

VioletsFun

The Violet Barn newsletter

February 2021 - No. 84

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Our calendar:

March 2, 2021 .

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

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

(Some of) What's New:



RS Ariel. Large semidouble white stars with blue thumbprints, with some variable white streaks of fantasy. Medium green and white variegated foliage. Standard.

Although the plant is not entirely new to our list, it is one of our favorites and is easy to overlook. It needs to be seen in person to be appreciated, and doesn't always show its best in a photo since the detail and color shadings don't always show well. Knowing this, we grew a large number for sale at our booth at the Connecticut flower and garden show, scheduled for this month, but cancelled. The photo at right is today's view of one of our shelves full of this variety.

View the website for all of the latest 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.

Inventory update

Gesneriads for baskets are back! We have been busy propagating and again have a good listing of **Aeschynanthus**, **Alsobia**, **Codonanthe**, **Columnea**, and **Nematanthus**. Any of these make a good display in hanging baskets or windowsill containers. The listing will improve as propagated plants mature. A limited number of "Seller's choice" specials are also available for each of these.

The weird, unusual, or charming:

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

Has your collection grown far beyond violets? Consider joining the Gesneriad Society. For more info: www.gesneriadsociety.org



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

Lysionotus montanus, is a lovely gesneriad, one of a number native to the mountains of central Taiwan. We think it is the nicest of the genus. It is similar to other Lysionotus, but this species has both the most attractive foliage and blooms. Succulent, thumbnail-sized leaves are deep, glossy, green and serrated. Blooms are pale lavender with a hint of yellow in the throat. Stems are still and upright.

It is not a naturally branching plant, so a full look can be achieved by pruning or potting multiple plants together in a pot (as is the case above). With proper lighting and care it won't grow too tall, too fast, and will bloom while still a manageable height. Even without blooms, the thick, deep green leaves make it an attractive foliage plant.

Care is pretty straightforward, and the plant is quite tolerant of neglect--it will take a lot of abuse from a neglectful grower. Moderate light (bright but not intense), watering (moist, not soggy nor dry), and environment are your goals, though it will tolerate less or more. We've grown ours in both windows and under lights (most under lights). To propagate, root tip cuttings in moist soil and cover.

This month's questions

I'm looking at making a batch of soil mix for my violets from a recipe I found. It calls for a small amount of superphosphate in the mix. The fertilizer I use has phosphorus in it. Is this the same thing?

Superphosphate is basically much stronger phosphate. Phosphate is an important part of all fertilizers and is necessary for the health and blooming of your plants. Because it is important in blooming, it is often overused when growing flowering plants like African violets. Your plant needs phosphorus, but it doesn't need large amounts of it. We always suggest using a "balanced" formula of fertilizer (as opposed to "bloom boosters" or the like). Good light and proper care is far more important in getting your plants to bloom than is your fertilizer choice, and there can be too much of a good thing--broccoli is a healthy food, but your children would never eat an all-broccoli diet, nor would you want to feed them this.

If you use superphosphate, do so sparingly, as more the the smallest amounts can risk burning the plant's roots, especially when plants are immature or recently transplanted. Most any good fertilizer will contain sufficient amounts of phosphorus, so adding it to the soil isn't necessary, so long as you fertilize regularly.

Back in August, I ordered three African violets and you sent another one for free. All of them are under florescent lights, on the same watering/feeding schedule. Two have been blooming well. However, 'Rob's Fuddy Duddy' and 'Jolly Jubilee' have not bloomed. They seem healthy otherwise, though both of them have gotten a bit bushy (I am new to miniatures and have not figured out how to prune new crowns from such tiny plants). Any suggestions?

Both should have bloomed by now with proper care and light, which you seem to have. 'Rob's Fuddy Duddy' is normally an excellent bloomer, one of the best. If they are "bushy", this is the reason they have not. They should have only one crown or growing point in the center of the plant--no suckers, offshoots, or other plants in the pot, nor an excessive number of leaves. Suckers can be difficult to remove on minis, but is easy with practice. Use any sharp, pointed, instrument that can be used to reach under and between leaves (even a sharpened pencil or long toothpick will work) to pick out suckers as soon as they appear. The sooner you do this, the easier it is and the better for the plant. There is good news. Our observation is that varieties that sucker when they are

young are also the best bloomers once these initial suckers are removed--these varieties are vigorous growers that will do either well. You just need to make the choice for them.