will die back as water is withheld. Before you encourage them to go dormant, peek at the root system to see if rhizomes have formed. The rhizomes can stay in the pots or be harvested and placed in plastic bags. The blooms on this variety seem very changeable. When it is a cool summer day, they will be bright pink; when it is hot, they will be a muddy pink color. When the bloom is old, it will fade to mauve. When the blooms are small, there is a lack of light or fertilizer.

Achimenes are said to be bothered by car exhaust, but I have found this to be false. No insect touches them. No disease seems to invade them. They make the most beautiful hanging basket ever, and can be grown in that same basket for two to three years. The rhizomes increase rapidly in most varieties. The yellow-blooming varieties are slow to increase, and most of the time, they have smaller flowers, too. One yellow-blooming variety had a honey-scented fragrance. Some of the older varieties will even grow rhizomes out of the bottom drainage holes of the pots.

They can be propagated by seed, scales from the rhizomes, propagules, whole and broken pieces of rhizomes, and cuttings. These must grow and age until they produce rhizomes. There are several double blooming varieties with this rose form. Two lovely red cultivars are *Achimenes* 'Rio Rita' and 'Desiree'. There is both a 'Blue Double Rose' and



'White Double Rose.' When the white one becomes too hot, it changes to a mottled pink and white variety. This one has the largest flowers and is easiest to cultivate.

When the plants grow about four inches tall, pinch off the top set of leaves. This will double the size of the plants and increase the flowers. Some varieties have an upright growth habit and may need small trellises or stakes; others need no staking and have stiff, strong stems. When potting them, use any good light potting medium and place the rhizomes horizontally on the soil surface, covering them with one-half inch of soil mix. Water with tepid water, add five or six granules of time-release fertilizer, and cover the top of the soil with damp sphagnum moss. Keep evenly moist. When

growth is strong, start fertilizing with a water soluble fertilizer, being sure to rotate formulas. This assures that micro-nutrients are available all the time.

The perfect place to grow them is under a shade tent with an open mesh top so the rain can get through but strong enough to protect from hail and sunburn. When it is time for them to go to sleep, just withhold water, and they will wilt. Store them in the dry soil or harvest them and bag them with a little vermiculite. When they start to wake up, small thread-like growths will emerge. Don't remove them. They usually wake up about January or February. Plant them as directed or just water them, add new fertilizer, and place them in bright light. In two to three weeks, they will emerge. You can also root the cuttings you pinch from



Achimenes 'Double Pink Rose'

them. Do not use a rooting hormone on them.

It only takes eight to ten rhizomes to fill an eight-inch basket if the tips are pinched. I have used moisture granules in the baskets and pots. However, take them out of the rain after two days, as the granules will enlarge to the stage of suffocating the roots. If they are left in the same pot for many years, the amount of rhizomes will not allow the water to drain. This will usually cause rot from the excess moisture.

You will really have to hunt for sources. I keep wishing we would get an advertiser in AVM that sells them. If you see a source, please let me know. Grow great *Gesneriads*!

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Nancy Hayes
In memory of Bob Clark's father
 Nancy Hayes
In memory of Alice Easter

Nancy Hayes
In memory of Ms. Kawakami
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Two-tone

Sundowners African Violet Club (WI)
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In celebration of the club's 25th anniversary

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Many thanks for all your Booster Fund contributions. If your club treasury is overflowing from your spring show sales, or you find a little extra cash deep in your pockets, consider a special donation to provide a new, up-to-date computer for our Editor, to assist her in preparing our valued *African Violet Magazine*. You might also consider the AVSA Website Upgrade. The upgrade is an expensive project, but its improvement will be of benefit to us all.



Geneva

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For the Editor's new computer
Website Improvement Fund: \$ 635.00
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PUBLICITY: Getting the word out



Spring may bring in April showers and May flowers, but we also have tons of African Violet Shows, displays, and like events. Just look at our www.avsa.org

website and click on the events section or look at the African Violet Magazine for events. It is very likely something is happening in the African violet world in your neighborhood. Your publicity chairman is in charge of letting the public know about your club's activities.

What the job of publicity chairman includes is letting the local and regional newspapers know about your club's meetings and events. These 'press releases' include the club's name, meeting place, address, city, zip, date, time, and the program or show information, cost of admission, and finally, a contact for more information. I've served on the publicity committee for my local African Violet Club, and I have often been surprised when reading the write up received in the newspapers. One recent example was in the events section of one local newspaper our meeting announcement started with "Petal pushers" and then went on to list the facts sent to them. This is something out of our control and might be just the *eye candy* that readers demand of their editors.

I just received an email from one of our affiliates in West Sayville, Long Island, New York. They received a great write-up in their local newspaper **two days after** their show. Perhaps it would have been better to get this write-up before the show, but this article went on to explain when they meet, how the show is judged, thoughts on designs, who the winners were, some information about the officers, and even included pictures of the show and other shows that were on the horizon. I'll attach a link for you to see: <http://www.sayville.com/news.asp?news=104>. I have never seen such a wonderful article. Not having the article appear during the show could be thought of as a disappointment, but this club is sure to entice new members. Just think of the article that will appear next time.

My local club just hosted a yearly show, and we also received a news article the following week. The garden editor had purchased plants at our show and was writing in detail of



how beautiful our show had been.

Publicity can be developed differently as is the case of the Jacksonville African Violet Club, 'Heart of Jacksonville'. They have held their shows at a mall for no charge until recently that was changed. They are hosting lots of mini events to advertise their show/sale. They have joined other garden clubs' events. One was a tea with an herbal society as the sponsor. I'm looking forward to seeing the results of this cooperative effort. Check out their website: www.jacksonvilleviolets.org.

When looking for addresses of newspapers in your area and beyond, **Google** is one choice of search. Just enter your state's name/newspapers. Then your event can be added to individual newspapers' event links. You can post to your county and the surrounding counties with great success. The garden web is another source. Post cards sent out to past shows' visitors are a great reminder. Be sure your club has a sign-up sheet for those visitors who would like to be notified of your sales and shows. Local television stations also have links for area events. Flyers announcing your event can be distributed around town. Ask the proprietor if you may leave some. If your group is involved in an event before your show, be sure to have a flyer announcing your upcoming show/sale/display. The library often has a listing of area clubs and societies. Contact the areas flower groups. Often, they will make a field trip out of your event. Remember the other African violet and gesneriad societies in your area as well as your state's African Violet Council or Society.

The African Violet Society members are our greatest means of publicity. Do you have your African Violet Magazine put aside because there is an article you meant to get to? Why not take it with you? Waiting rooms don't always have interesting and current magazines. Have your AVM ready to read away, while displaying the beautiful photo on the front cover. Be ready to answer questions, both about the violets and where to learn more about them. This is your chance to invite those interested to attend a meeting or come to your event.



The World of Gesneriads

Why in the world are they not more popular?

By John Beaulieu

Illustrations and photos by author

The African violet may be one of the most popular of all houseplants, but what about the other members of the family? The so-called 'other' gesneriads may be grown to some extent by houseplant hobbyists, but the general public knows very little about this group of plants. The public has a pretty good idea what you are talking about if you mention begonias, cacti, or orchids, but mention gesneriads to them and they will usually answer... "ges-what?"

I have been giving gesneriad slide presentations to central Ontario horticultural societies for over 25 years, and I still start each talk with the same couple of questions to the members attending. After explaining that the gesneriad family includes the African violet, I ask how many of them have ever grown African violets. Almost all the hands usually go up, but when asked how many grow other gesneriads, very few, if any, hands are up. When I mention that goldfish plants, lipstick vines, gloxinias and the chocolate soldier are all gesneriads, all of a sudden the hands are waving!

I have come to the conclusion that the biggest obstacle preventing wide-spread popularity of gesneriads is the name itself! Gesneriad may be pronounced as gez-NAIR-ee-ad or jes-NEER-ee-ad, as both are accepted as correct within the hobby.

In 1693, the French botanist, Charles Plumier, suggested that Swiss naturalist, Konrad Gesner's name be used for this family of plants.

Most gesneriads do not have common names that the public can get to know them by, and those that do have popular common names are still confusing. Both the columneas and nematanthus are often called goldfish plants. The true gloxinias are not the same plants we commonly call 'Florist Gloxinias', and so it goes. Perhaps if common names had used the word gesneriad as part of it (lipstick gesneriad or goldfish gesneriad) the family might have been better known.

As in any plant family, some plants may have special requirements, but the vast majority of gesneriads in culti-

vation today can be grown successfully in the very same conditions that you grow your African violets in. Light requirements, feeding, and watering are the same for most of the commonly grown gesneriads.

Most gesneriads are suited to growing on your light stands right along with your African violets. Adding other gesneriads gives you more possibilities for different flower color and shape, as well as a varied range of foliage.

There are gesneriads with vining or trailing tendencies, and these can also be grown in hanging baskets in a bright window location.

There are gesneriads of all sizes, from those that can turn into small shrubs, to miniature-sized plants that can add variety to your terrariums.

The ease of propagation is certainly one of the reasons that African violets are so popular, and the majority of other gesneriads are just as easy, if not easier. With many you can just take (and root) tip cuttings or stolons (runners), and you instantly have new starter plants, without having to wait for leaves to root and sprout new plantlets.

Note that I am careful to say 'many' or 'most' when talking about the other gesneriads.

There are those plants that do have special requirements such as temperature or moisture needs. There are species that can challenge even the advanced hobbyist, so there are gesneriads to interest everyone.

These are exciting times in the gesneriad world, as scientists and hobbyists are still discovering new gesneriad species in the wild. Some gesneriad groups are being hybridized at a rate close to that of African violets.

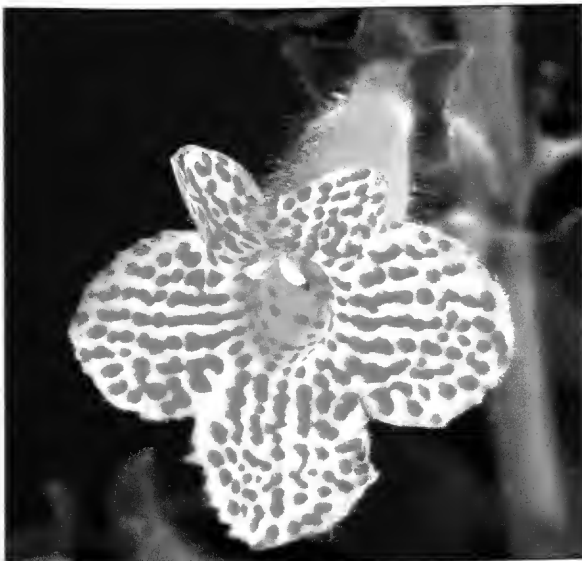
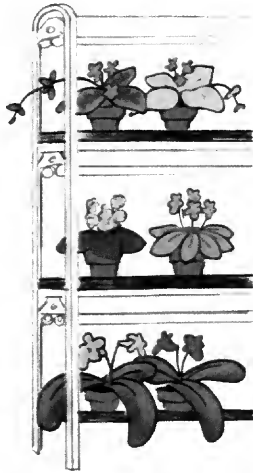
When you want to expand your interests beyond African violets or the common chain-store houseplants, remember the other gesneriads which have often been called the 'miracle' houseplants. They are the perfect companion plants to join your African violets, and I am sure that they would be just as well-known if it was not for that strange family name...ges-something-or-other!





Even today, there are plant lovers out there who are not familiar with African violets with variegated leaves. This ever popular variety is 'Perhaps Love'.

Even with one three-tiered light stand, you can keep gesneriads with differing requirements happy, by placing the warmth loving varieties (such as episcia) on the top shelf and those liking cooler temperatures (such as streptocarpus) on your bottom shelf. Your African violets can thrive on the middle shelf.



