

# VioletsFun

The Violet Barn newsletter

January 2021 - No. 83

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## Our calendar:

### February 9, 2021 .

International orders must be placed by this date for shipment week of February 15.

**All of our shows have been cancelled thru 2021.** If all goes well, we will hope to see everyone at a show in 2022.

We continue to ship during winter, but safe delivery of orders guaranteed by **Express** mail only.

## 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](mailto:comments@violetbarn.com)

## (Some of) What's New:

Check the website for all of the newest varieties.

## What's News:

**VioletsFun back issues** are now viewable on the website! We've been asked by many new reader's to send them copies of issues they've missed. Some others may simply want to find information that they remembered seeing before but can't remember when or where. Most are in pdf format and can easily be printed out if desired.

Our thanks to the Copper State AVC for inviting us to speak at their society meeting via Zoom. We're fairly new to virtual meetings, but enjoyed it and think it went well. This is likely the (at least near-term) future for AV groups, so we hope to have the opportunity to do it again.

## Inventory update

**Kohlerias** are now in plentiful supply for most varieties. Inventory of miniature terrarium and houseplants has also been updated and will improve further as recently propagated plants mature in the near future. For those waiting on hoyas--keep waiting! These have been in extremely high demand and we are propagating as many as we can. They will reappear on the site when shippable plants become available.

## The weird, unusual, or charming:



We grow lots of plants, many of them simply because we like them. Many for their beauty, but some because they are just different.

**Malpighia coccigera**, is a charming, and different, little plant. This small growing plant, though not actually holly, certainly will remind you of one. It has bright green, thorny, glossy, thumbnail-sized leaves on woody stems, making it a good bonsai subject of any size. Photos above show a young plant (the size we ship) as well as one we've grown larger. In our opinion, it looks best when kept in a 4" pot (photo above right) or smaller, and kept neatly pruned. It blooms easily, and will begin blooming even as a smaller plant (the young plant above is showing buds). White to pale pink blooms are small, but are fringed and showy and can be abundant on mature plants.

**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

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](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)

Provide bright, but not intense or hot light--much like African violets. The small plant above is grown under artificial light, the larger plant in a bright window. Use coarse soil and keep moderately moist (again, like a violet). It is tolerant of some neglect, but if greatly abused (extreme temperatures or drought) it will drop leaves. Propagation is easy by tip cuttings when shoots aren't too woody--the leaves are thorny, so handle with care!

### My plant "looks like this"



What's wrong with the leaves? Are they supposed to be that color? Yes. In fact, this is a nice example of very good variegation on this variety (*Rob's Boogie Woogie*). It should have this coloring. As is true of most variegation, it will be more pronounced when grown cooler, and less so (more green) when grown warmer. What's "warm" or "cool"? It will depend upon the variety, but 65-75f degrees is a good range, especially if you can provide nighttime temperatures that aren't

too warm.

Notice, though, how the leaves are growing long and widely spaced from each other, not compactly and overlapping as should be the case with this variety. Most commonly, loose, spindly, foliage is a symptom insufficient light. Plants grown in windows can often appear this way. Either because of a poor exposure, an obstruction shading the plant, being placed too far from the window, or simply because days are too short or cloudy. Usually the plant won't bloom well if this is the case.

It is getting enough light, since it is showing bloom and lots of buds, and is grown under sufficient, and predictable, artificial light. What it isn't getting is enough space to grow properly. This plant was removed from a tray, crowded amongst other plants, leaves forced upwards, not having enough room to lay flat. Not only is the foliage loosely spaced, but the petioles (leaf stems) are longer than they should be for this small growing semimature. Being very crowded, the plant simply had to adapt and do what was necessary to reach the available light--growing and stretching upwards.

Besides providing adequate water, light, and environment, providing adequate space is important in growing plants well, especially African violets, which grow round and flat by nature. Try to space plants so that leaves on adjacent plants don't touch or grow atop each other. We like to see a finger's width of space around the plant to allow it a little room to grow without crowding it's neighbor. When we see this happening, we know it's time to do some pruning or move plants. Good habits are hard to create. We all want to grow more than we have the space, or time, for, and it can be harder to create more space than to "thin the herd".

### This month's question

I need to rescue my violet. Does cactus soil have too much drainage?

*With proper watering, there can never be too much, or too little, drainage. We've seen beautiful, award winning, plants grown in soil not much better than cement. We've also seen beautiful plants grown in nothing but loose perlite. The growers simply had very good watering habits, adjusting for the consistency of the soil and the plants had otherwise excellent care and environment.*

*In a nutshell, the coarser the soil, the more you will need to water, and the wetter you can keep the soil. In the extreme (like the pot of perlite), you're basically growing the plant hydroponically, with the perlite serving no purpose other than to support the plant in the container as it sits in water. If you grow in a heavier, less coars, soil, you will need to water more sparingly, since the denser soil can be expected to hold more moisture. So cactus soil will be fine, and might be preferable if you tend to water heavily.*

