

VioletsFun

Violet Barn newsletter

October 2023 - # 116



(Some of) What's New

Hunter's Itsy Bitsy. Semidouble lavender pansies with darker purple edging over nice miniature foliage. Easy and profuse bloomer. A limited number available.

Check the website for all of the newest varieties.

Display and sale - November 5

Join us for some **"Violet Fun" on November 5**. Rather than travelling with our plants to a show, we are having the show here. We are currently growing many plants for display, both large (standard violets and streptocarpus) and small (miniatures).

Sales plants will be available of the displayed, and not displayed, plants--the "show" plants will be for sale as well (at shop--sorry we cannot ship them). Free advice (if requested) and refreshments also provided.

If you have specific plants you would like to purchase, consider pre-ordering.

Place an online order, with payment, and state "will pick up Nov 5". We will remove shipping costs when we download order, and have plants packed and ready for you when you arrive--you can always add plants during your visit.

[I plan to be there](#)

News and updates:

We continue to guarantee safe arrival of plants by any means shipped at this time. Our "in season" shipping continues through October. "Winter" shipping begins in November, at which time we will guarantee safe arrival only when Express mail is selected. The date at which we make this change will greatly depend upon our weather and will appear prominently on the website.

My plant looks like this:



Mildew season is here! With the arrival of autumn and cooler temperatures, we've started getting calls and emails with a familiar problem--"powdery mildew". This is the white powder that will appear seemingly overnight on foliage and blooms.

A very common problem, even for the best growers. Mildew spores are always in the air around us. When the conditions are conducive, they will settle on your plants and spread. Cooler nighttime temperatures, like those on a windowsill or lower shelf of a plant stand, and humid, stagnant, air make the appearance of mildew more likely on your plants.

Good air circulation in the room and among plants will allow temperatures to equalize within the room and among the plants (no "cool spots"). Not crowding plants will help, as air can move among and between plants. For treatment of a heavily affected plant, try a gentle cleaning in mild dish soap and room temperature water. Suds up your fingers, gently spread over the leaves, then rinse. To treat with a spray, **"neem"** oil is an excellent choice and what we use, as we have a large number of plants. Nontoxic and easy when used as directed.

This month's questions

My begonia and Saintpaulia brevopilosa looked great upon arrival a month ago. As you can see now (a month later) the begonia is gone and the S. brevopilosa doesn't look good.

Looking at your before and after photos, we can make a guess as to what might have gone wrong. Judging by the symptoms (rotted, or lost outer/older leaves) and the appearance of the plant and soil (white crust on surface) in the photos, guessing that plants were overwatered from the bottom. S. brevopilosa is a small growing plant with a smaller root system. If the soil is too wet, the root system cannot process the extra water and you will get the rotting leaves shown. Begonias get the same care as violets, but their range of tolerance is much smaller than violets simply because of their thinner, less succulent, leaves and stems--the foliage does not have the ability to withstand wilt (the leaf tissue holds less water) or overwatering (cannot hold the excess water) as thicker violet leaves do. They also have a smaller range of temperature and humidity tolerance than do violets for the same reason--easier to see the dried leaf edges, or rotted leaf stems, that you show. See below for a continued explanation.

Related question: One of my streps from my order 5 months ago is looking pretty terrible compared to the others. I water them together from the bottom by pouring water into the ceramic container. Water never sits for more than a few hours. All the plants are being treated identically. I don't understand why it should be doing so poorly when all of the rest are doing well.

Watering from the bottom is a convenience for the grower, and works well if the plants have full root systems in pot and the soil is dry and/or porous enough. If the plant has a less established root system (my guess here), the plant ends up getting more water than it needs--a full pot of wet soil, but less than a full pot of roots. This is why some can do well and others not. Not all have the same root development at a given time. By watering all together, one or more plants are making a compromise about watering needs. Bottom watering also makes large swings in soil wetness more likely, from dry just before watering to very wet after, as the volume of water cannot be controlled--the volume of water taken up depends upon the volume of soil in the pot, not the plants needs. Happy streps need "happy feet". If their roots are happy and growing, so is the plant.

If you water from the bottom, how do you determine when to remove the water from the saucer because the soil is sufficiently saturated? This pertains to miniature violets. Their small size makes it difficult to determine when the soil is wet or dry. This is especially difficult if the leaves and stem of the plant cover the soil. It is easier if the violets are standard size or larger.

If you cannot see or touch the soil, you can judge by weight. Wet soil will be heavier than dry. Like everything, this takes practice and experience. For plants grown here, we make a judgement about watering needs based upon appearance, feel (moist or dry to the touch) and/or weight. Sometimes one method just to confirm another. Whether the plant is top or bottom watered, the rules are the same--water when surface of soil is "dry to the touch", i.e. has begun to dry but still has some moisture within the pot (before wilting or stressed from lack of water, but not still moist). Caveats about bottom watering are explained above.

Calendar

November 9, 2023, 7 pm.

Meeting AVGS Rochester

Messiah Lutheran Church, 4301 Mt Read Blvd, Rochester, NY. Program; Show and tell and roundtable discussion by members of growing set up and methods. New members and guests are welcome!

October 24, 2023.

International orders must be received by this date for shipment week of October 30.

October 20-21, 2023

NY State AVS Convention

Hilton Garden Inn, Auburn, NY.

November 5, 2023

Display and sale at the Violet Barn, all are welcome. Exhibition plants and much more for sale.

Contact us

Email: comments@violetbarn.com

Mail: PO Box 9, Naples, NY 14512

Notes



Follow us on facebook!

We want you to succeed!

Plant not growing well? Don't wait until it's too late. Send us a photo and an outline of care and environment. You are not alone--perhaps we can help.

Having success?

Let us know and share your story.

Write a review to get a free plant

Write a review on the product pages of our website before ordering. Get a free plant added to your order.

Place a pickup order!

For those in the area, we offer pickup service. Save on shipping and we'll have your plants waiting for you.

[More info...](#)

Phone: 585-374-8592 (M-S 12-5 ET)

Sorry, we're currently closed to visitors

Are you a member?

African Violet Society of America

Sign up through our website and get a free plant added to order! More info: avsa.org

Gesneriad Society

Has your collection grown far beyond violets? Consider joining the Gesneriad Society. More info: gesneriad.society.org

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