Among houseplants, it is hard to match the dramatic markings of the kohlerias, such as the flower of this K. 'Empress'.



Columnea are fairly well-known gesneriads, probably due to their common name of 'Goldfish Plant'.



Aeschynanthus are also popular, with most people knowing them by the common name of 'Lipstick Vine'.



The other gesneriads, such as this Episcia 'Tropical Topaz', offer flower colors not available in African violets.

Hybridizing Gesneriads for Beginners (and others)

Part II

By Ron Myhr

WHAT TO HYBRIDIZE

There are a number of routes one could go in hybridizing or seed-setting. Among these are the following:

SELFING SPECIES

This was been discussed in Part 1 of this article - page 46 in the May/June 2009 African Violet Magazine. The object might be simply to increase one's own stock of plants of a particular species, or to select for particularly desirable characteristics. The best plants might then be crossed with each other, with the possible result being a superior strain of the species. More or less variable species one might work with include *Sinningia eumorpha*, *S. cardinalis*, *S. speciosa* (the true species, not the modern hybrids), *S. regina*, *S. concinna*, *S. pusilla*, *S. pusilla* 'White Sprite', *Streptocarpus johannis*, *S. rexii*, various *Episcia* species, and numerous others.

SELFING TETRAPLOID HYBRIDS

When two very different species are crossed, the resulting offspring are often sterile (see 'primary hybrids' below). However, they can sometimes be rendered fertile through a doubling of the chromosome complement of the plant. How this is accomplished is beyond the scope of this article. Suffice it to say that these chromosome-doubled plants are called tetraploids, as opposed to the original diploids. Tetraploid hybrids usually act as if they were species. Selfings will produce plants much like the parent, but there will be some variation, and selections can be made in the same fashion and for the same reasons as is done with species. As well, tetraploid hybrids within the same genus may be able to be crossed with each other, just as species may be crossed. Most tetraploidy in the gesneriads has occurred in *Sinningia*, with tetraploid forms of *S.* 'Cindy' ('Cindy-ella'), *S.* 'Diploid Dollbaby' ('Dollbaby'), and *S.* 'Freckles' ('Hircon') being very popular. The tetraploid name is in brackets.

SELFING STANDARD HYBRIDS

Most hybrids, when "selfed", produce seedlings with a range of characteristics (see discussion above). Primary hybrids (those plants that are the result of a cross between two species, (see below), when selfed, will typically produce

offspring with characteristics along a continuum from one parent to the other.

Some hybrids are the result of an attempt to produce a seedline that comes completely true from seed, and these will produce a large percentage of plants very similar to the parent. *Sinningia* 'Rex' is an example of such an inbred seed line. 'F1' hybrids are the result of crossing plants from two highly in-bred seed lines, and when selfed will produce seedlings exhibiting a range of characteristics from one parent to the other, just as in primary hybrids.

PRODUCING PRIMARY HYBRIDS

A primary hybrid is the result of crossing two species. In the gesneriads, most primary hybrids in common cultivation are sterile, as in *S.* 'Diploid Dollbaby' or *S.* 'Cindy.' However, if two species in one genus seem reasonably similar, it may be worthwhile to try to cross them. Primary hybrids from parents not too distant genetically, will often have superior vigor. It is this superior vigor that hybridizers are attempting to mimic when they cross two inbred seed lines to create F1 hybrids.

CROSSING COMPLEX HYBRIDS

Most hybridizing in the gesneriads involves crossing selections from complex hybrids in order to reach a specified goal, or to produce plants with a range of characteristics. One might try to produce a superior white *Streptocarpus*, as in the example above, or a red-spotted white *S. speciosa* by crossing a red-spotted pink with a plain white. Most of us are probably principally interested in growing a number of seedlings from which we might be able to select one or more that are improvements on the parents. It's fun to do, and probably the most rewarding way to expand our collection.

OTHER PROJECTS

As we gain more experience in setting seed and hybridizing, we may get more sophisticated in specifying goals for our efforts. One might, for instance, seek to incorporate some of the characteristics of a species into a line of hybrids, or to decrease the plant size, or increase the flower size. The first step is to acquire an appropriate selection of material with which to work, and to carefully map out a plan of action. Once seedlings are produced, the

second step is to ruthlessly eliminate those plants, which will not contribute to the goal - give them or throw them away. You will never know what your seedlings will look like at their best if your growing area is overly crowded. The third step is to repeat steps one and two until you are satisfied with the results.

SOME CAUTIONS

1. Work only with varieties you can grow. It would be foolish of me to try to hybridize miniature sinningias. I can't grow the existing hybrids worth a damn, and there is no reason to believe that I could grow my own hybrids any better. I do grow *Streptocarpus* and medium to large-sized sinningias reasonably well, and these are the ones I hybridize.

2. Don't try to cross between genera, unless you really know what you are doing. Relatively few intergeneric hybrids are reported in the gesneriads, and even with some genera, variability is great and fertility low. (This text was written in 1981 and recent techniques have somewhat modified this thinking. Many intergeneric crosses have now been introduced - Ed.) The so-called "Stroxinia," a purported hybrid of *Sinningia* and *Streptocarpus*, is really a pure

Sinningia speciosa of the slipper type, and it is extremely unlikely anyone will ever cross an *Episcia* with a *Saintpaulia* to produce a really red African violet. Some intergenerics are worth investigating, though, especially those from the *Kohleria*, *Gloxinia*, *Pearcea*, *Niphaea*, *Achimenes*, *Smithiantha* group of rhizomatous new-world plants, and it has been suggested that caulescent *Streptocarpus* (those with stems) might be crossable with species of *Saintpaulia*, although many have tried this without success. As well, the *Columnnea* group, which some botanists break into four separate genera, is wide open.

3. If you're even marginally interested in hybridizing, or in expanding your knowledge of gesneriads, you should join the Gesneriad Hybridizers Association, in order to receive the newsletter Crosswords. This is a forum for the exchange of information about hybridizing, and gesneriads in general, and provides a means for hybridizers to be in touch with each other to exchange interesting seed and information.

(This article first appeared in the Toronto Gesneriad Society Newsletter in two parts - Vol. 5, No. 2, Vol. 5, No. 3; February and March, 1981.) Part 1 appeared in the May/June .09 AVM - Page 46.



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Rebecca McMeel, Houma, LA
Metropolitan St Louis African Violet Council, St Louis, MO
Lynn Milgrom, Richmond, VA
Milwaukee African Violet Society, Milwaukee, WI
Margaret Nasta, McKeesport, PA
North Star African Violet Council, Anoka, MN
Lynn Wallach, Hollywood, FL
Judy Walton, Allen Park, MI
Shirley Wiggins, Shirley's Blooming Blossoms, Cement City, MI



The Once and Future Violet

AVSA 2010 Raleigh, North Carolina Convention

By Tom Glembocki, 2010 Convention Chairman

The members of the Mid Atlantic African Violet Society (MAAVS), along with many co-hosts invite you to come to Raleigh, North Carolina, for the 2010 African Violet Society of America's 64th Annual Convention and Show, April 11 through April 18, 2010.

Please join us for tours of beautiful gardens, a great violet show, pottery, NASCAR, arts, local culture, fine dining, and the camaraderie of other violet enthusiasts. It has been a number of years since there has been an AVSA National Convention in the East. We are expecting a large turnout due to pent-up demand - the equivalent of shaking a champagne bottle and popping the cork. Let the party begin!



North Carolina State Capitol



Sir Walter Raleigh

Raleigh is geographically in the center of North Carolina, midway between the Great Smokey Mountains and the sea. Mid-April is the peak of spring, when the azaleas and dogwoods are in full bloom. This may be a great time to plan an extended vacation in 2010 - the mountains to the west, or east to the beaches of the Outer Banks.

Raleigh, also known as the "City of Oaks," was named for the 16th Century explorer, Sir Walter Raleigh.

The city was established in 1792 as the State Capitol of North Carolina. On a leisurely visit downtown, you'll find many museums and the Governor's Mansion. Take a tour of the State capitol, or a walk through the tree-lined streets of historic Victorian neighborhoods surrounding the state government complex. And, on the outskirts of the city, golf is a year round endeavor.



Governor's Mansion

The Greater Raleigh area includes twelve municipalities with a wide range of cultural experiences, and dining and shopping that literally spans from A to Z, as in the neigh-

boring cities from Apex to Zebulon. Art, music, ballet, and theater are some of Raleigh's best features, helping to earn it the rank of sixth in the nation in creative talent. Raleigh and the surrounding municipalities regularly are awarded the title of "Best Place to Live in the United States" by Money Magazine, Forbes, and Fortune, thanks to a mild year-round climate, as well as an abundance of economic opportunities.



Raleigh Skyline

Even though Raleigh was founded in 1792, it's a city of constant change as evidenced by the constantly changing skyline. The most recent addition to the Raleigh skyline is the addition of the thirty-three story North American headquarters of the Royal Bank of Canada!

Some things never change. In the 16th and 17th century the clay soil of the nearby Seagroves area of North Carolina proved itself to be ideal for making the utilitarian vessels needed by the early colonial settlers. Today this same pottery has morphed from utilitarian purposes into artistic pursuits. Over 200 potters have studios in the town of Seagrove. Almost every other house seems to have a kiln in the yard for firing and glazing the clay stoneware.



The AVSA 2010 Convention team has been busy planning your visit so that you can enjoy some of these high-lights. We'll have maps available of nearby attractions, dining, shopping, and art for you to explore on your own. In addition, we'll structure the tours to give you a good flavor for the gardens, architecture, history, and pottery of North Carolina. And yes, that includes a trip to the hall of "King Richard" himself, the Richard Petty NASCAR museum. We'll share a lot more of the exciting details of tours in a future AVM, but for now, mark your AVSA calendars and start planning for a week in April of "The Once and Future Violet".

60th Anniversary of the Columbus African Violet Society

By Nancy Carr

The Columbus African Violet Society recently held its 60th show. It is truly cause for celebration. Our official birthday is March 23, 1949, when the first meeting as an African violet society was held in Columbus, Ohio. The first show was later that same year. The Society became affiliated with African Violet Society of America in 1951.

The Columbus club has had monthly meetings, annual shows and picnics and other activities for 60 years. We have had 29 presidents. Our membership has been as high as 87 members, in 1964. Currently we have 31 members. Several of our members are active in AVSA including Linda Owens,



Celebrating 60 years of African Violets

and 2005 in the Cincinnati area. Thelma Miller was Show Chairman and Mary Martin Co-Show Chairman for both shows.

The theme for our show and our year is 'Diamond Celebration'. We had 251 horticulture entries including 11 collections. There were 15 design exhibits. And we had 20 of our 31 active members participating in the show. Everyone worked hard to have a successful 60th show.

Among the special things we are doing this year – a couple of our long standing members wrote brief articles for our newsletter, 'African Violet Notes', about their memories of past Columbus AVS meetings or shows. Pat Hancock one of our Ohio hybridizers, hybridized an African violet in honor of our 60th anniversary. It is 'Buckeye Diamond Celebration' and is the project plant for our 2010 show.



Members of the Columbus AVS



Showroom

We had a banquet dinner at one of our local restaurants on the Saturday evening of our show. Pictures from the banquet and show are seen here.

Thanks to Donna Vogelpohl, Thelma Miller, Mary Martin, Janice Beaty and Linda Owens for providing and/or confirming the historical information about Columbus AVS.

a past AVSA president, currently chairman of the Finance Committee; Nancy Carr a Director, Convention Tour Director and a publications committee member; and Thelma Miller, chairman of the Ways & Means committee. James Rubottom, one of our past presidents, is chairman of the Internet committee. Emilie Savage, now deceased, was a Director, serving four terms, and Shows & Judges Chairman for a number of years. We had a hybridizer of African violets in our membership – Catherine Hawley, also deceased. She did most of her work during the 1970's and has over 50 cultivars registered or listed in First Class.

