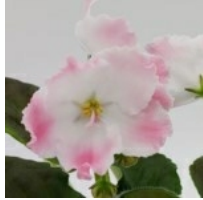


VioletsFun

Violet Barn newsletter

January 2025 - # 131

(Some of) What's new



PT Summer Mood. Pretty white semidouble stars with pink thumbprint tips. Medium green foliage. Standard. Limited number available now, more later.

RS Queen Olga. Large, semidouble rosy pink stars with white border.

Dark green, quilted foliage. Very showy standard. Limited number available now, more later.

[View the website for all of the latest listings.](#)

Not so cute...



Yes, the common "field mouse". Not so cute when his lunch is the flowers on your plants. Rural living means living with nature or, rather, nature deciding to live with you. It's an on-again, off-again problem for us. Living and growing plants in a 120 year old barn doesn't help. It's nearly impossible to find and seal every tiny crevice and hole, no matter how we try.

It's gotten better, as our rodent problems had been worse in years past, though the reaction of the hardware store clerk (after clearing their shelf of glue traps) would suggest otherwise. In years past, we've had chipmunks (many), even a weasel (once). At least the mice limit the damage to munching on blooms and don't destroy an entire level of plants by running through and over them. They're also easier to catch. Usually lots of glue traps, strategically placed is enough. Catching larger, faster, creatures means having our staff racing around the place with sticks and buckets. Yes, it's quite a sight.

Having a cat on the premises only helps if the cat makes an effort to help. "Barney" (he passed about 8 years ago), was hopeless. So much so that mice would bully him, standing between him and his food dish as he was paralyzed with anxiety. That was one lovable, but lazy, cat. Our dogs are much better. They'll at least inform us when there's something to look for, and where to look.

Giving up on our backyard birdwatching helped quite a bit. We loved seeing the birds but found that our well stocked bird feeder might have well have been a flashing "vacancy" sign outside a rodent motel--"free breakfast served". Removing the feeder also seemed to remove the chipmunk problem. The mice still make an occasional appearance, but in smaller numbers, and usually only when the weather turns colder. The one we caught yesterday was the first this winter, though we've caught more in the storage and non-growing areas of the barn. Let's hope it's the last, though winter will be here for a while longer.

News and updates

Winter shipping now in effect.

We do ship in winter. However, through the end of March, we can only guarantee safe arrival when Express mail is chosen. If you choose, we will ship via priority mail (less expensive) but, though boxes are well insulated, priority mail is at customer's risk.

Inventory updates.

Recent update of standard violet inventory, with a number of new listings. Episcia inventory was also recently updated..

Our new **You Tube** channel.

Our first longer (20 minute) instructional video on Dish Gardens posted a bit over a month ago. Last week, a short (1 minute) video, on repotting a violet back into a small pot. We

My plant looks like this



It's time to repot (*Rob's Loose Noodle*) again. Should I consider a larger pot or keep putting her back in the original pot from the Violet Barn? Also, should I remove some of the lower leaves? She's about three years old.

Your plant looks healthy, so your general care and environment must be pretty good. It does appear to have two crowns or "heads" growing side by side. You can divide these into two, single crowned, plants. You may need to use a sharp knife to cut between them if you can't pull them apart by hand. They can be potted into their own pots. Since this is a miniature variety, use a pot no larger than 2 1/4" in diameter (2 1/2" if you must). You can remove older/lower leaves if needed to give the plant(s) a better shape or appearance.

If, after dividing, one of the plants is left with few (or no) roots, you can still root it. Fill the same small pot with wet (not soggy) soil. Soil should have a firm feel to it--you can't easily press it down with your finger. Make a small hole, or "divot", in the surface, then press the base of the plant/crown firmly into it, and firming soil around it--be sure it doesn't easily wobble around or pop out. Then place in a plastic baggie, seal it, and place it in a bright (not hot) location for a month until rooted.

*As your violets grow, when you begin to see "suckers" (the beginnings of a second crown), remove them as soon as visible. This will keep your plant single crowned so it won't need dividing again in the future (the *Saintpaulia* species and trailing varieties are an exception to this rule). This will also encourage better blooming, as it will have no choice, as you're not allowing it to sucker.*

This month's question

I have two streptocarpus, one that I have had for about two years, and another that I received this year from you. The older one spent its first year in the bathroom, north side of the house. It was not very happy and I was about to give up on it. My wife said no, so I put it in front of an east facing window and told it to sink or swim. It loved the change, put out some new foliage and in April it started blooming like crazy...it has not stopped in the six months since. Now my question. Will this plant ever stop flowering and put out new foliage? The plant seems to be only putting energy into flowers and none into new leaves. It is photo period sensitive?

Moving it to a brighter location likely explains it suddenly wanting to bloom. Though streptocarpus aren't photo period sensitive ("seasonal"), they do need sufficient, regular, light to bloom well. Natural, window, light can be very irregular, depending upon weather, time of year, and where you live (latitude and general climate). North facing windows usually won't have enough light in short (often gloomier) winter months. Under artificial lights, where light is regular and predictable, streps can bloom nearly constantly.

Unlike African violets, streps can produce multiple (6-10+) bloom stalks per mature, healthy, leaf. So long as it continues to grow and produce leaves, and has enough light, it will bloom--this can go on for years. At some point, it may get a bit crowded or overgrown in the pot. Older leaves, that have already produced a lot of bloom (you'll see the "stubble" from past bloom stalks) can be thinned out and removed. If very crowded, you can divide the plant. Repotting in fresh soil every 9 months or so can keep it fresh and growing, and continuing to look good and blooming.

Sometimes, streps can get too focused on blooming and "forget" to grow leaves--a good problem to have, I suppose. You might have to discourage blooming, by removing some bloom stalks, to remind it to grow some foliage. We regularly do this on our very young plants. Some varieties will start to bloom heavily even before they have a pair of mature leaves. We'll remove the blooms, force it to grow a bit larger with more leaves, then let it bloom. The payoff is usually worth the short wait.

Calendar

February 22, 2025.
Northeast Plant Show.

Notes



Follow us on facebook!

At the OnCenter in Syracuse, NY. Open to public 10-3 pm. We will have a booth with a good selection of plants for sale.

March 2025.

Next international shipping. Sorry, due to weather and the holidays, we are not shipping internationally during winter months. We will resume next spring.

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

Come to our Open house in October!

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...](#)

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

If you no longer wish to receive these emails, simply click on the following link

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