

VioletsFun

Violet Barn newsletter

October 2024 - # 128



Annual Open House

Our 2nd annual Open House, held October 5-6, was a huge success! Thanks to all who visited. We had about 150 attendees, of which more than a quarter were from out of state (many FAR out of state). There were more than 150 showplants displayed. A panel of AVSA judges from our local affiliate judged the entries ahead of opening. Above are the top three winners. From left to right, '*Ian Minuet*', '*Buckeye Exotic Dancer*' and '*PT Magda*'. To see many more photos of the plants displayed, visit our [facebook page](#).

Besides our judges, a big thank you to our guest speaker, Karyn Cichocki, who made the long drive here to give a hands on presentation on dish gardens. For those how missed it, and wish you hadn't, we recorded her presentation and will post it once it's edited. We also had programs each afternoon, Saturday on streptocarpus, and Sunday, on growing violets from "seed to show". Thanks to Doug and Linda for providing the wonderful live music on Saturday. Thanks to our staff as well. Each grew showplants (Philip won best in show with his '*Ian Minuet*'), and helped with sales, parking, assisting customers, and answering plenty of questions. Here at the Violet Barn, everything is a team effort!

We're already making plans for next year, with some improvement planned. Make plans to visit early October 2025.

News and updates



Kohlerias are back!

After a very long absence, kohlerias are again listed for sale on the website. There is a limited selection at this time, but we will have a full listing in another month or two.

Chimeras are back!

A limited number of standard size chimera violets are again listed as well. Like kohleria, we hope to have a full listing in later this year, certainly by early spring.

My plant looks like this:



(Emailed to us) It appears I have some type of fungus growing on top of the soil and around the base of the leaves. I don't want this to get to the point it will kill my plants. How can I get rid of it? Many of my violets were recently repotted in Oyama self watering pots and are in the wick mix.

This is not unusual, and shouldn't harm your plant, even if it were to become much worse. Unfortunately, this kind of thing will often develop on constantly moist soil, and is one problem you must deal with when using self watering systems like Oyama pots that keep soil very wet. Were you not using a very light, "wicking" mix, the fungus growth might be worse.

Most commercial peat, and peat-based potting mixes, are fairly clean and "sterile" in the sense that you shouldn't have soil borne pest issues to deal with, so long as the package is unopened and the mix not previously used (so much better than "baking" garden soil as growers did before such mixes were available). Still, kept moist long enough, it will grow more than your plant. We've seen mushrooms sprout in terrariums given enough time. Some of our older miniature houseplants, that have been kept wet for long periods, will

grow a thick covering of green moss--actually a desirable look on some of our bonsai material.

We will see this mold on pots of newly potted plantlets or cuttings that are kept under cover the first month after potting. It can pose a problem if there's a lot of it as it can create a barrier on the soil surface and make watering from the top difficult. We simply scrape it off, and once the plants are uncovered and the soil is allowed to dry a bit, it doesn't reappear. If not dealt with, and the plantlets are very small, it's more of a concern (not the case with your plant).

Other than scraping, or removing, the mold from the soil surface, if you want to discourage it appearing in the first place, try a drop of dish detergent, or a few drops of a fungicide like Physan 20 (1/8 tsp per gallon) in your water every once in a while (this will also keep algae from forming in water reservoirs). Better yet, let the soil surface dry occasionally.

This month's questions

When you propagate plants from leaves, do you separate the baby plant from the mother leaf? I have watched videos advising to do this, but I've purchased violets that still have the mother leaf attached, and they seem to grow just fine. What is your preference?

You can keep the "mother" leaf attached, but there's no reason to. Once the plantlet has sprouted and is big enough to be potted alone, the mother leaf from which it sprouted provides no benefit.

Sometimes, vendors will sell "rooted clumps" or pots of plantlets sprouted from leaf cuttings. It's usually best to separate plantlets from each other, and from the rooted leaves, and pot them individually. They will get a better start this way, not having to share the pot with others. If you've purchased a violet from a garden center, department store, or the like, its source was likely a mass producer for whom it is more profitable to produce plants with attached mother leaves, extra plantlets and/or crowns--there is a labor cost to removing them and properly grooming a violet for mass production.

Thank you for the package of African violets and streptocarpus that I ordered. I want to check that the soil they came with is not the wicking soil? Also, I'd like to try other plants as well, and since I travel a lot, I need to have all of my plants in self-watering pots. Can I grow hoyas, episcia, and other gesneriads in self-watering pots with wicking mix?

As we don't wick, the soil we use and ship plants in is not a proper "wicking" soil. It is very light, but not ideal, for wicking. You can grow most any plant in self-watering pots, so long as the potting mix is light and porous enough. Hoyas are succulents, so unless you are gone a very long time, they likely won't mind drying a bit in your absence. Still, they can be grown in SW pots with very light soil. Episcias are tropical plants that like more damp, humid, conditions so do well when wicked or self-watered. Once they start growing, kohlerias can consume plenty of water, so will do well also. Other gesneriads, like streptocarpus or primulina don't like soggy soil and benefit from a bit of dryness between waterings. Sinningia are tuberous, so can tolerate a bit of dryness (if too dry they may go dormant), and tubers can rot if kept too soggy--be sure your soil is very light. Still, if you have a mature plant, with a well developed root system, any will do fine if self-watered.

Calendar

November 7, 2024.

AVGS of Rochester Meeting.

Held at Messiah Lutheran Church, 4301 Mt Read Blvd, Rochester, NY. New members welcome! Program: Kohlerias

October 18, 2024

International orders must be placed by this date for shipping week of October 28.

October 18-19, 2024.

NY State AVS Convention Show.

Hilton Garden Inn, 800 Pittsford-Victor Rd in Pittsford, NY.

Contact us

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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.

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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