The Columbus AVS has co-sponsored, with the other Ohio affiliates, 2 AVSA Conventions – in 1992 in Columbus

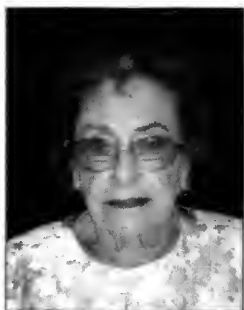


Winner's Table

"African Violets Around The Biggest



Barbara Burde



Barbara Elkin



Carol Magoon



Carolee Carter



Rex Pershing



Catherine Heider



Cindi Nofgizer



Claire Zimmerman & Nancy Sullivan



Roger Wheeler



Donna Stillwell



Doris F. Carson



Elaine Re



Frances Kilpatrick & Pat Sutton



Kevin Denger



Gail Podany & Carol Semrau



Gabriela Liberty & Ingrid Nelson

Little City" AVSA Reno Convention 2009



Jenny Daugereau



Joan Santino & Barbara Jones



John Brownlie, Bill Price, Doris Brownie



Mel Grice



Janice & Ron Davidson, AVSA President



Maida Den Oudsten



Norma Kunzel



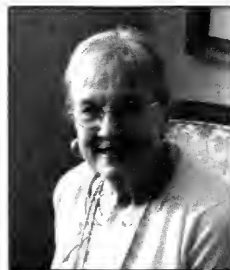
Leslie Cox



Lola Sutherland



Lynne Wilson



Margaret Schmisrer



Marjorie Bullard



Penny Wichman



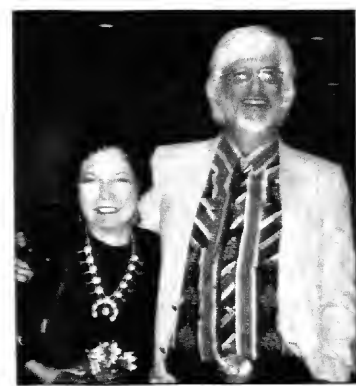
Susan Hapner & Diane Miller



Sharon Shannon



Paul Kroll & Bob Clark



Ruth & Will Loomis



Sharon Arnao

Shirl's Peachie Pink

Exhibited by: Leonard Re

Hybridized by: S. Sanders

Semiminiature



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Sinningia Ozark 'Razzamatazz'

Best Other Gesneriad - Commercial

Exhibited and Hybridized by:

David Harris

Dave's Violets

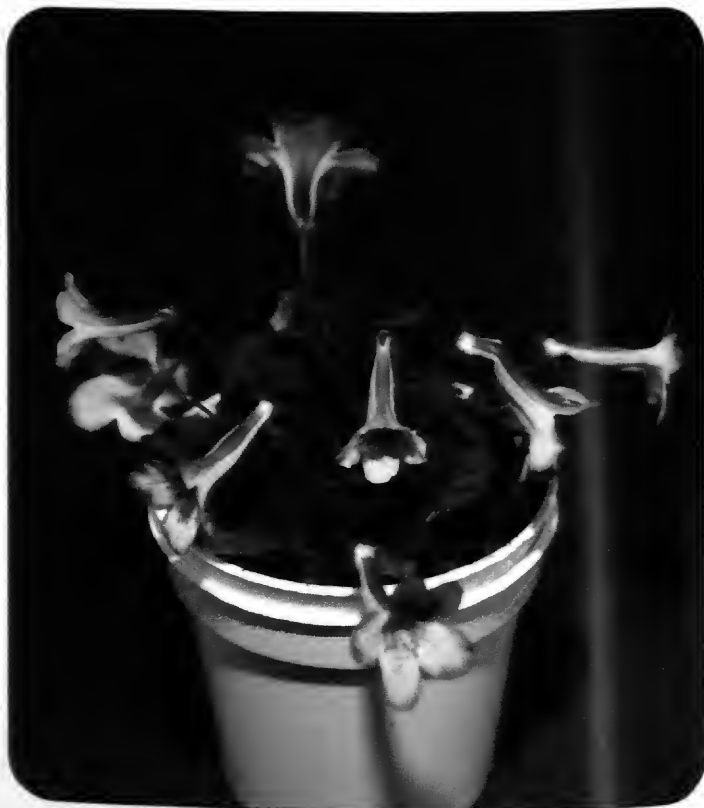


Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky



Photo Credit. Winston J. Goretsky

Frances Young

Exhibited by: Barbara Burde

Hybridized by: H. Pittman

Standard

MOTHER NATURE'S GIFT TO THE DESIGNER

An extended version of my presentation at the 2008

Dixie Birmingham Convention

By Bob Green

Weathered wood is one of Mother Nature's gifts to the designer. The words "weathered wood" and "driftwood" are synonymous in design. Originally, driftwood meant only those pieces of wood that had floated on the seas and been cast up on the beaches. Today, however, any natural piece of wood, be it drift, weathered, petrified, or otherwise, is considered to be "driftwood" or "weathered wood." For the sake of clarity and consistency, we should use the term "weathered wood" to suggest the multiplicity of Mother Nature's means of creating her wood masterpieces.

As a designer, I have always collected wood forms - stumps, roots, limbs, etc. for use in designs. I have browsed pet shops, and have found wood forms sold for use in terrariums and aquariums (these, however, are quite costly, since they are usually mounted on marble or granite slab bases). I have even bought wood pieces on E-bay. I have always been drawn to pieces of wood that resemble something, for example: a bird, an animal, a hand, etc.

It is rare to find a piece of weathered wood that can be used as is, without some conditioning, trimming, or alteration. You should always clean found wood with soap and water and a stiff brush, removing embedded dirt and grime. It may be necessary to use a knife or other instrument to remove deposits from grooves and crevices. For proper proportion and balance, you may have to completely remove any side branches or nubs that might interfere with the design you are creating.

To mount and anchor tall pieces of wood for line, wrap a piece of small-gauge hardware cloth around the bottom of the wood for insertion into a pinholder or needlecup. Drill holes in the wood and fasten with small screws to the hardware cloth so it will not shift.

For heavier pieces of wood to be used as line in your design, you may find the natural balance of the wood in this manner: Insert the base of the wood in a container (bowl or bucket) of water, holding the wood in a position that looks level, straight, or balanced; remove the wood from the water and draw a line at the watermark, and saw off the end of the wood at the watermark. Drill a hole up into the base of the wood. Take the top from a tin can (large enough for balance), and make a hole in the center of it. Insert a long, flat-headed screw through the can top, up the hole into the base of the wood, and fasten tightly. The piece of wood should now stand on its own. Another method is to anchor weathered wood permanently to a heavier wooden base by nailing or screwing it in place, or by gluing it with hot glue. A large piece of wood may also be made to stand upright on its own by making lags

of dowels, or using smaller pieces of wood as props.

Even though weathered wood makes a statement to us in its own right, we occasionally may want to alter that statement by various means, such as bleaching, staining, painting, oiling, waxing, chalking, sandblasting, charring, etc.

To bleach weathered wood, soak it overnight in equal parts of bleach and water. You may have to weight the wood down so that it is completely covered by the bleach solution, as some weathered wood tends to float. The next day, remove the wood from the bleach solution, rinse in fresh water, and set aside to dry, preferably in direct sunlight; or, if you are in a hurry, you may use your oven or microwave. The wood should dry to a warm beige or honey color. Bleaching will raise the grain of the wood, so you may have to rub it with sandpaper, if you want a smoother finish. To get a whiter tone to the wood, just repeat the soaking procedure with a stronger concentration of the bleach. Oxalic acid crystals, which you can buy in a drugstore, will give the bleached wood a distinctly rosy hue. Just combine an equal amount of crystals with water, and brush the concoction on the surface of the wood.

Wood stains are available in many colors and shades. Brush or rub on a light coat, let dry thoroughly, and check the color. You can darken with a second coat, if necessary, for the particular effect you want. Always let the stain dry completely before applying another coat.

Painting weathered wood alters it considerably, and the change is forever, unless, of course, you re-paint it with another color. When you paint weathered wood, all but coarse textures are covered, as is the grain, and the natural wood tones are lost forever. There are times, though, when the design we are creating or have in our mind's eye calls for a bold dramatic statement or form. Paint will emphasize the form by eliminating the surface detail of the wood. Weathered wood with deep crevices and grooves is best spray-painted. I use flat paint usually, unless I am trying to be completely avant-garde or abstract in my design - then I use the glossy, textured, or glitterized spray paint. If you join different pieces of wood together to create a new and different shape, the sections will probably have different grains, textures, and tones. To unify them, the use of spray paint is excellent. Painted wood is great for modern, free-form, and abstract designs or when you want or dare to make a different statement.

A piece of weathered wood may be given a sophisticated effect for stylized designs by applying a self-polishing liquid wax. Also, warm linseed oil will darken weathered wood, and

can also be rubbed to a subtle glow.

To cover up rubbed, scratched, or cut places on weathered wood, I use pastel chalks. If a nub has been removed or decayed areas of the weathered wood have been gouged out or cut away, the exposed areas are usually a different shade or tone. After rubbing with sandpaper, I rub chalk on and into the exposed parts of the wood, and blend the chalk into the adjacent areas. It usually takes several shades of chalk to get a matching tone.

To remove surface texture and color, you can sandblast the wood if you have a sandblasting kit and compressor, or you can have it sandblasted at a furniture refinishing or auto body-repair shop for a small fee or, perhaps, in exchange for an African violet or a gesneriad. Sandblasting will give the wood a light tone and a very smooth finish.

For an encrusted white surface on weathered wood, a material called water glass (liquid sodium silicate) can be used. The sodium silicate can be bought at a drugstore. The sodium silicate may be brushed on areas of the wood where

you want a crusty-white, barnacle-like appearance. Then burn with a propane torch.

For a natural looking blue-green patina on weathered wood, I use a solution of: one cup clear ammonia, two tablespoons of copper powder (available at art supply, paint, and hardware stores), and two tablespoons of white craft glue. I brush it on the weathered wood with a hard-bristled brush. After the mixture has oxidized and the wood has completely dried, a beautiful bluegreen patina will appear on the weathered wood. To make it more green than blue, the amount of copper powder used in the mixture is increased. This procedure, unlike spray-painting, will not conceal surface texture.

In conclusion, let me stress: weathered wood in itself is very dramatic and will always try to dominate a design, so you will have to be generous with the use of your African violets and blossoms when placing them in a design with weathered wood.

From *The Dixie News*



Movin' On Up

The Joys of Growing into an AVSA Senior Judge

By Cheryl Salatino

It's funny how quickly time flies. Feels like my interest in becoming an African violet judge was peaked only a year or so ago. The process of actually becoming a judge seemed daunting back then. Yet, other judges encouraged me to enroll in a Judging School as a great place to learn more about growing, and they were right.

After taking one practice class, I later passed the test and achieved a Student Judge status. When I began to judge African violets, I was partnered with more experienced judges as part of the judging team. I wanted to easily see what they saw when merit-judging a plant. Often I heard statements like, "Give the benefit of doubt to the grower," and "Can you really take more than ten points off for that flaw?" The lessons learned were lasting and gave me a positive perspective about growing and judging plants.

Time has marched on. I have become the more experienced judge. The transition to an Advanced Judge was straightforward: keep your judging skills fresh by participating in an AVSA Judging School every three years and earn the blue ribbons required to take the renewal exams. Fortunately, I was able to pass those exams with flying colors. I even fulfilled my obligation to grow at least twenty-five African violet varieties (now, that was the easy part). At the latter part of 2008, my Advanced Judge certificate was

ready for renewal. This time there was a choice to be made. After completing nine years of service as an AVSA judge, I was now eligible to apply to take the Senior Judge's exam. Sure, I could remain an Advanced Judge as long as I continued to meet the renewal requirements. But, hey, why not try something different?

