

**Learn how to Propagate
and Grow a beautiful
African Violet from a
single Leaf**



can then be grown in most situations in the home. Twin fluorescent tubes are used, placed between 20 and 30 cms above the foliage with lights on for 10 to 11 hours during the daylight hours. All plants must have a period of darkness African Violets need at least 8 hours.

Warmth. Being tropical plants, violets need warmth to grow well The ideal temperature is in the mid 20°s. However, they will grow reasonably well outside that range, but will not tolerate a temperature below 12° for any length of time. They also resent big fluctuations in temperature but this does not normally occur in the home, although it is best to remove them from the window during cold nights.

Shape. African Violets will grow as flat rosette-type plants provided they are kept to a single crown. Any side shoots appearing from the main stem must be removed as soon as they are seen; otherwise, the plant will become a mass of leaves, pointing mainly upwards. Flowering will be greatly reduced because the lack of light will prevent bud formation.

Plants must be rotated regularly to prevent them from growing towards the light and becoming lopsided. Remove old and yellowing leaves from the bottom row, as these serve no useful purpose and spoil the look of the plant.

The more serious growers use fluorescent lights because there is full control over the light; in addition, they

Potting Mix. A light open potting mix (such as sold at Society meetings) which retains moisture, and allows plenty of air around the roots, is best. We use 3 parts by volume of peat moss, 2 parts grade 3 Vermiculite and two parts Isolite (granulated polystyrene). Dolomite is added to obtain a pH of 6.5, approximately a teaspoon to 5 litres of mix depending on the pH of the peat. Most African Violet potting mixes available from garden centres are heavy and compact, making watering an exacting business, with many African Violets lost through over watering. This type is not ideal for wick or other self-watering systems practiced by most Society members.

Propagation. Is from a leaf, one that has almost finished growing, usually from about the third row from the centre of the plant. We try not to spoil the shape of the plant when removing a leaf for propagation. The leaf stem is cut about 2.5 cm (1") long and inserted into the potting mix almost to the leaf blade. Keep the mix moist, not wet, and it should produce baby plants in from 2 to 4 months, depending on temperature. These are then separated into individual plants, when they are about 5 cm tall, and potted into small pots, taking care each one is in the centre of the pot with main stem upright. Use a fertiliser high in nitrogen for young plants, and it is best not to allow them to flower until they are about 15 to 20 cm in diameter. Flower stems are removed as soon as they appear on young plants. This allows the plant to use all its energy to produce a larger plant and,

**African Violets will
bloom continuously
given good light and
correct watering**

eventually, more flowers.

Watering. Rainwater is best, always at room temperature. Cold water will damage the roots. Watering can be from the top or bottom or by self-watering methods if the potting mix is suitable. The frequency of watering will depend on the mix, the size of the pot and the temperature. The mix should be kept moist, not wet. The general rule, as with most plants, is to wait until the surface is dry, water thoroughly, and do not water again until the surface is again dry.

Fertilising. This is done on a continuous basis with every watering. Use a good proprietary brand at $\frac{1}{8}$ (one eighth) strength. Nothing is gained by adding extra fertiliser apart from damage to your violet.

**There are over
17,000 different
African Violets,
they are the most
widely grown
indoor plant in the
world**

Pots. African Violets prefer shallow pots and do not like being overpotted, especially when you want plenty of blooms. Use a 50mm pot for the baby plants and pot them into squat pots when the leaf span is about 3 times the diameter of the pot it is in, and the leaves should extend beyond the rim of the new pot.

General. Do not over-crowd your African Violets. Allow plenty of space between them for good circulation of air around them. Lack of air circulation, especially when the humidity is high, will introduce powdery mildew.

Keep leaves clean; a soft brush can be useful, brushing from the centre outwards.

Warm water will not damage leaves unless they are placed in strong light before they dry.

Do not place cut flowers from your garden near your violets, as you will possibly introduce thrips, aphids, or mites. Most pests are easily eradicated using suitable sprays, except for mites which can easily ruin your Violet before you are aware of their presence. In this case, take a good leaf and start again. Most sprays or even water will damage blooms.

**SOUTH AUSTRALIAN
AFRICAN VIOLET SOCIETY
WAS FOUNDED IN AUGUST
1964 AND HAS BEEN HOLDING
MEETINGS EVER SINCE THAT
DATE**

Find us on the web at:

www.africanvioletsa.com

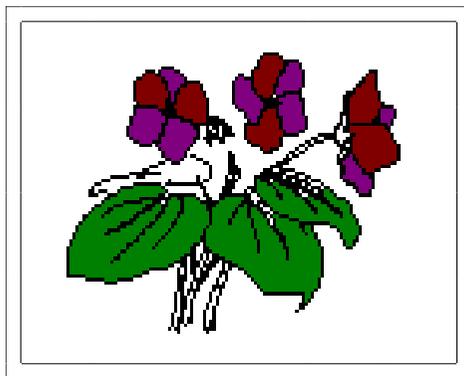
Our Society meets every Third Thursday in the month (except December) at 10.00 am at:-
The Western Youth Centre
79 Marion Road
Cowandilla

Visitors are always welcome to come along.

OUR MEETINGS INCLUDE.

- * Monthly Show Bench.
- * Talks on Culture of African Violets.
- * Sale of Plants.
- * Sale of Potting Mix, Fertiliser, Pots and other related growing aids for African Violets.
- * Meeting our Violet Friendly Members

If you require more information on the society or are interested in joining the Society and become involved in a very interesting hobby, our secretary can be contacted by telephone (08) 8337 9274.



*African Violet Society of
South Australia. Inc.*
Founded August 1964

We only grow the best Violets

African Violet Culture

African Violets are essentially indoor plants requiring conditions similar to those we prefer to live in.

Any attempt to grow them outdoors will certainly result in failure, mainly due to the extreme fluctuations of temperatures, plus the difficulty in controlling insects that can be devastating to their well being.

Light. African Violets are grown for their very attractive flowers and foliage, and it is very important that they grow in very good light. The general rule is as much light as possible without direct sunlight. This means that they should be placed close to a window that receives good light during most of the daylight hours. Windows facing North or South are the best because they receive good light all day. East and West facing windows must have some protection from the sun's direct rays both morning and afternoon throughout the summer months.

African Violets will bloom continuously given good light but because the hours of light are reduced during the winter months, as well as the intensity, there will be fewer blooms at this time of the year.