

VioletsFun

Violet Barn newsletter

March 2024 - # 121

(Some of) What's New



Hunter's Skeeter Bite. Double white and purple-red, variable, multicolor blooms. Small, pointed, medium green foliage. Easy growing, great blooming miniature. (pictured here)

Hunter's Hot Lips. Fully double fuchsia-purple and white multicolor blooms. Thick, serrated, quilted, deep green foliage. Miniature.

News and updates:

Inventory updates.

Miniature sinningia now available! A limited number of miniature sinningia are now listed on our site. We are busy propagating more, so selection and availability will improve in time. Only plants with developed tubers are being shipped. This slows our production of them, but ensures success with plants received.

Winter shipping remains in effect.

Through the end of March. Spring shipping should begin sometime in April, depending upon (mostly our) weather conditions. Any changes will appear on the website.

AVSA Convention show.

After an absence last year (our first in over 40 years), we will again be attending the (inter)national convention of the African Violet Society of America in Phoenix, AZ. Being too far for us to drive, we will be shipping our plants to the show for our sales table. We hope to have a good collection of blooming plants available. Try to come early for the best selection, if you can, as we can't resupply the table.

For those in the Phoenix/Tempe, area, or within travelling distance, this is an opportunity you don't want to miss. The show moves around the country, and likely won't return to this area again soon. Beautiful show plants, creative flower and plant arrangements, speakers and workshops are among many reasons to attend. Both the show and sales areas are open to the public. Show dates are April 25-27. For more information, visit the AVSA website, avsa.org

My plant looks like this:



This photo was sent to us recently with the following message.

This semimini (Rob's Astro Zombie) has been mine since last summer, delivered to my Illinois residence. Since late October, my violets have been in our home in Florida.

I've obviously done something wrong based upon recent leaf changes. I left my violets in my lanai when temps there were in the 60's. I've since moved them inside my home where it's a bit warmer.

I know for sure I need to cut the one stem that has the leaf decaying on the end. Should I cut all of them back that look a little "off"? I've not fertilized lately, have I overwatered?

Based upon the rotting leaf tip, you might have overwatered, but the plant looks generally quite healthy. Yes, you can easily remove the discolored leaves as well as many of the older ones. This plant does show one or more "culture" breaks--changes in care or environment during its life. Much like rings on trees, violets can show differing sizes of leaves or rates of growth due to these changes. Besides the change in color, you'll notice that the size of the leaves has changed over time as well. The original, oldest leaves are much larger in size than the newer growth. This plant has grown in four different environments over its life time--ours, yours in IL, then two locations in your FL home, so this isn't surprising.

As you've had this plant for some time, and it appears to be in its original pot, it can be pruned back to a point where growth is uniform and lush--this looks to be the youngest 10

to 12 leaves in the center of the plant. The older growth on the lower/outside rows can be removed, and the plant repotted in fresh soil. The newer growth looks very healthy and of a good size, so whatever you are doing now is fine. Pruning it will make its appearance more uniformly so.

This month's question

I've never had insect pests on any violet that I've grown, until now. My violets are blooming and seem healthy, mostly. I'm finding very tiny white creatures under the pots, on the wicking mats. I discarded the mats and now have each pot in a separate drip saucer, in which I'm keeping systemic granules. But, I still find some of the tiny pests on the shelf they're sitting on in my light station. I can't tell if they are larvae or something else. They don't do a lot of moving, mostly just when disturbed. Several of my plants are showing discoloration on the foliage. I did make the mistake of sitting a Cyclamen near the violets, so I wonder if it has mites. I will appreciate any input you can offer.

Your photos aren't very clear, but I can make a good guess. If you are finding white pests under pots on the mats, these are likely mealy bugs (symptoms would differ with mites). You likely will find mealies, or their egg masses (white patches on root ball or inside of pot) in your soil as well, or at base of plant (sticky and cotton-like). At a certain stage, when population is great enough, they will "poof" onto the area or surfaces surrounding the plant. If this happens, you have an established population.

Mealies cause damage as they feed on the tender roots of the plant. Small populations can go unnoticed, as an otherwise healthy plant can look normal for quite some time. We've known, or seen, of more than one instance of a prize winning "show" plant (some quite spectacular) being found to have mealies (after the fact). These plants were otherwise given great care and were healthy enough to overcome the infestation. Left alone though, or otherwise not given optimal care, plants will eventually suffer in the way you describe. As roots are damaged, the healthy root ball shrinks, the plant loses vigor, leaves discolor and growth is weak.

Systemic granules (typically imidacloprid is the active ingredient) are good as a preventative and, used in liquid form as a drench can help to kill off small populations. An established population of mealies, though, may be hard to eradicate. If the plants in question aren't valuable, you might want to discard them. Otherwise, we'd suggest that you "restart" them. Decrown the plant cutting off the top most (2-3 rows at most) part of the plant and leaving a bit of the stem or trunk, perhaps 1/4". Discard the base of the plant, roots, and soil. In doing so, you are discarding most of the mealies as well. As for the rootless, soilless, top of the plant, wash this in dish soap and room temperature water as best you can. Make some lather in your hands and gently, but thoroughly, wipe the leaves of the plant and rinse. Then, you can re-root the plant top. Fill a small pot (2 1/2" to 3") with potting soil, moisten the soil (not soggy), then press and firm the crown into the soil. Be sure the soil mix is firm enough to "hold" the base of the plant in place. Then place the plant and pot in a plastic baggie or clear container. It will be rooted in 4-6 weeks at which time it can be removed from the bag or container. Then keep an eye on it for further problems. If you've done a good job cleaning it, it should be fine.

Mealies don't move very well and need your help to spread--crowding plants, using common watering reservoirs or surfaces, or worst, reusing soil. "Community" watering of plants is very convenient and time saving, but does come with risks. If this is done, it's always a good practice to keep the same plants on the same surface, and not to move them around. That way, if you do see a problem, it will limit itself to one area and one group of plants. Lastly, never take plants indoors that have spent time outdoors (either at your home or at the garden center), as this is the #1 means of introducing pests to a collection. Still, if you grow enough plants, for enough time, pests of some kind are inevitable--it can be overcome.

Calendar

April 4, 2024. 7 pm.

AVGSR Meeting. Our local African violet and Gesneriad society welcomes new members. Held at Messiah Lutheran Church, 4301 Mt Read Blvd, Rochester, NY.

March 23, 2024.

International orders must be placed by this date for shipping week of April 1.

April 25-27, 2024.

AVSA Convention Show. Phoenix, AZ.

Notes



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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.

We will attend and be selling.

Contact us

Email: comments@violetbarn.com

Mail: PO Box 9, Naples, NY 14512

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

Sorry, we're currently closed to visitors

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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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