The requirements to become a Senior Judge are the things you hear about from the day you are interested in pursuing your first judge's test. In a nutshell, you are literally required to apply for the exam. The application asks that you demonstrate you have judged at least three AVSA sponsored shows, received good grades on prior tests (over 90 points on three exams), earned three recent blue ribbons, and you are growing at least fifty varieties of African violets (ha, still the easy part). If your application is approved, you get to take the test at home (hmm, not so easy part).

Of course, I decided to go for the Senior Judge exam. AVSA accepted my application, and the test arrived. I'll spare you all the rest of the details. Suffice it to say that when I received the results, I was thrilled. Being awarded a Senior Judge certificate was an accomplishment I had only dreamed about way back when.

From *Ye Bay Stater*, publication of the Bay State AVS



Photo Credit. Margaret Taylor

Birthday Blush

Hybridized and Grown by: Margaret Taylor, Australia

Standard

MINUTES ANNUAL MEETING

AFRICAN VIOLET SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.

April 17, 2009 • Sparks, Nevada

The Annual Business Meeting of the African Violet Society of America, Inc. was called to order by the Third Vice President, John Carter, at 3:15 PM in Pavilion B of John Ascuaga's Nugget Hotel Resort, Sparks, Nevada. The invocation was given by Marge Savage followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. John Carter presented the President, Joyce Stork.

Nancy Hayes, Secretary, reported a quorum was present.

Nancy Hayes, Secretary, read the Standing Rules for the Annual Meeting and they were adopted.

President Stork appointed Cindi Nofziger Chair of the Committee to Approve the 2009 Annual Meeting Minutes, with Sylvia Leeds and Beverly Powers as committee members. Judith Carter was appointed Timekeeper. In the absence of Chair, Barbara Pershing, Lynne Wilson, member of the 2008 Committee to Approve Minutes, reported the minutes were approved.

Nancy Hayes presented the Courtesy Resolution, which is attached. The Resolution was adopted.

Sue Ramser, member of the Bylaws Committee, moved on behalf of the Board of Directors to recommend a change to the AVSA Bylaws - Article IV -Officers and Their Duties - Section I - Elected Officers - Treasurer - #6 - as follows:

Change the word "audit" to "financial review". New sentences to read: He/she shall be bonded in the amount set by the Board of Directors and shall submit all records related to the treasury for financial review annually by an accountant selected by the Executive Committee. The financial review report shall be given to the members of the Board of Directors for adoption at each annual meeting.

This Bylaws change was presented at this convention and was not published in the African Violet Magazine. A 9/10 standing vote is required.

The vote was a 9/10 rising vote in the affirmative and the Bylaws have been amended.

Sue Ramser, member of the Bylaws Committee, moved on behalf of the Bylaws Committee to amend the Bylaws - Article IX - Finance - Section 3 - Investments - Subparagraph 3 - All monies received from commercial membership dues over and above three dollars more than individual dues shall be deposited in the Boyce Edens Research Fund special investment account.

The proposed amendment is as follows: delete subparagraph 3 in its entirety. Thereafter renumber Sections 4 and 5.

The amendment was published in the African Violet Magazine and requires a 2/3 rising vote. The vote was a 2/3

rising vote in the affirmative as amended, and the Bylaws have been amended.

The Nominating Committee Chair, Janet Riemer, presented the following report:

Officers to serve until the conclusion of the 2011 Annual Meeting:

President - Ron Davidson

1st Vice President - Linda Golubski

2nd Vice President - John Carter

3rd Vice President - Winston J. Goretsky

Secretary - Sue Ramser

Treasurer - Edna Rourke

Directors to serve until the conclusion of the 2012 Annual Meeting:

Barbara Elkin

Richard Follett

Terry Klemesrud

Beverly Powers

Pat Sutton

No nominations were received from the floor. The officers and directors were elected by voice vote.

President Stork announced that the installation of the officers and directors shall take place at the installation banquet this evening.

President Stork announced the inadvertent omission of an international member of the Board of Directors by the current Nominating Committee. The current international member would be retiring at this convention. Lynne Wilson, Standing Committee Chair and voting member of the Board, resigned to accommodate this need. President Stork announced the appointment of Doris Brownlie of Canada to the Board of Directors to fill the unexpired term.

President Stork recognized the retiring directors, Kathy Bell, Phyllis King, Cindi Nofziger, Dr. Bill Price, and Marge Savage. Also recognized were Committee Chairs retiring, Janet Riemer, Nominating, Linda Owens, Convention Director, Barbara Pershing, Publications, Randy Deutsch, Finance, Heather Menzel, Tally Time, and Barbara Trotsky, Membership and Promotion.

Tom Glembocki, 2010 Raleigh, North Carolina Convention Chair, extended an invitation to the 2010 Convention and Show to be held at Hilton North, April 11th through the 18th.

A list of deceased members from this past year was prepared by Mary Boland and read by Nancy Hayes. The list is attached to these minutes. The following members were added: Albert Buell, Connecticut, Wayne Coley, Virginia, Agatha Garrison, New Mexico, Scott Libby, Maine, Dolores

Peron, Minnesota, and Maisie Yakie, Texas.

Richard Nicholas, Chair of the Tinari Endowment Fund Advancement Committee, spoke to the assembly regarding The Legacy Society as a part of the campaign to raise money for the Anne and Frank Tinari Endowment Fund. This Society is a measure to secure AVSA's financial future. You can give by adding a bequest from your will or through adding AVSA as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy. The initial Legacy Society members have pledged thousands of dollars and are recognized at this convention by a ribbon on their name badge.

The following announcements were made:

Forms are available for nominating a member for the Board of Directors as well as Convention Show Awards donations for 2010.

There will be no Saturday morning Board of Directors meeting.

As there was no further business to come before the 2009 Annual Meeting, the meeting was adjourned at 4:05 PM.

Nancy G. Hayes, Secretary

COMMITTEE TO APPROVE:

Cindi Nofziger, Chair

Sylvia Leeds

Beverly Powers



MICHIGAN STATE AFRICAN VIOLET SOCIETY

By Ingrid Bowman and Marge Farrand

Every spring and fall, the Michigan State AVS has a "Display and Sale" at Matthei Botanical Gardens in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Members grow beautiful African violets and Gesneriads for the event and gather from all over the state and renew old and dear friendships. We advertise in magazines, newspapers, on the internet, and also on postcards.

Our past President, Loreen Callentine, had this idea, and it has been very successful. We have the postcards on a table in our salesroom, along with information on how to grow and take care of African violets. We also have *African Violet Magazines*. The people who come to see and buy our plants write their name and address on the cards. One month before the event, the cards are mailed. Maybe the postcard idea will work for your club, as it has for ours.

We were all fearful that the economy would keep the buyers away this year, but we were in for a big surprise. The Gardens asked us to open the doors early because the lobby was filled with violet enthusiasts who wanted the pick of the plants! Indeed, when the doors opened, our sales area was filled with shoppers, many bringing their own large boxes to hold the plants. Soon, the large center table was bare, and a long line had formed at the cash register. By the end of the day, we were practically stripped clean, and we still had Sunday to go! This was a sign that no matter how bad



things are, real African violet lovers always find a way to buy their favorite plant!

After our meeting and group dinner, we all headed home to scour our shelves for those plants we decided we could part with after all. It turned out to be our best display and sale in recent memory. We had more than 1,000 plants! It shows how much peace and pleasure these plants can bring, even in

trying times.

When we closed on Sunday, there were only a few to take home. The sale was a huge success, and all members are now growing for the fall display and sale.



EXPERIMENTATION:

Discovering the best way to grow your plants

By Susan Shaw

Experimenting is challenging and leads to optimum growing and development of strong plants of which you can be proud. When you know you have created the best possible environment for your plants through testing of all possible ways of growing, you feel knowledgeable and have a sense of confidence. Always being open to new ideas and new methods that work for other growers will bring you plenty of material to test and make new discoveries.

When experimenting, only test on one or two plants, and only do research after reading and using a reliable source.

Soil is probably one of the most important elements to successful growing. Many growers find that packaged African violet soil is expensive and doesn't always contain the proper amount of ingredients for all stages of growth.

It is challenging to make your own soil, but you will know exactly what is in it. Canadian Sphagnum Peat Moss is the usual base ingredient. After adding vermiculite, for its ability to hold moisture, and perlite for aeration of the soil, Dolomite lime is added. It brings the pH to 6.5-6.8, and is needed because Peat is acidic and you want a neutral soil. I have experimented using a 1:1:1 mix for starting leaves. I have also started leaves in only vermiculite, and vermiculite and perlite. Test to see what works best for you. My basic soil is 2-1-1.

Some growers use a layer of perlite in the bottom of the pot to keep plants well-drained and not sitting in water.

Fertilizer is another element you can experiment with. Fertilizer contains Nitrogen (the first number) for healthy foliage, Phosphorus (the 2nd number) for blooms, and Potassium (the 3rd number) for general health and disease resistance. Some growers use a balanced fertilizer such as 20-20-20. Others use a 15-30-15 formula. Growers wishing to boost the production of blooms use a fertilizer with a high middle number such as 10-50-10, once a month. Many growers use a monthly schedule of watering their plants with a different fertilizer every time they water. I add 1 drop of Superthive, which is a growth hormone, to my 15-30-15 feeding once a month. Never use Superthive alone.

Fish Emulsion can be used as a drench or spray to green up pale plants. (It is not recommended for use on variegated plants.)

About every six weeks, you should drench your plants

with epsom salts, or plain water to prevent the buildup of fertilizer salts.

Light for your African violets is another element for experimentation. Natural light from an east or west window is the best exposure. Artificial light (fluorescent tubes) opens a whole new field of experimentation.

Test the number of hours of light and the distance from the tubes for successfully growing show and sale plants. It can be adjusted for seasons and environmental changes. Powdery mildew is caused by crowded plants or a difference between day and night temperatures. Some growers run their lights at night to keep plants warmer and turn them off during the day.

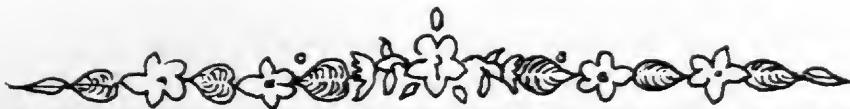
Deciding what plants to grow is a fun experiment. If you grow all standards, try a mini or trailer. If you grow all hybrids, try growing a species or two. Growing Chimeras is fascinating. "Chimera" refers to the flowers (stripe from center to edge) or to the leaves. Chimera leaves can be variegated, but the variegation is not effected by temperature. Chimeras must be propagated by suckers or bloom stalks. To create new chimera plants, cut out the crown with a single-edged razor blade, and root it. Using a couple of vinyl paper clips, you can pin the crown to the top of the soil.

The remaining plant, without the crown, will sprout several new suckers. These are removed and rooted to create new Chimeras.

Growing other Gesneriads, relatives of the African violet, is an interesting experiment. If you have only grown fibrous rooted plants, try one that grows from scaly rhizomes or tubers. Learning about the conditions in which these plants grow in nature, will challenge you to try to accommodate their needs. These "cousins" of the African violet are both charming and beautiful, and some are very easy to grow.

Keeping a record of your progress and discovery while testing is important. There are always new things to try like hybridizing, entering a show, and growing show plants. If you belong to a club, Project Plants (each member receives the same plant) will allow you to use all your discoveries to grow the best plant.

Share your results with fellow African violet growers, as it might stimulate others to try new and better ways to grow the plants we love. Experimenting pays off in many ways.



