

# VioletsFun

The Violet Barn newsletter

January 2023 - No. 107

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## Our calendar:

At this time all orders are guaranteed by any means.

No events or shows scheduled at this time.

## International customers.

Due to complications from weather and holidays, no international shipping until March 2023.

## Winter shipping in effect.

Safe arrival guaranteed only by Express mail when signed for upon delivery.

## 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 on product pages before ordering. Get a free plant added to order.

## Join AVSA.

See further below in this column.

## (Some of) What's New:

Check the website for all of the newest varieties.

## What's news:

### Website redesign

If you've recently visited the website, you may have noticed a different appearance. It's been a number of years since we last made changes. We're hoping this makes using it a bit easier to use and view.



### Primulina are back!

After a very long absence, we have small number of primulina for shipping. We have potted and propagated more and will add to the listing as they are ready.

Formerly known as *chirita*, they are another gesneriad relative of African violets, they have gained much popularity recently as new species are discovered and hybrids introduced. They are nearly neglect proof and do well in typical home environments. The one pictured is a plant we had growing in a west facing window of ours. Primulina thrive in the same environment as African violets and will tolerate some neglect, being forgiving if you forget to water, feed, or repot them, or place them in the least desirable spot of your growing area.

Primulina are good bloomers, though they will need to mature a bit more than violets to begin, and it can seemingly be forever for flower bracts to open. Once they start, though, you'll be rewarded with almost constant blooms.

## Inventory

Inventory of some items, like standard violets, remains low, and some items (like chimeras, sinningia, and kohleria) may not be available at all. We have had recent problems producing saleable plants in some categories so have removed these from the catalog listing. We are working hard to address this and replenish our inventory. It may be late spring or summer 2023 before inventory approaches previous levels.

## This month's questions

**Contact us:**

**email.** [comments@violetbarn.com](mailto:comments@violetbarn.com)

**mail.** POB 9, Naples, NY 14512

**phone.** 585-374-8592  
Mon. thru Sat., 12-5 pm ET

*Sorry, our shop is close to visitors at this time.*

**Place an order for pickup!**

For those living locally, we offer 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)

Some time ago, in my first gesneriad order, I received three primulina from you. All are now in 3" pots, top watered, and happy. One has maintained a single crown and flowered after 9 months. Quite exquisite. No questions there. Another, 'Patina', beautifully healthy, is now 9" across, has maintained single symmetry. For months, it's had little flower stem bumps but no stems or blooms. Same care as the others. Is there anything I can do to encourage flowering other than wait? Should I pot up to a 4" pot?

Another has multiplied, with four new suckers/side shoots, but has not flowered. It seems happy and looks lovely but may be too crowded? I'd rather have one expanding plant and up-pot the whole thing, but will divide if better for blooming or any other reason. Should I remove and pot separately all the suckers, leaving the original single crowned?

*You can grow primulina either single or multicrowned, depending upon preference. Some will tend to sucker, or multi-crown, more than others. A few will even produce "stolons" in the sense that a stem will appear at the suckers base and eventually extend away from the main plant. Much will depend upon form and appearance you want the plant to eventually take. As a rule, plants will bloom sooner if grown single-crowned, simply because they will need to if not allowed to sucker--it will be the only means it has for reproducing and increasing its numbers. That said, there is often a happy medium where you can have an attractive, multicrowned (or multibranching) plant that also blooms well. This will just require a bit more patience.*

*Like any flowering plant, providing good light and otherwise consistent care is important. If a plant is mature and otherwise healthy and growing, but not blooming, try providing it a bit more light. Primulina are fairly undemanding in this regard, but will still need good light to flower well.*

*Primulina can sometimes seem to take forever for buds to mature and open. Once buds first appear, it can take time for them to develop and extend above the foliage. Then, you might have to wait longer for the bracts to open. Once they do begin to bloom, they will continue to bloom almost indefinitely with the proper care and environment. Primulina do seem to prefer being a bit pot bound, meaning you should not pot into a larger container until you are certain the current root system has filled the current pot entirely. The experience of many growers is that being a bit pot bound helps to push primulina into blooming.*

Should wicks be different sizes or lengths for miniature or standard African violets? Some of my standards became waterlogged, so I pulled the wick for awhile. I believe I'm using #18 mason twine.

*It is possible that the wick might not be large or thick enough to draw sufficient water into a large container, but an oversized wick shouldn't matter, as the wick will draw only the water needed to replace what is used from the soil--there's a limit to how much water the soil can hold. More importantly, because the soil will be so wet, you need to have plenty of relatively nonabsorbant material, like perlite, in the soil to aerate the mix. We recommend that perlite (or similar material, like styrofoam beads, etc) make up at least 50% of the potting mix. It's also important to not use a pot significantly larger than the root system. Too large a pot only means more overly wet soil and water than the available root system can use.*