

VioletsFun

Violet Barn newsletter

August 2024 - # 126

We're getting ready!



Our 2nd annual Open House is coming soon, and all of our staff is has been growing plants for this event. At near left is Olive, and at far left is Angie, one of our part-time staff, holding a few of the African violets they've been growing.

Plants have been set aside and disbudded for many months (why you don't see flowers here), and will be allowed to come into bloom soon. We're expecting a spectacular display of nearly 200 showplants for the event, plus hundreds more for sale. Many of the showplants will be for sale (at the end of the event).

Besides the show and sale, there is much more planned. Private tours of our facility before we open on both days. A guest speaker Saturday morning, and programs on both Saturday and Sunday afternoons. Live music is planned, and free refreshments will be available. Our friendly staff will be on hand to answer questions, should you have any. All of the [details can be found on the website](#).

RSVPs are encouraged (tours will require one), so we can plan accordingly. Click the button below to do so. We will send you confirmation with details about the full schedule of events for the day.

[I will attend](#)

News and updates

Northeast Plant Show.

Our first time doing this show. A one day event, there were plenty of plants to be seen. We were the only vendor selling African violets and many of the other plants we brought, and it was generally a different plant "audience" that was attending the show. It was a learning experience for both us and the attendees. We plan to attend at the next show in February 2025.

Ohio State AVS Convention Show.

We'll be attending this year's show at the Kingwood Center in Mansfield. Visit our sales booth--we'll have plenty of plants to see and buy. This is perhaps our favorite show of the year both because of the show and the venue. Lots of lovely showplants and the gardens of the Kingwood center are wonderful.

Inventory updates.

Miniature violet inventory updated recently. Standard violets will be updated again within the next week of so. For those attending the open house, we plan to have selected varieties available only at that event, with a slightly different selection on each day.

My plant looks like this:



Please help me with this stubborn AV! I've had it for quite a while now, and it has always sat in the same spot. I repotted it immediately after I got it with African violet soil. It has since consistently put out new growth, and the outer leaves have consistently died. They always get soft, wilted, stems that eventually turn mushy. I tried adding a little plastic collar to keep the leaves off of the soil, without luck.

As it appears now, and from the symptoms described, it is most likely a soil and/or watering issue--it doesn't have a healthy root system to support the plant. If you have soft, droopy, leaves (especially the outer ones), even when the soil has moisture, this is most certainly the case. Heavily variegated varieties, like this one, also

tend to grow a bit slower and be longer to develop full root systems. This makes soil, potting, and watering more important. Heavily variegated leaves can be more prone to rotting, as well.

As it is now, it is in far too large a pot. It is best to use a pot just slightly larger than the healthy root ball. Too much extra soil (without roots in it) around the root ball means it stays wet without the roots being able to access and use the moisture. This leads to root rot, an even smaller healthy root system, and the symptoms described.

The soil may or may not be porous and "light" enough. Most "African violet" soils available in stores are fairly heavy and will retain more water than needed, especially if pot size, or watering, is not ideal. You didn't say how you watered. With the pot size and soil, you would need to be very careful. The best rule of thumb, especially with a problem plant, is to water from the top, when the surface of the soil is "dry to the touch". Water so all of the soil is evenly moist, but not so much that it is dripping soggy. Then wait for the surface layer to dry before watering again--not through and through dry, you don't want to stress plant by wilting. As this point, would remove the unhealthy leaves and repot into a smaller pot, water carefully, give it some TLC, and hope for the best. As it is heavily variegated, it will grow a bit slower and it may take some time to fully recover and grow out.

This month's question

I've had an inherited streptocarpus for 35 years (who knows how long its previous owner had it, but it was large when I got it). I've repotted it once in that time and it currently lives in a huge terracotta pot. I love how this huge plant looks but it's not blooming as much anymore and I know it needs repotting. What's better for the plant: an even bigger pot, or dividing it into many smaller plants and pots? Also, is 35+ years a normal lifespan for these plants?

Streps will live forever if taken care of well. Most important, besides daily care and environment, is to keep the root system growing and healthy. Like any plant, but especially streps, healthy roots means a healthy plant. Your care must be otherwise good, as we wouldn't recommend keeping a plant in the same soil and pot for such a long time. Soil does get old, in time, and should be refreshed to keep the root system healthy.

Streps, like most plants, will bloom from new growth. If your plant is very large and the pot is full with (older) leaves, it may not be producing enough newer growth. This will happen with streps, in time, as they will multiply in the pot and can become overcrowded with old growth if not regularly pruned, thinned, and repotted (Olive has a saying, "if the old doesn't go, the new can't grow!").

Our preference would be to divide your large plant into smaller plants. Break, or cut, the larger clump of roots and growth into smaller ones. Remove the oldest leaves and growth, and repot into a smaller pot just a bit larger than the resulting root ball. This will encourage fresh growth in roots and leaves, and then blooms. We repot our mature streps about every 6-9 months, dividing the largest plants as needed. This keeps them constantly growing and blooming, and looking fresh. If done regularly, plants can live indefinitely with proper care and environment.

Calendar

September 5, 2024, 7 pm.

AVGS of Rochester Meeting.

New members welcome.

Held at Messiah Lutheran Church, 4301

Mt Read Blvd, Rochester, NY. Program:

Artistic design with gesneriads.

September 6, 2024

International orders must be placed by this

date for shipping week of September 16

September 20-21, 2024.

Ohio State AVS Convention Show.

Held at the Kingwood Center in Mansfield.

Details: osavs.org

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

Sale and show at Violet Barn.

Contact us

Email: comments@violetbarn.com

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.

Mail: PO Box 9, Naples, NY 14512
Phone: 585-374-8592 (M-S 12-5 ET)

[More info...](#)

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](https://gesneriad-society.org)

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