WATERING AFRICAN VIOLETS

By Annette Kennedy

African violets are commonly killed by over watering.

There are no right or wrong ways to water an African violet, but there are some methods that are better than others. Watering provides the opportunity to feed your plants at the same time by using a nutrient solution.

African violets can be watered from the top or in a saucer. However, only water your plants when the potting mix feels a bit dry, and never leave a plant sitting in a saucer of water. It could be too wet, eventually succumb to root rot, and die. After half an hour, tip any excess out of the saucer.

Most growers prefer to wick-water their African violets. When using this method, a wick is inserted into the pot through the base before the plant is potted into the pot.

I choose to use a type of nylon Venetian blind cord, but a lot of growers use 8 ply acrylic or nylon wool, or even nylon pantyhose cut into thin strips works just as well and is readily available. Whatever you use, it must be a nylon or synthetic cord, not cotton. Another important key when

wick watering is to use the correct type of potting mix. Wick watering is like a passive form of hydroponics, and the potting mix for this is just a growing medium, usually called a soilless potting mix. The main ingredients are peat moss, perlite, and vermiculite, and it is generally only available through African violet clubs or specialist growers. Potting mix for African violets is available from garden centers, but this is usually soil-based and contains dirt, and/or compost, holds much more water, and is not suitable for wick watering.

There are a variety of containers or reservoirs that can be used for wick watering. The most basic is a take-out or margarine container. Make a small hole in the lid for the water

to go through. Put the nutrient in the container and sit the plant on top with the wick down through the hole. Wick watering allows you more time between watering, depending on the size of your reservoir. So, if you are going away on holiday, simply use a large container such as a bigger take-away container or a cat litter tray with a wire mesh (available from the sales table). Using a litter tray allows you to leave one plant for longer or to sit several plants on one tray and water all at once instead of individually. However, if one plant has bugs or diseases, they can easily spread to others on

the same tray. When wick watering, a build up of algae can happen. This is because the nutrient is exposed to light. To discourage a build up of algae, regularly wash out your reservoirs and also wash the wick by dipping it into some warm soapy water and rubbing it or gently tilt the pot sideways and wash the wick under a slow running tap.

Using open reservoirs helps to create humidity around your plants. Some growers have success using

ceramic pots that have a porous insert, but for me, the pot well has been more successful.

The quality of the water used is equally important. During the drought years, our Melbourne water company has added more chemicals to the water, to the detriment of some growers' plants. I have used tank water, but because of the dirt build-up in reservoirs, I now prefer to use tap water.

A build up of fertilizer salts can also occur, and it may be necessary to leach salts out by watering plants from the top.

Potting mix for African violets is available from garden centers, but this is usually soil-based and contains dirt and/or compost, holds much more water, and is not suitable for wick watering.

From the May '09 Newsletter of the
Early Morn AV Group, Inc., Australia

*AVSA OFFICE HOURS
Monday - Thursday
8:00 am - 4:30 pm*

African Violets Hit the Jackpot in 'the World's Biggest Little City'

By Rich Follett

The souvenir booklet for the 63rd Annual AVSA convention "African Violets Around the World's Biggest Little City" lists 'U.S. Western States African Violet Societies' as the hosts – only a group effort could have produced such a wonderfully diverse and appealing convention. The entire week was an endless array of colorful and exciting experiences as dazzling as the casino built right into the ground floor of John Ascuaga's Nugget hotel.

Just to give you some perspective: I am an English teacher who lives in a restored Victorian home in a sleepy little mountain town that closes up by sun-down. True, we have a few neon signs out by the highway five miles off, but my day-to-day life reads pretty much like a scene from 'Meet Me in St. Louis.'

When I arrived at the hotel, I was handed the key to my room – *on the twenty-third floor!* The view was breathtaking! I am sure the hotel desk clerk was amused by the 'golly gosh gee whiz' expression still lingering on my face when I asked if any place was open for a midnight snack – he smiled and said 'Reno is *always* open!'

I spent the whole first night wondering how on earth I would be able to pay attention to the violets with so much going on all around!

I shouldn't have wondered, though: when the show opened on Wednesday evening, it became immediately clear that the African violets were the main attraction. The stunning display of more than 500 awe-inspiring horticultural and design entries was breathtaking. The show was magnificent, the buzz was electric, and everybody went home a winner. Lynn Lombard and Barbara Elkin deftly co-chaired both the Convention *and* the Show. It was truly wonderful to see such team spirit!

Like the casino with flashing its lights and opportunity in every corner, the 63rd annual AVSA convention "African Violets Around the Biggest Little City" offered far too many delights to be counted. I will simply say that everybody hit the jackpot in Reno. There were many jackpots to be won for those willing to take a chance; good friends from far and near, beautiful plants and designs, informative and diverse programs, the chance to talk about African violets for as long as we wanted *without guilt*, one-of-a kind and hard-to-find

items at both the Ways and Means table and the luncheon auction and, of course, the slot machines, roulette wheels, and a host of other pulse-quickenning diversions.

Everyone who comes to an AVSA convention takes away memories and experiences uniquely their own. I will never forget seeing two of David Senk's amazing African violet hybrids on the winner's table at the show. I love these unusual beauties and have been saying for years it would only be a matter of time until we saw them on the head table. Thanks to Dr. Bill Price, 'Senk's Snowy Egret' and 'Senk's Try the Decaf' were proudly displayed in the winner's circle as two of three of the 'Best AVSA Collection - Standards.' I was so puffed

up with pride, you'd have thought I had grown them myself! I will never be THAT lucky (or that skillful!), but this sure was a thrill, particularly since I was the one to give Bill his first 'Senk' leaves several years ago.

And, I'll never forget seeing Heather Morgan of San Mateo, California, win the 'Best in Show – Design' award as a first-time exhibitor. Of course, we all ogle perennial expertise with slack-jawed reverence, but how *exciting* it was to see a newcomer walk away with the prize of prizes! Heather was marvelously humble about the whole thing and I sincerely hope her story will encourage others to try their hand at entering plants or designs in a national show. I know I am already eyeing my light stands with Raleigh on my mind!

Another highlight of the convention was seeing so many people rise when our Past President Joyce Stork called for members of the newly-formed AVSA Legacy Society to stand and be counted. My heart was filled with joy to see all of those who have formally dedicated themselves to the survival and future well-being of this society. The African Violet Society of America is a life-giving link for all of us who share the love of African violets, and the wonderful people who grow and show them. I am a life member of AVSA, but I now know that life membership is *not* enough. I am making plans for AVSA to be included in my estate so that I can be a *next-life* member as well. As far as I am concerned, seeing so much support for AVSA and the Tinari Endowment Fund was the biggest jackpot of all.



Attention Affiliates: Getting New Members!

A Message from Kathy Bell, Membership Chair

Email: bellkk@peoplepc.com

The AVSA Membership Committee is working with the AVSA office to get new members in our affiliated clubs, and AVSA. They are sending us a list of new AVSA members and their contact information each month.

How is this going to work? That's where you come in. We would like for you to contact the people on the list and see if you can increase membership in your club. Committee Member, Sylvia Leeds, will be emailing you a list of people from your area, when they join AVSA.

You may not get a list from Sylvia every month, and when you do, not all of them will have an email address or phone number. If that is the case, we urge you to send them a postcard to their mailing address, inviting them to your club meeting. Some of them may already belong to your club, but please contact those who do not.

By the end of this year, we're asking the affiliates to let Sylvia know if this is helping you increase membership, if this program is a success. For it to work, we need the help of all of our affiliates, so please contact those on the list you receive.

If we all work together, we can help our local clubs, and the African Violet Society of America, grow.

Please share this message at your next meeting, and email it to your members who were unable to attend. The list will be sent to whoever is the contact person for your club.

Please remember that the Membership Committee is always looking for ideas to increase membership, so please feel free to contact me at the email address listed above.

Thanks in advance for your help!



Affiliate Contacts

Lynne Wilson, Affiliates Chairman

645 Hudson Avenue

Tampa, FL 33606-3926

Email: wilsonav@tampabay.rr.com

I recently sent a message to all of the affiliate contacts on behalf of Kathy Bell and Sylvia Leeds, who are serving on the AVSA Membership & Promotion Committee. Their goal is to increase club membership by sending information about new AVSA members to the local clubs so that they may contact them. This effort requires both time and patience, and they are finding their search is stalled when they try to match the new members to the contacts listed on the AVSA website.

Often, the contacts listed have new email addresses, full mailboxes, or other problems connected to receiving messages. Please check your club's information by looking on the AVSA website <www.AVSA.org>, to see that your

affiliate information is correct as posted. Your club has the opportunity to list two contacts. *Please be sure your contact persons have their e-mail information and phone numbers listed correctly and are able to receive messages and will check the website and let AVSA know of any changes and corrections that need to be made to their individual sites.* These contacts do not need to be changed every time a new slate of officers is elected. Dedicated and conscientious members, who are able to relay the information they receive, as well as reply to an email or answer a phone call, and give potential guests and new members basic information, is all that is required to be the contact for the affiliated club.

Aeschynanthus

By Mel Grice

My favorite genus of Gesneriads is *Aeschynanthus* (es kin ANTH us). This Old World genus of the Gesneriad family comes to us from southern Asia and the western Pacific Islands. They are analogous in many ways to the New World genus *Columnnea* (ko LUM nee a), found in Central and South America. Both of these tropical herbs are usually trailing epiphytes with fairly large, showy flowers. The dictionary defines an epiphyte as, "a plant that grows on another plant but is not parasitic, such as the numerous ferns, bromeliads, air plants, and orchids growing on tree trunks in tropical rain forests."

Aeschynanthus are shrubby, or trailing plants with dark green or mottled waxy leaves. They are noted for their brilliant red, orange, yellow, or pink tubular flowers that often appear in large terminal clusters on the end of the vining growth. The shape of the flower calyx and emerging bud has given some varieties the name "Lipstick Plant". The original "Lipstick Plant", *A. lobbianus*, has hard-surfaced shiny leaves, with bright red flowers that emerge from a very dark red tubular calyx, in a fashion reminiscent of lipstick emerging from a tube. *Aeschynanthus* flowers are frequently bird-pollinated in nature.

Aeschynanthus prefer warmth (70-80°F) (21-27°C) and high humidity since they come from tropical rain forests. Depending on their growth habit, they can be grown in a hanging pot or upright on a fluorescent light stand or windowsill. Most prefer a well-drained potting mix that is allowed to dry out slightly between waterings. I have sent many *Aeschynanthus* to the compost heap by over-watering. They do not grow in pots of sterilized soil in nature. You may have noticed that roots extend from each leaf node if there is sufficient humidity. These roots attach themselves to trees and boulders as the plant vines grow. They receive frequent rain showers that quickly run off the roots. Most nutrients that

they receive come from the water running off the trees or rocks on which the plants have attached themselves. **THEY DO NOT GROW IN A SWAMP.**

I make a potting soil mixture that I call my "epiphyte" mix, for lack of a better name. I use equal parts peat, perlite, and vermiculite. I add horticultural charcoal, small piece orchid bark, and some long-fiber sphagnum moss that I shred into smaller pieces before adding to the mixture. Since the roots of epiphytic plants are not growing in much soil (if any) in nature, they do not require the lime that African violet growers usually add to African violet soil mixes. So leave out the lime. I used to try to grow all Gesneriads in my basic African violet soil mix, but now I have different recipes that try to mimic the natural growing conditions. Truly, one size does not fit all.

