

VioletsFun

The Violet Barn newsletter

May 2020 - No. 75

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Our calendar:

June 2, 2020 .

International orders must be placed by this date for shipment week of June 8.

All of our spring shows have been cancelled. If all goes well, we will hope to see everyone at a show this fall or next spring.

At this time all orders are guaranteed by any means of shipping (i.e. priority mail).

Free stuff and how to get it!

2021 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.

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:



Ma's Vivacious. SDouble white pansies with broad blue edging. Bright, glossy, medium green foliage. Easy grower, good bloomer. Standard. Limited number presently available.

Tropical Sunshine. Sdbl. to double white and yellow stars, often with fringed green edge. Medium green, wavy, serrated, foliage. Standard. Limited number.

Much more! Check the website for all of the newest varieties.

What's News:

Toilet paper.... and African violets.

They have more in common than you would think. Since much of the world began "staying at home", toilet paper has, surprisingly(?) been much in demand and often hard to find. Seems the same can be said for African violets. We have been inundated with orders over the last two months--far more than we could have anticipated. With the extra time at home, it seems that many are starting, or rediscovering, hobbies like indoor gardening. Of course, we appreciate the business. This also means we have been busy dealing with orders and shipping most of each week leaving little time for actually producing and growing plants. Like toilet paper, you'll find some empty shelves when viewing our site until we have a chance to catch up.

Inventory update.

Episcias are again listed and available. Some other items, that are normally listed, may be temporarily unavailable. These will return as things return to normal and we have time to produce more for shipping.

This month's question

I have been having trouble for the past few years with thrips on my African violets. My symptoms: the flowers look like they are covered in flour, and I am getting white spots on the leaves. Do you have any suggestions for treatment?

The white "flour" you describe on the blooms might be powdery mildew. If what you describe is spilled pollen, or you see very small, thin, thread like insects crawl from the

Our shop and glasshouse at:

7209 County Road 12
Naples, New York 14512

Open to public Wed-Fri, 12-5 pm

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

pollen sacs or on the petals, then you likely are seeing thrips. Since thrips exist in multiple stages and in multiple locations on or around the plant, they are very hard to get rid of easily. Trips on flowering plants are like fleas on pets--at some point you'll have to deal with them. Prevention is always the best medicine. Stay on top of the plants. Look at them regularly, keeping dead or "suspect" blooms off of the plants. Also, NEVER take plants in from outside--this is the #1 source of pest problems. Once outside, keep outside. As a precaution, also disbud new plants you acquire or, at the very least, segregate them from your collection until you feel they don't harbor any hidden problems.

Thrips can be found in many different stages, which make them hard to attack and eliminate. Mature thrips can be seen moving about the blooms. The larve can be found wriggling atop the soil surface of on leaf surfaces. If you see unexpected freckling (very tiny dotting) on normally green leaves, this can be evidence of immature nymphs in the leaf tissue. Because most chemicals work on contact and can only attack thrips at one, or two, stages, they can't be counted on, alone, for eradication. They can also be expensive, especially if your collection isn't large enough to warrant spending the money.

Short of chemicals, the best strategy is to disbud plants--this will eliminate, or greatly reduce, the population of adult thrips. Do this until you no longer find suspect blooms on your plants. Repotting into fresh soil will remove most of the larvae that might be there. Of course, there may still be nymphs in or among the leaves. Regularly check your plants and remove buds and blooms as needed. Unless the infestation is extreme, and your collection very large, this will show results, and the problem will disappear, or become manageable, over time.

If you must use a spray or drench, one product we have some experience with, and is (relatively) nontoxic, and organic, is 'Botanigard'. This is a naturally occurring "parasitic fungus" that attacks the thrips, and comes in a wettable powder. It is expensive, though. Neem oil is inexpensive, nontoxic, and easy to use, but mostly is an irritant/deterrent for thrips. There are other products, but being neither entomologists nor chemists, we are not going to discuss them here. Of course, when using any such products, use caution, and follow directions.

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