

VioletsFun

The Violet Barn newsletter

October 2020 - No. 80

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Our calendar:

October 27, 2020

International orders must be placed by this date for shipment week of November 2.

All of our shows have been cancelled thru Summer 2021.

If all goes well, we will hope to see everyone at a show in 2022.

Free stuff and how to get it!

2022 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

Our shop and glasshouse at:
7209 County Road 12
Naples, New York 14512

(Some of) What's New:



Ma's Cosmic Ice. OWow! Very striking, large double white stars with blue side pinwheel stripes. Light to medium green, quilted, foliage. Standard chimera.

MK Wind Changes. Double white stars with broad pink side stripes splashed blue fantasy. Medium green, quilted, foliage. Standard chimera.

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

What's News:

It appears Covid-19 will be with us for awhile. We've been notified that all of the shows we usually attend have been cancelled through 2021. This means you won't be able to view exhibits, or our sales table, in person. Many will be holding "virtual" shows, so members can still participate, and exhibits can be viewed, online.

Our shop remains closed to visitors. We can have 10 people working in our facility at any given time, and to keep them at a safe distance, have rearranged our working space, making it difficult to accommodate visitors. We do offer pick-up service for those within driving distance that want to avoid shipping costs--see note in sidebar at left.

Inventory updates.

Mini chimeras will return to inventory in another few days and are in good supply. All of our "basket" gesneriads are again in good supply--[aeschyranthus](#), [alsobia](#), [codonanthe](#), [columnnea](#), and [nematanthus](#). After a short absence, we again have **4" plastic azalea pots**--only in green however (our former supplier is unable to manufacture them in white at the moment).

Continued apologies for erratic nature of our inventory this year--demand has been extreme and has yet to subside. We hope to take advantage of a relatively "quiet" winter, to catch up. If you see your plant listed on the site, we have it. If it was there, but has disappeared, it's sold out and will reappear when we have more plants of shippable size.

A frequently asked question about light:

Sorry, our shop is closed to visitors at this time.

Place an order for pickup!

For those living locally, we are offering [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

Lately, we have received numerous inquiries about exactly what kind of artificial light to provide plants. Given the enormous number of choices now available, this can be an overwhelming task for someone new to growing under lights. A thorough answer would require MUCH more space--perhaps we'll revisit the subject in a future issue.

This is the short, simple, answer we typically provide. Based on our experience, this is what works with us. Though all are of some importance, don't bother too much with the kind of light *source*. Your plants don't care whether they get light from the sun or from a halogen, florescent, LED or other type of source. They care, but not as much as you might think, about the *color* of the light. Don't fuss too much about this--"cool" or "warm" or "natural" or "K" values. Most important is the *intensity* of the light--how bright it is. If your violets get enough light (but not too much) they will grow and bloom. All bulbs will list things like "watts", "k" values, and "lumens". You want to provide approximately 600-700 lumens for each 1 foot of (linear) growing space beneath the bulb (if you are illuminating 4 feet, this means about 2,500 lumens). Bulbs of this brightness should be 12-18" above the plants, for 12-13 hours per day. Use this as a starting point, and adjust as needed to make your plants happy.

Florescent bulbs work well, but look at those lumens! T5 bulbs (the very skinny ones), tend to be *very* bright, T8 bulbs less so, and T12 bulbs (the old style fat ones) even less. All are more energy efficient than incandescent, and more practical, and cooler, than halogen. Look for solid state fixtures, since these will use less electricity, and produce less heat, than those with the old-style magnetic ballasts. LED bulbs are more energy efficient and produce less heat, have no ballasts, and prices are declining all of the time. They also come in a variety of sizes, making them easy to install in areas where you want to grow plants, like over counters or within shelves. There are many options, and the ultimate choice is yours.

This month's questions

I was wondering why my violets have leaves that seem to grow downward. Right now they're healthy, receiving fertilizer every watering, they are on a table near a sliding porch door on the west side of my house. I have the violets under LED grow lights for 12 hours, about 12-18" above the plants. Am I doing something wrong?

You don't seem to be doing anything wrong. If your violets are healthy and blooming, this is normal. If you reduce light, they will do this less or grow upwards, in search of more light, but then you likely won't be getting much in the way of flowers. If the light were too intense, in addition to the leaves growing downwards, the center growth can become tight and crowded and the leaves thicker and more brittle.

A happy violet should grow flat to the pot. If the diameter of the plant is much larger than the pot, leaves will tend to bend over the pot rim, simply due to gravity and the weight of the leaves. [Leaf support rings](#) can help hold these flat if you choose to use them. You might simply have too many leaves on the violet, as well. If the lowest, outermost leaves are hidden beneath leaves above them, they likely can be removed--more than 15 or 20 leaves on your violet is too many. Lastly, genetics plays a role. Some varieties just want to grow this way!

How long does it take an African violet to bloom once it forms buds? My violet has half a dozen buds on it but it seems like it's taking them forever to actually open and bloom.

This will depend upon environment and care, and genetics. From the time the bud first emerges to time of bloom can be anywhere from a few weeks to a few months. Blooming will tend to be faster with good light and warmer conditions, slower if cool. Larger blooms with lots of petals or frills usually take longer fully open--and some

of the very double, frilly, varieties never do open fully. Many of those with green edges tend to take longer to open.

Of course, stressful conditions or care can delay maturation of blooms. Avoid extremes in heat, humidity, or watering and aim for moderation in care and environment. If your violets look otherwise healthy and happy, and are growing, you may just have to be patient. Often, the most beautiful blooms take the longest to appear.

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