Propagation of *Aeschynanthus* is by tip cuttings. Fill a pot with the above soil mixture and place as many cuttings as you have, evenly-spaced around the soil surface. Place each cutting of two to four leaves so that the bottom pair of leaves is making contact with the soil, since the new roots will come from the leaf nodes. Place the pot in a plastic bag or under a dome where it will receive light, but not direct sunlight, and you will soon have a nice pot of *Aeschynanthus*. Most *Aeschynanthus* leaves are fairly succulent, and you can put down a single leaf to root like an African violet, but this seems to take a lot longer to produce a new plant. (I only try this when I have a cutting that is new to me and I want to insure that *something* survives if the tip cutting does not.)

Some popular hybrids are *A.* 'Black Pagoda', a free blooming plant with mottled leaves and yellow flowers, *A.* 'Rigel' with orange flowers, and *A.* 'Big Apple' with brick-red flowers.

From *The Violet Connection*, publication of the Ohio State AVS
Vol. 57, Issue 53



John Carter & Harry Webber



Arizona Attendees

FUN IN RENO



Rich Follett



Al & Edna Rourke



Tom & Libby Glembocki

Planting by Moon Signs

All tables use Eastern Time. Please calculate the difference between your time zone and Eastern.

Moon in Aries

Barren and dry, fiery and masculine. Used for destroying noxious growths, weeds, pests, etc., and for cultivating.

Moon in Taurus

Productive and moist, earthy and feminine. Used for planting many crops, particularly potatoes and root crops, and when hardiness is important. Also used for lettuce, cabbage, and similar leafy vegetables.

Moon in Gemini

Barren and dry, airy and masculine. Used for destroying noxious growths, weeds and pests, and for cultivation.

Moon in Cancer

Very fruitful and moist, watery and feminine. This is the most productive sign; used extensively for planting and irrigation.

Moon in Leo

Barren and dry, fiery and masculine. This is the most barren sign, used only for killing weeds and for cultivation.

Moon in Virgo

Barren and moist, earthy and feminine. Good for cultivation and destroying weeds and pests.

Moon in Libra

Semi-fruitful and moist, airy and masculine. Used for planting many crops and producing good pulp growth and roots. A very good sign for flowers and vines. Also used for seeding hay, corn fodder, etc.

Moon in Scorpio

Very fruitful and moist, watery and feminine. Nearly as productive as Cancer; used for the same purposes. Especially good for vine growth and sturdiness.

Moon in Sagittarius

Barren and dry, fiery and masculine. Used for planting onions, seeding hay, and for cultivation.

Moon in Capricorn

Productive and dry, earthy and feminine. Used for planting potatoes, tubers, etc.

Moon in Aquarius

Barren and dry, airy and masculine. Used for cultivation and destroying noxious growths, weeds, and pests.

Moon in Pisces

Very fruitful and moist, watery and feminine. Used along with Cancer and Scorpio, especially good for root growth.

July Moon Table

Date	Sign	Element	Nature	Phase
1 Wed 12:18 am	Scorpio	Water	Fruitful	2nd
2 Thu	Scorpio	Water	Fruitful	2nd
3 Fri 10:10 am	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	2nd
4 Sat	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	2nd
5 Sun 10:07 pm	Capricorn	Earth	Semi-fruitful	2nd
6 Mon	Capricorn	Earth	Semi-fruitful	2nd
7 Tue	Capricorn	Earth	Semi-fruitful	3rd 5:21 am
8 Wed 11:05 am	Aquarius	Air	Barren	3rd
9 Thu	Aquarius	Air	Barren	3rd
10 Fri 11:44 pm	Pisces	Water	Fruitful	3rd
11 Sat	Pisces	Water	Fruitful	3rd
12 Sun	Pisces	Water	Fruitful	3rd
13 Mon 10:40 am	Aries	Fire	Barren	3rd
14 Tue	Aries	Fire	Barren	3rd
15 Wed 6:30 pm	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	4th 5:53 am
16 Thu	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	4th
17 Fri 10:41 pm	Gemini	Air	Barren	4th
18 Sat	Gemini	Air	Barren	4th
19 Sun 11:51 pm	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	4th
20 Mon	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	4th
21 Tue 11:27 pm	Leo	Fire	Barren	1st 10:54 pm
22 Wed	Leo	Fire	Barren	1st
23 Thu 11:22 pm	Virgo	Earth	Barren	1st
24 Fri	Virgo	Earth	Barren	1st
25 Sat	Virgo	Earth	Barren	1st
26 Sun 1:25 am	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	1st
27 Mon	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	1st
28 Tue 6:56 am	Scorpio	Water	Fruitful	2nd 6:00 pm
29 Wed	Scorpio	Water	Fruitful	2nd
30 Thu 4:10 pm	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	2nd
31 Fri	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	2nd

August Moon Table

Date	Sign	Element	Nature	Phase
1 Sat	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	2nd
2 Sun 4:08 am	Capricorn	Earth	Semi-fruitful	2nd
3 Mon	Capricorn	Earth	Semi-fruitful	2nd
4 Tue 5:08 pm	Aquarius	Air	Barren	2nd
5 Wed	Aquarius	Air	Barren	3rd 8:55 pm
6 Thu	Aquarius	Air	Barren	3rd
7 Fri 5:34 am	Pisces	Water	Fruitful	3rd
8 Sat	Pisces	Water	Fruitful	3rd
9 Sun 4:23 pm	Aries	Fire	Barren	3rd
10 Mon	Aries	Fire	Barren	3rd
11 Tue	Aries	Fire	Barren	3rd
12 Wed 12:49 am	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	3rd
13 Thu	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	4th 2:55 pm
14 Fri 6:25 am	Gemini	Air	Barren	4th
15 Sat	Gemini	Air	Barren	4th
16 Sun 9:13 am	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	4th
17 Mon	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	4th
18 Tue 9:56 am	Leo	Fire	Barren	4th
19 Wed	Leo	Fire	Barren	4th
20 Thu 10:00 am	Virgo	Earth	Barren	1st 6:01 am
21 Fri	Virgo	Earth	Barren	1st
22 Sat 11:12 am	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	1st
23 Sun	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	1st
24 Mon 3:16 pm	Scorpio	Water	Fruitful	1st
25 Tue	Scorpio	Water	Fruitful	1st
26 Wed 11:16 pm	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	1st
27 Thu	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	2nd 7:42 am
28 Fri	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	2nd
29 Sat 10:44 am	Capricorn	Earth	Semi-fruitful	2nd
30 Sun	Capricorn	Earth	Semi-fruitful	2nd
31 Mon 11:43 pm	Aquarius	Air	Barren	2nd

Reprinted with permission from Llewellyn's 2009 Moon Sign Book, published by Llewellyn Publications, ISBN 0-7387-0124-6



Photo Credit: Ann-Marie Keene

Streptocarpus 'Alissa'

Exhibited by: Holly Walker

Getting a New Affiliate Off the Ground and Running

By Carolee Carter

African Violet Club of Ocala (Florida)

What can be said about starting a new affiliate that hasn't been said before? Yes, there have been a lot of success stories. You've read about them in the pages of AVM. So, what makes this story any different?

I was president of two very energetic and strong AVSA affiliates – one in South Florida; the other in Northern California. When my husband and I were ready to move yet again, one of my conditions was to find a “retirement” location that had an affiliate within driving distance (I drove 72 miles each way to my meetings every month in California). Well, that was not to be. We fell in love with Ocala, Florida, and while the closest affiliate was only 25 miles away, it met during the day in the middle of the week. I was still working!

I began to collect names. I participated in several AV Internet groups, and whenever I saw someone's name from Central Florida, I added it to my list. I flew under the radar for two years but rejoined the AV Council of Florida to have at least some connection to the 100 violets I transported cross-country from California! Council members knew I was on the prowl for names of anyone within a 50-mile radius of my new home. Our AVSA Affiliate Chair also gave me names of members in my area. I spoke at garden clubs, mentioned that I was planning to form a club, and added more contacts. My list began to grow.

Then, two members of another affiliate moved to Ocala, and they urged me to get a plan of action into first gear. After a couple of planning sessions, I found a meeting location at our library, prepared a flyer, and then advertised heavily in every venue I could think of: local and community newspapers, garden centers, grocery store bulletin boards, the library, and, of course, my coveted list of names. I hoped that we could lure a dozen people and was amazed when 22 people appeared at our first meeting! We grew out of our library space in one year.

So, what's our secret to success? Here, in no special order, are my random thoughts:

- I think the Ocala market was ripe for an affiliate. There are clubs for camellias, roses, bonsai, and they all seem to be successful. I heard the same story over and over again about how their grandma grew beautiful African violets, but when they moved to Florida they all died. Could you help?
- I purposely selected a morning meeting time on a Saturday and chose a location that was easy to find. I wanted to capture both working and retired folks and knew from experience that nights and weekdays were the kiss of death.
- Constant monthly advertising in the media is a must, and make sure you include a phone number or email address. Ask the publication how soon they need your information. Every month, we're listed in the “What's Happening” section of our newspapers which always prompts phone calls and emails. After a half dozen meetings, a reporter and photographer visited our meeting which resulted in a great story about how the “new club on the block” was doing.
- I connected with the local Master Gardeners' office and told them of our existence. I urged them to feel free to contact me if anyone called with a question concerning African violets. And, we contacted local garden clubs with the same information that results in at least 2-3 talks to their groups each year.
- I created a tri-fold flyer with general growing tips and included information about our meetings. One of our members sells African violets at the Master Gardeners' Spring Show, and she includes the flyer with every sale.
- I printed business cards with meeting and contact information, for a very nominal cost. Every member carries a half-dozen in their wallet. When we spot someone looking at violets in the garden centers, we offer them a card and encourage them to call if they have a problem.
- At our meetings, I always give a handout that pertains to the topic of the program.
- Every new member receives a “New Member's Packet” in a folder with their name on it. It contains a welcome letter, bylaws, AVSA membership form, basic AV information and a majority of the handouts that have been shared at past meetings. This is a valuable way in which to bring a new member up to speed about topics we have already discussed.
- Permanent Name Tags are made for each member. It's very important to keep everyone's name in view so we remember them and call them by their name.
- A week prior to our monthly meeting, I send an email to our members (with copies mailed to snail-mail members) reminding them of our program along with any other news to share. I also include those who have called during the month as a reminder.
- I do the usual stuff that every club does:
 - Hold a raffle at each meeting. I began by setting down dozens of leaves and separating the babies to have enough plants each month for the raffle. Everyone always went home with a half-dozen or more plants, and our treasury kept growing. Now, others are contributing.

- Providing hands-on workshops is a must. It gets everyone working together instead of just listening to me ramble at each meeting.
- Stage a DAWG show with silly prizes; it's always fun. This was a huge hit our first year because our new growers weren't very good yet.
- Invite interesting guest speakers. Our first year we had four speakers from the Florida Council who covered a wide range of subjects. The members loved it.
- Publish a Yearbook. I've done this for three years but will relinquish this effort because we just launched a great website at a minimal cost that contains everything you would ever want to know about AVs and the club – and more! It's still being tweaked, but it's a good start (www.africanvioletclubofocala.org).
- Devote a portion of every meeting for a Show and Tell session. Ask members to assess the plants and agree upon a plan of action for the grower.
- Give each member their choice of a raffle plant in their birthday month. They love being able to get a "first pick!"
- At our meetings, I:
 - Ensure that the business meeting is SHORT – no more than 15-20 minutes. If any serious business needs to be discussed, the Board will review the issue, and a summary is presented to the membership. Minutes are not read because they are posted on the website.
 - Encourage questions – especially from novices. Ask them to interrupt if they don't understand. If no one is asking questions, I sometimes ask *them* questions just to see if they're paying attention! No one ever feels intimidated by others with more knowledge. No question is silly, and everyone helps with the answer. You might say this is a no-brainer, but some people are timid.
 - Assign others to be a part of the program. If they're unsure of the topic, give them some research material. People want to feel included.
 - This is important – Steer the meeting so that it is always positive and informative. You want people to leave thinking they didn't waste their time that day. Make the meeting fun, factual, serious, and to the Point. Challenge members when appropriate and always be open to new ideas. Because we are new, we don't fall victim to that dreaded comment heard in long-established clubs "but we've always done it that way."
- It is imperative that the president be ORGANIZED. I can't tell you how valuable it is to stay on top of things to ensure everyone is recognized and included at every meeting. Have you answered everyone's questions from the last meeting? Is there something you forgot to share? Prepare a script! Even though you won't read it verbatim, if you highlight each topic, then you can easily flow through all that needs to be said. Make notes during the meeting on your script. After every meeting, I spend a couple of hours organizing everything for our next meeting while it is still fresh in my mind.
- Last – YOU MUST MAINTAIN A SENSE OF HUMOR! I always manage to get the crowd laughing at my past mistakes. And . . . it always helps if you have a competent assistant – in my case, it's my husband, who always gets everyone laughing.

