

VioletsFun

Violet Barn newsletter

May 2024 - # 123

(Some of) What's New



Ma's Bikini Atoll. Spectacular, large white stars with bright pink edging dotted purple. Medium green standard foliage. A challenge to grow for show, but a gorgeous plant.



Ma's Blast Off. Double pink stars spotted with purple fantasy. Medium green, quilted foliage. Standard.



Steffano's Starry Eyes. Lovely plant! Semidouble large white fluted stars with pink eye. Dark green, cream, and white TL variegated foliage. Excellent showplant. Standard

View the website to see all of our new listings!

News and updates:



AVSA Convention show.

This year's (inter)national convention of the African Violet Society of America was a success. We managed to bring well over 300 plants for our sales table, some as checked baggage, the remainder mailed, and sold out quickly. Travelling by air to Phoenix meant bringing no large showplants, but we did enter both plants and design.

Nice to reconnect with old friends, meet many of our customers, and see some wonderful plants and displays. Best in show went to 'Brazos Belle', but there were many beautiful plants, one of which, 'Rob's Boolaroo' is pictured here. Next year's convention is in Kansas City. Already making plans to attend.

Inventory updates.

We very recently extensively updated inventory of standard and trailing violets, as well as miniature sinningia. A number standards are being listed for the first time. Demand tends to be great this time of year, so availability can change quickly.

2nd Annual Open House.

Our 2nd annual show and sale at the Violet Barn has been scheduled for October 5-6. Last year's event was a huge success and we plan on improving upon it. There will be a judged show with more than 100 plants and many more than that for sale. Have your questions answered (if you have any) and look around. Tours of additional growing areas also available. Refreshments (and live music) as well. Admission is free and all are welcome. RSVP's are encouraged, so we can plan appropriately. Details on website.

[I will attend](#)

My plant looks like this:



This photo came recently with the following question: "I know white-leaved plants are sickly, but, what is the best way to keep a white-leaved violet alive?"

Heavily variegated (white leaved) varieties aren't really "sickly", but they do tend to grow a bit slower and generally are less tolerant of neglect or poor care. As plants need chlorophyll to use light to process nutrients

into energy, and these plants have less of it, they do tend to grow slower than all-green varieties. Because of this, you'll find they won't consume as much water, and may be slower to produce a full root system. This means overwatering is more of a concern. Water when the plant calls for it (when surface is dry to the touch), which may be on a different schedule than for other plants. If constant-watering, it is especially important to use the proper pot size (don't overpot) and a soil with a lot of perlite. If you're using too much fertilizer (or your water is very hard), you're also more likely to notice salt deposits in the plant center, since the plant won't be able to process the excess.

Very white, heavily variegated, leaves are also more easily bruised, burned, or otherwise damaged--they have "tender skin". Avoid getting cold water on the leaves or handling leaves with moist, cold, or dirty hands. You'll notice the "bruises" the next day if you've done this. Keep them out of hot, or intense, light for the same reason.

Variegation is highly dependent upon temperature. Your plant will be more white when grown cooler, more green, when grown warmer. If you want more, or less, variegation, you can adjust it's environment to encourage it to grow as you want. Most serious exhibitors, who want well-variegated plants, will grow in a cool basement, air-conditioned, or similar environment. If your light stand or windowsill is very warm, your variegated plant may look mostly green.

As a plant needs as least some chlorophyll to maintain itself and grow, be sure to keep at least some green on the plant when grooming. Young plants can often be very white. We instruct our staff when grooming to leave at least a green leaf or two on the plant, even if it looks out of place, until the plant matures and can "green up" a bit. For example, we wouldn't recommend removing the outer row of leaves from the plant shown, as this would leave the plant with nothing but all-white leaves.

Does all of this make a heavily variegated, very white, plant "sickly"? More sensitive, perhaps, and a bit less forgiving. But given their beauty, well worth the effort.

This month's question

When my violets get too "messy", I will root a leaf and start a new violet. Recently, I started a leaf from 'Opera's II Staniero' and the resulting plant had the same beautiful shiny leaves, the same flower shape, but the flower was purple. Is it possible to get a variation of a violet when starting from a leaf? I presumed the genetic material would be the same as the parent plant.

This can happen, and will happen more with some varieties, and this is one of them. The more unusual the flower, the more likely this will happen--the genetics are more complicated (more colors), so are more likely to mutate. This variety also has some variability in foliage. Sometimes the leaves on the progeny will be more or less wavy or ruffled than the parent--it should be shiny, but not too wavy. It can produce "true" plants from leaves, but there is much waste--one reason we never have many of this one to sell (and the price is higher).

This is why you tend not to see many mass produced violets with complicated color patterns--they are simply more difficult, and costly, to "mass" produce. Most "supermarket" varieties tend to be solid, more predictable, colors. The most unstable varieties (like the "pinwheel" chimeras) are often not propagated by leaf cuttings at all, as the odds of getting plantlets with the proper coloring are very small. For these, we propagate by crown cuttings (suckers produced from a plant with the growing center removed), which are more likely to be true to the parent.

I have a question that concerns the African violet I ordered from you. It was growing beautifully in the pot you sent it in, then I decided to put it in a violet pot that I ordered on Amazon. I used the soil mix you recommended and the violet seemed to stay damp in the wicking pot. The new blooms rotted before opening. Is there a situation where 'violet pots' are not good for violets?

The rotting blooms may simply be from the handling of the plant when repotted, or it may be the result of the plant not being acclimated yet to the pot and wet soil. Self-watering pots are a great convenience, but they are a shortcut that presents its own problems. As its purpose is to keep the soil wet at all times (so you don't need to remember to water), it's important that the proper pot and soil is used. Use a pot not much larger than the current root system, and use a soil with lots of perlite, at least 50%. After repotting, don't immediately fill the reservoir with water but, instead, water moderately by hand from the top until the plant shows new foliage growth, which will indicate that it has grown new roots into the new, additional, soil. Once the plant is established in the pot and soil, and has a sufficient root system to process all of the water, it will do fine.

July 4-6, 2024

Gesneriad Society Convention, St. Louis, MO. Show, sale, presentations, more. For more info: gesneriadsociety.org

May 24, 2024.

International orders must be placed by this date for shipping week of June 3.

October 5-6, 2024. 10-3 pm.

Sale and show at Violet Barn.

Contact us

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Mail: PO Box 9, Naples, NY 14512

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

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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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