

VioletsFun

The Violet Barn newsletter

June 2022 - No. 100

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Our calendar:

June 28, 2022. International orders must be placed by this date for shipment week of July 5.

Safe delivery now guaranteed by any means.

Free stuff and how to get it!

2023 AVSA Show awards.

Best Robinson collections

1st place: \$200

2nd place: \$100

Write a review.

Write a review before ordering, good or bad, we'd like to know. Get a free plant added to order.

Join AVSA.

See further below in this column.

Contact us:

email. comments@violetbarn.com

mail. POB 9, Naples, NY 14512

phone. 585-374-8592
Mon. thru Sat., 12-5 pm ET

(Some of) What's New:



K's Unbridled. Exclusive to the Violet Barn! This is the latest standard hybrid from Kathy Hajner. Crazy colors, and very different. Semidouble frilled violet pansies with purple and white reverse fantasy, and darker centers. Excellent, dark green, quilted foliage that shapes well for show. An unusual, yet easy grower and bloomer.

Check the website for all of the newest varieties.

What's news:

Shop visitor hours.

Very sorry, but we remain closed to visitors during June. We remain very busy with shipping and find ourselves short-staffed for the month. Every available "extra" day is needed simply to keep up with the plant work. Our apologies.

AVSA Convention and Show.



After an absence of two years due to Covid concerns, this (international) get-together of growers, exhibitors, and vendors returned. Held "virtually" the last two years, this year's event was long awaited. Attendance was good, though less than in the past, due to the still understandable reluctance to travel and socialize in large groups. We did have a small sales table, limited by the fact we had to mail our sales plants ahead to the hotel.

The variety shown, '[Picasso](#)' was chosen Best in Show. This is an older variety that continues to win big awards, deservedly so here. We were pleased to see a few of our hybrids, notably '[Rob's Fuddy Duddy](#)' (Best semimini and 3rd Best in Show) and '[Rob's Willawong](#)' (Best Trailer), on the court of honor. There were many other beautiful plants in the show, more that expected given its smaller size. The design division was excellent. Our lone entry, '[Rob's Chilly Willy](#)', won best in the commercial division. It was nice meeting again with everyone after a long absence. Next year's convention is in Atlanta, Georgia.

Our shop and glasshouse at:

7209 County Road 12
Naples, New York 14512

Place an order for pickup!

For those living locally, we offer pickup service. Save on shipping and we'll have your plants waiting for you.

Are you a member?

Consider joining the African Violet Society of America. Sign up through our website and get a free plant! For more information, visit www.avsa.org

Has your collection grown far beyond violets? Consider joining the Gesneriad Society. For more info: www.gesneriadsociety.org

Inventory updates.

5" azalea pots. We finally got a large delivery of these pots from the manufacturer after being on backorder since last year! We finally exhausted our inventory a month ago, meaning they were unavailable for a short time. Inventory for **trailing violets** and the **Saintpaulia** species have also been recently updated.

Miniature sinningias are back! A good selection of mini sinningias are again available. These are small growing, tuberous, gesneriads with trumpet shaped blooms. In many colors, many with double blooms.

This month's question(s)

Last October I received a 'Tommi Lou' African violet. I waited until three months after the date on the container to transplant it. It is treated the same as my other violets that are doing well, but I can't get this one to take off. It's in my sunroom and gets plenty of light and I keep the soil moist. Am I just being impatient or does this poor thing need help?

Our experience is that this is a slower, less vigorous, grower that produces a smaller root system. It can grow into a larger plant (we've grown it quite large for show in the distant past), but it does seem to take longer to get established and to "take off". It's worth the trouble and is worth growing simply because of its history. It is the first of its kind with such variegation (the source of the term "Tommi Lou variegation"), and the common ancestor of most modern variegated hybrids (see 'Picasso' above, for example). As you show it, it does seem a bit overpotted. We'd suggest repotting into a smaller pot, not much larger than the existing root system.

OK, smaller pot. Thanks for the advice. Could you explain what the biology of restricting the pot size is? It seems counterintuitive. And how would I know what varieties need this pot size restriction? I already think it looks happier.

You're not restricting the pot size, just using the appropriate size for the root system. Restricting would mean using a pot size smaller than the root system, which is what one might do in growing bonsai, where the intention is to limit the size of the plant being grown. For your violets (and most all plants) we want a container just a bit larger than the root ball--allowing room for growth, but not too much. Here's the logic. For example, if you have a container that holds one pint of soil, but the root system only occupies a volume of one cup (i.e. 50%), then when you water that pint of soil, you are supplying double the amount of water than the root system as access to or can process. This makes proper, even, watering more difficult--the soil with the roots will dry quicker (roots are using water), while the surrounding soil stays wet (no roots to use water). Typically, it increases the chances of overwatering, since one tends to water based upon the visible pot/soil volume as opposed to (the not visible) root system size.

The analogy we always make is a child's shoes. You buy him (or her) shoes just a bit larger than his feet. Just large enough for him to grow into. That way you're not buying new shoes (or repotting in this case) every few weeks. If they were double the size of his feet, he'd look like a clown, trip over himself, and likely not have normally developing feet. You'd save money on shoes, but at the expense of bruised knees and elbows, or a podiatrist.

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