The African Violet Club of Ocala is now 2 1/2 years old and currently has 46 very enthusiastic members from a 50-mile radius. We lost 13 members after year one but gained those back within four months. Every month I receive at least one or two phone calls from someone who wants to visit our next meeting, so the future still looks bright.

If I were asked to name the biggest reason for our apparent success in such a short time, it would be rising to the challenge when asked by the state affiliate to host the state's annual convention and show last year. What? Are you kidding? We were one year old when this invitation occurred. I said I'd mention it to the club and see how many passed out. They surprised me. They thought it was a great idea. The show turned out to be one of the best in recent years and every member stepped up to the plate with enthusiasm. One member won Best in Show, another Best in Design, two others won Best Novice Horticulture and Best Novice Design, and several more won blue ribbons for their entries! And, best award of all – everyone made new friends.

On reflection, yes, it did take a few bucks to get the club rolling, and I certainly contributed my own funds until the treasury had grown. But, it paid off. If what I've shared seems like a lot of work, well, yes it was for the first few months, but I was amazed how everything seemed to fall together and flow. The process rolls along and gathers its own steam. It's really not as difficult as it might seem on paper. So, step up to the challenge!

How long will it last before the bubble bursts? Hard to tell. We're the new kid on the block, which has its advantages. Right now, everyone is having a lot of fun, and they tell me they look forward to each month's meetings. I couldn't ask for more than that.



African Violets Go to School

By Brenda Petry, the Violet Gallery

My sister, Melody Hartman, grew and sold African violets when her children were small. Her business, Woodland Violetry, in Columbia, Pennsylvania, provided income to pay for her two children to take violin lessons. Now that her children are grown and accomplished violinists, she has returned to teaching.

This year at Hinkletown Mennonite School, in Hinkletown, Pennsylvania, besides teaching math and computer, Mrs. Hartman was required to sponsor a cluster or club group for students. So thanks to her love of African violets, she decided to give students an opportunity to grow violets in the classroom.

Nestled among the computers, desks, and tables is a small light stand with trays of violets.



Light stand at Hinkletown Mennonite School with African violet starts.

The club meets once a week for one hour and 15 minutes. The students began by learning basic culture techniques. They divided the leaf plugs, put them into trays, and learned to water and care for them under the light. Other violet plants were moved into larger pots, and some were planted in self-watering Dandy pots.



Preparing the trays for planting.



Watering and caring for African violets at school.

One club session involved researching information on the computer. The students looked at web sites and learned about the violet growers and varieties that are available.

For another session, Mrs. Hartman invited me to visit and talk about my methods of growing plants. I also shared a slide show about the species growing in Africa. I explained how the original violets were found and are now the genetic foundation of the wonderful varieties that are available for growing.

The club members also were shown a presentation of the different violet blossom types, and then had a mini quiz to identify violet types from pictures of the blooms.



Brenda Petry demonstrating how to pot down an African violet.

A highlight of the club this year was a trip to the Philadelphia Flower Show in March to visit the Violet Gallery's booth and learn about the marketing of plants. The club was enthralled with the show "Bella Italia."



The African violet Club visits the Philadelphia Flower Show.

During my visit to the school, the girls were so excited to be growing African violets. They knew the names of the varieties when I spoke of different plants. I mentioned that 'Powwow' is a great red. "We have that one," one of the girls piped up. As we talked about violets with fantasy in the blooms, they remembered that they are also growing 'Stargate,' a fantasy violet.

Six girls have found a new love, growing African violets. Their interest has extended to some of their family members. One student talked about her grandmother's collection of violets on a table by a window. Another grandmother accompanied the students to the flower show. It is exciting to see the love of violets shared with a new generation.

Congratulations to the Hinkletown Mennonite School, Mrs. Hartman, and the girls in the African Violet Club! The classroom provided new way of promoting this wonderful hobby of growing African violets.



Melody Hartman, the girls in the African violet Club, and Brenda Petry learn about growing large plants and species African violets.

The AVSA Reno Convention: On Lake Tahoe



To Show - Know Your Plant!

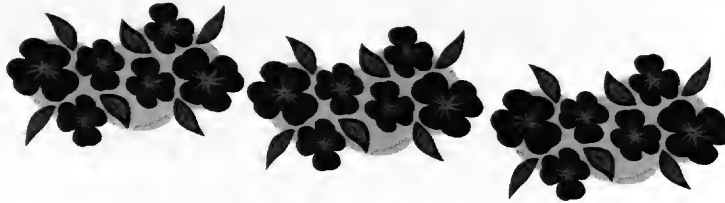
1. Have you observed this particular variety of plant from the time it is a baby plantlet just separated from its motherleaf until it is about a year old? This is useful in having an overall idea of what to expect from your show hopeful. For example, you can determine if the plant is blooming true to variety and how long it takes to come into full bloom.
2. Does it have a symmetrical growth habit, or do the leaves tend to grow in an irregular pattern? Since the symmetry of the plant can count for 30 percent of its points when being judged, this is the element that should be given careful consideration.
3. Does the plant grow fast or slow compared to others? If you want a big plant, the faster grower is more likely to produce it in less than a year provided it does so in an orderly manner and does not become gangly with long petioles and small leaves.
4. Is the flowering habit prolific or sparse? The more prolific bloomers are the varieties to be chosen, especially if they have good, symmetrical foliage as well.
5. Are the flower pedicels sturdy, standing up above the foliage? Heavy heads of bloom can cause weak stalks to

allow the flowers to lie on the foliage, and dead blooms will damage the foliage.

6. Can you determine if the flowering nodes produce more than one stem? If more than one stem appears from the axil of leaf and main stem, this is a definite asset when attempting to produce a huge bouquet of blossoms.
7. If the African violet is a trailer, does it consistently produce more than three branches? If not, you may wish to force it to branch by removing the four center leaves of the first crown to appear.
8. If the plant is a miniature, does it occasionally produce a row of larger leaves? A change in the growing environment, including changing fertilizers, can sometimes produce this larger row. It means that this particular variety may need to have a very stable set of growing conditions.

There are probably other questions you could ask about why your particular plant does certain things, but these are the basic things to look for when starting to select possible show entries.

Saintpaulia International News



Tips for Starting African Violets from Leaves

1. Choose a healthy leaf from one of the middle rows of the plant.
2. Cut the leaf stem at a 45° angle so the cut side will face up when planted. Plantlets will develop from the cut area.
3. Start leaves in small containers; 3 oz solo cups, smaller individual yogurt cups, 2" pots, etc. Fill with soil, and add warm water to moisten before putting the leaf down. The potting medium used can be your regular potting mix, or plain vermiculite, perlite, or some other combination. It is best not to use a potting mix that contains fertilizer.
4. Place the cut tip of the leaf no more than 1/2" below the surface of the potting mix.
5. Once the African violet leaves are planted in the moistened medium for rooting, place this container under a

dome in your growing tray or cover with a plastic baggie. This will keep the humidity high around the leaf.

6. If a leaf is taking forever to produce babies, shock the leaf by cutting the top third off and/or slam the bottom of the pot against a counter to loosen the potting mix and warn the leaf that if it doesn't produce, then it's history.
7. Some growers still prefer to start leaves in water (my mother and grandmothers favorite method. But, African violets that have been started by putting a leaf in a small container of water produces "water roots."
8. Once they are put into soil, the plant has to develop "soil roots" in order to grow.

The Dixie News, Publication of the Dixie AVS
Vol. 57, No.1

Violets in the Community

By Barbara Conrad • Encinitas, CA

Plant enthusiasts can tell you all about pruning rose bushes and how to split and repot an orchid, but anything about our African violets... hold on here. These horticulturists are suddenly at a loss for words, stopping in their tracks. Wide-eyed and anxious, most of these folks look as if a taboo subject has been raised.

Aha! Here's where you can slide open the door to dismiss their fears in cultivating and propagating our lovely saintpaulias. Unfortunately, plant lovers probably won't come to you asking questions, as they have already had too many other plants to learn about. You need to get out into the community and invite people into your world of beautiful violets.

We understand why we need to expose more people to our hobby, but where? And, how? It can be quite easy: Feel your way slowly by giving growing tips, a plant, leaves, a plastic bag of fertilizer, and encouragement to a few of your personal friends. This one-on-one exposure is great motivation for them to get started on a new hobby. At the same time, you are building up confidence in your capability to speak easily about something for which you have a passion. Having your friends' respect and appreciation for your help is a reward in itself. Listen to their questions, which teaches you what you need to include in your next series of presentations.

Then, try talking to a small group at a local church or another plant society, such as a begonia club. Senior centers are always looking for new topics as presentations. They will often offer an honorarium to cover your gasoline costs, handouts, and possibly a plant for each attendee. If you are a bit shy, bring along a friend to be in the audience and focus for as long as necessary on that smiling, encouraging face.

What should you say? Talk to these new faces just the way you did with your friends at home. Tell them how you became involved with violets. Show them baby plants next to their mamas, and separate a few. Cut a leaf for propagation. Discuss lighting, water, fertilizer, and violet pests. That will easily keep you going for a half-hour, which is just long

enough. Then allow fifteen minutes or so for questions and answers.

This is your ideal opportunity to offer information about AVSA and pass around back issues of the *African Violet Magazine*. Give details about your own club. Various plants may be on display: a standard, a semiminiature, a miniature, a trailer, and a gesneriad. A large, lightweight, plastic storage box filled with excelsior is excellent for this purpose, to be rolled on a luggage dolly. At least one plant may be given out as a door prize, plus the back issues of the AVM. Handouts on cultivation and propagation are passed out along with supplies. These inexpensive kits include a plastic cup, a wick, perlite, starter mix, two leaves, and a tiny dab of fertilizer. If you happen to have lots of small starter plants on hand, bring those along too. However, this is not a time to sell plants.

Our annual San Diego County Fair has an outdoor horticultural grandstand for speakers. This is a wonderful opportunity to educate a larger audience. Our club also reserves a one-day booth with lots of educational handouts as well as enthusiasm.

This past year I was asked to speak at a Horticultural Judges' Council meeting in San Diego. These judges have had a difficult time judging violets in their various community flower shows.

Retirement homes are another outlet with an appreciative audience. Many of the residents like to share their violet experiences from years gone by as violets bring about fond memories. I am the richer person in these outings. While I am giving my time and sharing, I am also learning from others. It has become another avenue of volunteering.

Recently, I was interviewed for our city's Home and Garden Magazine. The feature story with photos resulted in a multitude of emails, mostly asking specific questions. This experience showed me that the community interest in violets is very much alive. We just need to reach out to these people. Do it and have fun!

Coming Events Deadlines

January Issue - November 1

March Issue - January 1

May Issue - March 1

July Issue - May 1

September Issue - July 1

November Issue - September 1

Announcing!! New DVDs from the AVSA Library Committee Ideal for Club and Personal Use

African Violet Trailers - Making Them Do What I Want Them to Do.

