


VioletsFun

The Violet Barn newsletter

July 2022 - No. 101

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Our calendar:

July 19, 2022. International orders must be placed by this date for shipment week of July 25.

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:

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mail. POB 9, Naples, NY 14512

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

(Some of) What's New:



Bristol's Easter Bonnet. Our newest streptocarpus variety, with lovely green and white variegated leaves. Rose-pink and white bicolor blooms. Very pretty, a compact grower and reliable bloomer. Limited number now available.

Check the website for all of the newest varieties.

Inventory updates.

Miniature chimeras are again available. Miniature violets, episcia, and petrocosmea have all been updated in the last few days, and streptocarpus within the last week. After a very brief absence, our "wicking" potting mix is again available.

This month's question(s)

I've read about fantasy African violets and know they can be unstable. I was at a AV show this spring when a grower told me that fantasy violets are temperature sensitive and don't care for warmer environments, and once you lose the fantasy, it's gone forever. I know that crown variegated violets are temperature sensitive but I've never hear nor read this about fantasies. Is this true and/or there other factors that affect fantasies blooming true?



A "fantasy" bloom is one that shows patterns (rays, streaks, dots, splashes or puffs) of contrasting colors or variable shades of the same color. Usually, it will be a darker color on a lighter one--when a lighter color is splashed, streaked, or puffed on a darker color this is often called "reverse" fantasy. The photo at left is of

'K's Unbridled', a new variety that we featured in the last newsletter. It is an excellent example of a "fantasy" bloom, with many contrasting colors splashed and streaked on the petals.

Varieties with fantasy blooms are more unstable, simply because they are more genetically complicated than those with solid color blooms. This genetic variability is what makes collecting African violets

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

both exciting....and frustrating, for both growers and hybridizers. Without this variability, we'd all still be growing the varieties our great grandparents did 80 years ago--everything with small, single, blue, pansy blooms.

What does "unstable" mean? In propagating, this means that not all plants produced from cuttings will bloom with the desired coloring ("true" to description). It also means that plants that have bloomed true may later mutate (or "sport") to a different color--usually a solid version in one of the dominant colors. Usually, not always, if this mutation is complete (a full head of solid color blooms), the fantasy won't return.

How to avoid this? Mutations typically occur in response to stress, so you want to provide the best care and environment for your plants to minimize the stress. Temperature, specifically prolonged high temperatures, is a common source of stress. What's warm? Like people, this will depend upon the variety--some are more sensitive than others. As a general rule, if *you* feel warm, then your violet feels warm. Most African violets do best in the same temperatures that people do--about 65-75f degrees. If your environment is regularly in the 80's, then your violets, though they will live and grow, won't be happy--they'll be stressed (as would you!). Prolonged stress might trigger the most unstable of them to not grow as they should. Of course, any kind of prolonged and/or extreme, stress might trigger a mutation, so providing proper care and a good environment is always desirable.

I am just getting back into violets. About 40 years ago, I started some violets from seed, with good results. I'm back to starting from seeds and leaf cuttings and I'm trying to cross pollinate several plants to see what happens. My question is, what is the best way to start violets from an existing plant and retain/duplicate the plant's characteristics?



The best method is by crown, or blossom stem, cuttings. This is the only way to ensure with good degree (not complete) certainty that the plantlets produced will bloom and appear as does the original plant. Illustrated ["how to" lessons](#) appear on the plant care pages of the website. In effect, you will be "cloning" the original plant, and is the only way to ensure that true plants are produced when propagating "chimera" varieties, like the one pictured at left, '[New Waves](#)'. Chimeras can only be propagated true by these means--no single leaf will contain the proper genetic makeup to produce plantlets like the original.

For other varieties, propagation by leaf cuttings is easier, and usually reliable. Varieties that are genetically complex, like fantasies and some multicolors, will be less reliably produced true to description. Propagation by seed from cross pollination will be the most unreliable. Just like the children in any large family--unless identical twins, no two are the same and, as much as some parents might desire it, none will be identical to mom or dad.



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