

# VioletsFun

The Violet Barn newsletter

October 2022 - No.104

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## Our calendar:

### November 1, 2022.

International orders must be placed by this date for shipment week of November 7.

### October 21-22, 2022.

#### NY State AVS Show & Sale

Held at the Hilton Garden Inn, in Auburn, NY.

#### Safe delivery guaranteed by any means through

**October.** Winter shipping begins in November by Express mail.

## 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.

## (Some of) What's New:



**Bristol's Snow Storm.** Our newest streptocarpus, it will cover itself in clear white, long-lasting, blooms that contrast nicely with deep green, compact, foliage. Easy growing, very easy and heavy blooming.

Check the website for all of the newest varieties. We expect to introduce new varieties over the coming months.

## What's news:

**International customers!** Please note the deadlines in the margin. This will be our final international shipping until spring 2023. Besides complications from weather and winter holidays, customs and international delivery services have become less reliable, and more unpredictable, especially since the onset of Covid, increasing the risk of damaged orders for our customers. We will resume international shipping next March.

For domestic (US) customers, we continue to ship year-round, even in winter. From November through end of March, however, Express (overnite) mail will be the default shipping option, and the only means by which we guarantee safe arrival. Priority shipping during winter remains available, but is done at customer's risk.

## This month's questions:



I have a 'Broadway Star' trail that I purchased many years ago. I finally dealt with its overly long neck this year, and can't quite get the two cuttings to root. The 'parent' plant is healthy and happy. When I first took cuttings off the parent, I followed instructions from a Youtube video to gently scrape the stem to encourage new root growth. After about two months, I seemed to be losing

more and more leaves. I pulled them out of their pots, rescraped the stem, added some root stimulator, and placed them in a sealed plastic bag. Thinking they may have been too wet in the bag, I removed them, might occasionally see a new leaf in the center but they would then go back to losing leaves. What, if anything, can I do?

*Trailing violets, like this one, are typically very easy to propagate. We propagate all of ours much the same way, by tip cuttings. This will produce plants much faster than leaf cuttings, and produce much more predictable plants as it avoids the genetic*

variation you sometimes get propagating plants by leaf. The pruning also benefits the 'parent' plant by encouraging more branching and fuller growth.

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7209 County Road 12  
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Open to public Sundays 12-5 pm  
By appointment only--call  
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**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](http://www.avsa.org)

Has your collection grown far  
beyond violets? Consider joining  
the Gesneriad Society. For more  
info: [www.gesneriadsociety.org](http://www.gesneriadsociety.org)

*Removing dead material and debris from the stem is helpful, but scraping isn't necessary, and can do more harm than good. Excessive scaping can damage growing points from where new roots will emerge. Rooting hormones are intended for use on woody plants and are of little benefit for tender-tissued plants like African violets. In our experience, using them on tender cuttings generally does more harm than good.*

*Of course, if your plant is very old, some of the growth may appear quite woody or tough, and would be more difficult to root. Even the oldest plants, though, will have newer growth. Select the younger, freshest, tips for rooting. These will need neither scraping nor treatment with hormones and should root quite easily, and using these tips will not harm the appearance of the parent plant in the long run as it will readily rebranch and fill in.*

*When placing cuttings under cover (or in a baggie) to root, you do need to be careful not to overwater. Wet the soil (not soggy) before placing cuttings in the pot. Cuttings need to be firm in the soil--if just placed loosely, they will root poorly or slowly. Once this is done, place in bag and seal--you won't need to water them again until removed from the bag in about 4 weeks.*

***This month's questions***

Can streptocarpus be grown under terrarium conditions? I understand the problem with overwatering leading to root rot--if the soil is light enough, maybe with a drainage layer at the bottom, will high ambient moisture cause issues?

*So long as the soil is not kept soggy, or is well aerated (lots of perlite), they can be grown under terrarium conditions. The high humidity won't be an issue. Your terrarium will have to be large enough to accomodate them. Streps are vigorous growers, have long leaves, and can grow multicrowned over time, all meaning they can outgrow a confined space. They are also prolific bloomers, which means you will have to be diligent about removing spent blooms as they appear, before they rot and become potential problems.*

I purchased a few self-watering ceramic pots for my African violets. Do I leave the water in the reservoir and refill it when it dries out, when the soil is almost dry, or do I wait until my violets have absorbed enough water and then dump out the excess water?

*Any of the above, though most growers simply keep the reservoirs filled all, or most, of the time. If your soil mix is very light (contains at least 50% perlite), the reservoir can be kept full. That said, at least an occasional, partial, drying of the soil can be helpful. If the soil is allowed to totally dry, it may be difficult to "restart" the absorption process through the inner pot. If this happens, water from the top to thoroughly wet the soil, and the inside of the inner pot, then refill the reservoir.*

I am a violet collector and really love trailing violets, and have many of your varieties. One of my first was 'Rob's Boolaroo' (*our note: 'Rob's Boolaroo' has pink blooms with blue speckles*). I have been growing it for many years and got two sports from it, in two different shades of purple. You've said that both are 'Rob's Gundaroo', but I clearly see a difference in shade. Do you think that this is eligible for its own name? (photos were attached).

*Since the plant in question is not greatly different, we wouldn't name it. At most, perhaps, you might argue for one to be called 'Rob's Gundaroo sport'. 'Rob's Gundaroo' is a mutation with medium blue blooms, but there will always be some variability due to genetics, care, and environment. On our site, you'll notice that the two plants pictured for this variety are different shades (the main photo being darker than the*



*other). Given that this variety is widely grown, if you were to name your lighter version, it is likely that the darker versions of 'Rob's Gundaroo sport' and the lighter versions of 'Rob's Gundaroo' would be nearly identical and lead to much confusion. This is why we wouldn't distinguish the shades and name them differently. That said, there's nothing to keep anyone from calling plants whatever they choose--they are your plants, after all. If you do choose to distribute them, please explain the parentage and difference to the recipient--this will help minimize the likely confusion.*

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