This is an update of an older AVSA 35mm Slide show. Viewers will see and hear Bev Promersberger demonstrate and describe her successful method of growing award winning trailers. **Price \$19.95.**



Understanding the African Violet Species - Two DVD set with 4 parts:

Part 1 - Discovery, Origin, Habitat, Conservation.

Part 2 - Understanding the New Species Classification.

Part 3 - Species Photo Gallery.

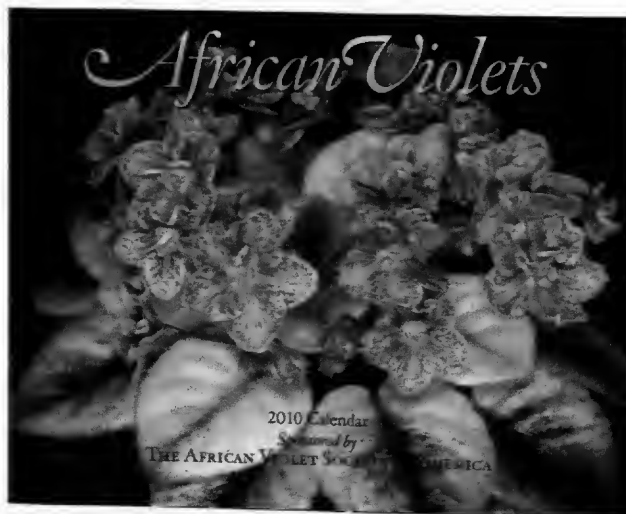
Part 4 - Culture, Growing, Showing the Species.

Information researched and written by Barbara Pershing and Jeff Smith. Narrated by Richard Nicholas. Produced by Tom Glembocki for the AVSA Library. **Price \$29.94.**



AVSA's 2010 Calendar

The perfect gift for lovers of African Violets!



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BASIC CARE OF AFRICAN VIOLETS

By Annette Kennedy

LIGHT

Most of us are attracted to an African violet by its flowers, and our aim is to keep it flowering as long as possible. One of the requirements for this is bright light which is why you find African violets growing on windowsills. African violets should avoid direct sun, because like us, they can be burned.

Be aware of net curtains on windows, or shade cloth or shrubbery on the outside, which can reduce the light intensity to your plant. When growing in natural light, be sure to turn your plant so it doesn't grow lopsided.

FOOD

This is another essential to keep your plant in flower. There are various African violet foods available, so whichever you use be sure to follow the instructions. With my plant food I use 1 cap into 2 liters (1/2 gallon) of water, and it is diluted enough to use all the time. By using a nutrient, your African violet is constantly fed while it is watered, which helps it to grow and flower. African violets will flower almost all year round, and feeding them regularly helps them to do this.

Sometimes a plant may flower almost all the time, but usually they will flower and have a rest, then flower again.

WATERING

Over-watering is the biggest killer of African violets. There are no rules on how to water your African violet. They can be watered from the top, in the saucer, or as most serious growers do, by wick watering. When watering from the top or in the saucer, tip out any excess after 1/2 hour. Only water when your potting mix feels a bit dry, not regularly every Monday or so.

WICK WATERING

This method is when your plant has a wick inserted into the pot from the bottom, and it hangs down into the water which is drawn up by capillary action. The wick must be a synthetic cord, such as nylon blind cord, nylon or acrylic 8 ply wool, or nylon pantyhose cut into thin strips. If you use a cotton cord, it will soon rot and be of no use to your plant.

The wick watering system is easy to use in conjunction with the self-watering "potwells," or reservoirs. These have a clear base, so you can easily see when it is empty. That is when your plant needs watering, so lift the pot out and fill the potwell only up to the top of the clear saucer, then replace your plant, and it will look after itself. Another option is to use

a "take out" container with a hole in the center of the lid. Your plant can sit on the lid with its wick through the hole and into the nutrient.

POTTING MIX

If you have bought your African violet through a club meeting or annual show, or from a specialist grower, it is likely growing in a soil-less potting mix. A soil-less potting mix contains no dirt or compost, it is just a growing medium made mainly from peat moss, perlite, and vermiculite, which is why you need to use plant food. It is very open, free draining, and well suited for wick watering.

If you bought your African violet from a nursery or garden center, chances are it is in a heavier potting mix that is not suitable for wick watering, so if you want to use this system you will need to repot in a lighter soil. Always use clean pots, and no bigger than a 4" pot. Choose the size pot to suit your plant.

ENVIRONMENT

African violets like the same conditions as you and I; ideally the temperature should be between 18 - 25 C. (65 - 77 F.) degrees. It doesn't matter what type of heating or cooling you have in your home, but like us, your violets should not be directly in front of these appliances.

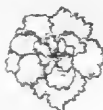
Some people put African violets in their bathroom to get the benefit of steam, but the steam is usually there for a short time, and then the rest of the time your bathroom can be one of the coldest rooms in the house.

The leaves on African violets will get dusty just like other things in your home. To clean them, use a soft brush, support a leaf with one hand under it, and gently brush the leaf from the center to the outside. When flowers are spent, remove individual blooms, and when all blooms on a stem have finished, remove the flower stem at the base where it joins to the plant.

LEARN

Attend local African violet club meetings for help and advice from other members who are willing to share their ideas.

From the *Newsletter* of the
Early Morn AV Group, Inc.
Vol. 35, #3 - April '09



FOLIAGE TYPES

African violet foliage ranges in color from light green through a dark mahogany green. Markings on variegated foliage (in addition to shades of green) can be white, cream, light yellow, or rosy shades from light pink to a deep wine red. Besides color, the shapes of the leaves are also distinctive. The more common foliage types are:



Compound, Wasp, Bustle, or Piggyback: Leaves are compound with one large and two smaller lobes.



Girl: Deeply scalloped leaves, usually rounded or heart-shaped with white to yellow markings at the base of each leaf. These markings can extend to the leaf blades and edges of the leaf.



Holly: Heavily crested leaves with the leaf edges curled forward or bent back with exaggerated wavy edges resembling holly in form.



Longifolia or Spider: Narrow pointed strap-like leaves with either plain or wavy edges.



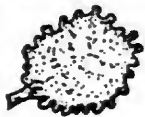
Plain or Tailored: Plain in texture and form; it is sometimes known as standard or boy type foliage.



Pointed: Ends of the leaves come to a definite point.



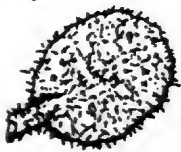
Quilted: Leaves have distinct raised areas between the veins. Some leaves have pie-crust edging.



Ruffled, Fringed, Wavy, or Fluted: Leaves have serrated or ragged edges.



Spooned, Ovate, Cupped-up: Leaves are concave with high edges like a spoon.



Supreme: Leaves are thick, hairy, and quilted with strong pencil-like petioles.



Variegated: Leaves (in addition to shades of green) can be marked with white, cream, light yellow, or rosy shades from light pink to a deep wine red.

- A. Variegated foliage: Defines all variegation other than two listed below.
- B. Crown variegation
- C. Mosaic variegation

A Bit of Violet Fun: "Over Here! What About Me?"

By Rob and Olive Ma Robinson

At least that's what I thought I was hearing as I groomed a shelf of miniature violets recently. I've been told that some people talk to their plants, but one of them, among the hundreds there on the shelf, seemed to be talking to me! Over where? And, just who is "me," anyway? I continued to look. There he was!

One pathetic-looking plant that seemingly hadn't seen water in ages, stared sadly at me from amongst his well-watered neighbors. His leaves were a dull, grayish-green color, and not having the strength to hold themselves flat, they curled down over the pot. As I reached to rescue him, he nearly fell over, without enough weight to hold himself up. Only his heavier, water-logged friends on either side had kept him from tipping over as I fumbled to pick him up. I gave him a drink of water, but it ran from the surface of the soil. The poor thing was dying of thirst, yet hadn't the strength to drink.

He was the Rodney Dangerfield of violets, ignored and unappreciated, and "getting no respect." How could this have happened? Only yesterday that shelf has been watered. He had to have literally sat in a puddle of water much of the day. Even today, the blanket was still damp. Everyone else on the shelf seemed well-watered and happy. Every one of them had water; why didn't this one choose to drink? Was it an attempted suicide or a last, desperate attempt to gain my attention and respect?

Perhaps more sinister forces were at work. I had to examine the scene to look for clues. What made this plant unique? Let's see... same variety, potted in the same soil, at the same time, growing in the same environment. No clues there. Better take a closer look at the victim. Other than his ghostly appearance, there's nothing unusual about him outwardly. Time to turn him over.

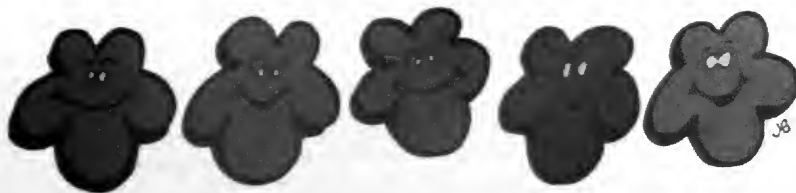
And, there it is! The smoking gun! *There was no drainage hole!* He could have been sitting in water up to his pot rim, bobbing up and down, and he still would have died of thirst! It seems that no one had ever bothered to check if there was a hole in the bottom of his pot!

Just imagine what his life must have been like. His infancy was comfortable enough. After his separation from mom, he was given his own pot and soil, watered, and left to spend the next few weeks in the warm, humid confines of a tray covered with a clear dome. Early childhood arrives, and the dome is removed. He and his siblings can experience the fresh air together - probably his last happy memory. Soon, the soil around his feet begins to dry, normal growing pains shared by all. Besides, here comes the first watering - he can see the tray being filled, a giant trough from which he and forty-three others can drink. Yet he's still thirsty. Why? Days of dryness and worry pass. Finally, clinging to life, it's time for watering again. Being so much drier than everyone else, he's noticed and given a little squirt from the top as the tray is filled again.

Childhood, and a few more weeks of worry pass. It's time to be given his freedom. He and his tray-mates are placed on the shelf, on the blanket. Adolescence surely had to be happier than his tormented childhood. His future looked bright. If all went well, he'd be blooming in another couple of months. Then, someone nice might adopt him and give him a good home. He would reward their tender loving care by continuing to grow and bloom, prompting "oohs", "aahs" and admiration from the friends of his adoptive parents. Alas, it wasn't to be. Adolescence proved as traumatic as childhood. A vicious circle of health, near death, and resurrection. Every watering day for three months, he must have futilely screamed, "Over here, don't forget about me!"

It would be different now. Realizing his predicament and understanding his life story, I took pity on him. He deserved the same chance at a happy ending as everyone else. I turned him over, cut a hole in his bottom, and let him sit in a saucer of water, being sure he slurped up every last drop. Then I returned him to the shelf. Soon he would look the same as his neighbors - healthy, green, and in bloom, lost amongst their sameness, but still special.

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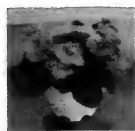
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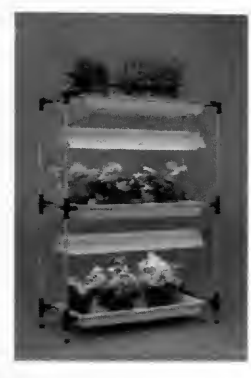
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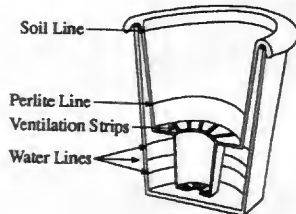
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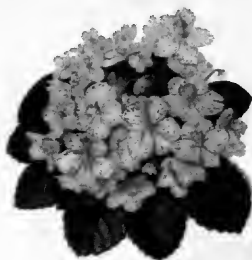
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