



THE DIXIE NEWS

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Affiliate of African Violet Society of America, Inc. (www.africanvioletsocietyofamerica.org)
Mary Lou Harden, Editor (mlhard@verizon.net)

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President's Message

Betty Ferguson
bettywithviolets@gmail.com



Happy Thanksgiving, Dixie members and friends!

I hope you had a fun summer while accomplishing all those chores on your summer To Do List. And now you're getting to wind down for a long winter's rest and to give your violets special care so they'll be ready for the Little Rock AVSA convention next spring and then for our Dixie convention next October in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

As your Dixie President, I've paid attention over quite some years to national and state politics and have been taking lessons so I can be the most efficient and effective Dixie president possible. I've learned that presidents are entitled to make executive orders at any point and to issue mandates and change them at their whim. So, as your Dixie president, I have some orders and mandates to issue.

WAIT! That's not what *Robert's Rules of Order* says your president can do! That's exactly why we have a Board with officers and committee people and board meetings—to keep one another in check. And it's one reason all Dixie members should attend the DAVS Open Meetings at our conventions.

Mary Lou and I participated in an October workshop, "The ABCs of Parliamentary

Procedure." As our AVSA and Dixie Bylaws Chair, Mary Lou already knows all about Robert's Rules and parliamentary procedure, but I learned a lot from the speakers, who included Ann Guiberson, a recent past president of the National Association of Parliamentarians. Best of all, I learned some ways to keep those board meetings short (or shorter) and to the point.

At this point, I want to thank each of you for your role in keeping Dixie functioning, both in convention planning and execution, *Dixie News* contributions, growing sale plants, simply keeping your dues paid, and talking up Dixie at your local club get togethers.

Our holiday season has already arrived! One mandate I do believe is acceptable is to tell each of you to have a safe and joyous season filled with blessings, laughter and hope.



Columnnea 'Frosty Hills'

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JOIN THE AFRICAN VIOLET SOCIETY OF AMERICA



On This Cover: 'Rob's Vanilla Trail', a semiminature hybridized by Ralph Robinson, shown by: Bobbi Johannsen of Jacksonville, FL, at AVSA's 2017 convention show in Orlando, FL. Photo by Winston J. Goretsky.

The November/December issue is loaded! Look for several ideas on how to prepare for cooler weather, including articles on maintaining proper temperature and humidity, as well as watching for nutrient deficiencies in your plants. And, if you've ever wondered whether there's a "right" time of year to repot, we have an answer to that question!

The *African Violet Magazine* is a great reason to JOIN AVSA! Members receive six full-color issues annually of the African Violet Magazine. Check out AVSA's website:

www.Africanvioletocietyofamerica.org.

SUPPORT AVSA. AVSA especially needs the support of its individual members, its affiliates and commercial members at this time. Donations should be mailed to: AVSA Office, P.O. Box 22417, Beaumont, TX 77720. Online Donations are also accepted. Dixie encourages all Dixie affiliates and members to support AVSA. AVSA is a 501(c)(3)

*Follow me to
Tennessee*

**DIXIE CONVENTION 2022
OCTOBER 12-15, 2022**

**DOUBLE TREE BY HILTON
MURFREESBORO, TN**

nonprofit organization. All donations are tax-deductible.

Donate online or by mail to: **AVSA Office, P.O. Box 22417, Beaumont TX 77720.**

Individual Membership in AVSA is \$30 per year. Send check with contact information to:

AVSA
P.O. Box 22417
Beaumont, TX 77720

AVSA holds annual conventions in various regions of the country. All members may participate in these exciting events which feature judged shows open to all registered AVSA members. After judging, shows are open to the public. Informative presentations are made by experts in African violet culture. Commercial members also display their newest introductions and have booths where plants and plant-related products are sold.

a few cuttings to root for the next year. It brings me so much pleasure to see this plant every time I go out.

The African Violet Club of Greater Atlanta had our second virtual show on September 4. There were many wonderful entries in every class. One I have included is the final picture submitted by Tom Kowalski. There are a few of his Optimara plants surrounding a Happy Buddha. It was the perfect ending to our show.

We have also had our first in-person meeting in 19 months. We decided on a soft opening for those who wanted to come, and had a plant sale. There were 6 members selling plants and 3 table of leaves. It was great to shop the sales tables and visit with friends. We are crossing our fingers that things continue to improve and in-person meetings continue also.

Wishing everyone a beautiful Fall

Phillis Hinkle, Georgia Director

**BECOME A DIXIE MEMBER
DIXIE AVS DUES**

Individual	\$15.00 Yr
Individual Life	\$175.00
Affiliate Club	\$20.00 Yr.
Commercial	\$25.00 Yr.
Dual (2 at one address)	\$20.00 Yr.

Mail application (**p.17**) or a copy with check payable to Dixie AVS to:
Johnnie Berry, Membership Secretary
287 Fennel Way, SW
Atlanta, GA 30331
johnniepearl@comcast.net

**RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!
(Membership Application on p. 17)**

Please send check payable to DAVS to
Johnnie Berry, Membership Secretary
287 Fennel Way, SW, Atlanta, GA 30331
johnniepearl@comcast.net

**GEORGIA STATE
DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

by Phillis Hinkle
pchinkle@bellsouth.net

Greetings from
The Peach State,



Fall is my favorite season. Less humidity, crisp air, and less direct sun suits me fine. I have a large pot on my deck that has a beautiful streptocarpella "Sparkle" in it. She shares the pot with a shamrock and its pretty white flowers. She is a 4th generation. Each fall before a frost I take

**ARKANSAS STATE
DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

by Betty Ferguson
bettywithviolets@gmail.com



The Central Arkansas African Violet Society continues to meet in person (hooray!) at a Little Rock library. Except for normal ouchies and pains, none of our members has been sick.

Our last program was presented by one of our newer members and was one of the best programs we've had in a long time. Carol spoke of facts and methods she has learned regarding growing African violets and other Gesneriads and voiced questions she still has, bringing lots of discussion from club members. Even long-time

growers picked up new techniques from the discussion.

We held our October sale again in a pavilion in the park. The fall day was beautiful and just the right temperature. The turnout was magnificent, and the club made over \$500. As is normal for plant sales, we had an early rush with one shopper arriving even before all the members were there for set-up. Plants, especially big blooming plants, went fast.

Betty Ferguson, Arkansas Director



Going, going, gone!

of Tampa AVS also attended. I was glad to share my way of doing things, even though some of the guests MAY have been growing longer than I have! But you never know what tips you may pick up.



Bobbi Johannsen
Demonstrations at Lakeland AVS



Examining the root ball

FLORIDA STATE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

by Bobbi Johannsen
Bobbiolet@bellsouth.net



Hello!

Things are FINALLY happening! My head is spinning from all the events that have happened here in Florida in the last couple of months. Am I just not used to it after nothing happened last year, or am I getting old? (Don't answer that!)

Many of the local clubs started meeting in person again, and I was invited to speak at the First Lakeland AVS in September. Several members



Some of the members and guests who attended the meeting in Lakeland

My own club – Heart of Jacksonville AVS -- participated in several craft sales that were fairly well attended. We still have one more event coming up in early November. It was good to get out and meet the people again. Love for these plants has definitely NOT died during this hiatus of gatherings!



Craft Sale at St. Paul's

The African Violet Council of Florida had a big display and sale in October. This was a successful, stepping-stone event, thanks to a few key growers, Mary Lou Harden and Cathy Carter, who brought MANY plants for sale. Also, to the First Lakeland AVS who grew-out many greenhouse plants to sell, and Mary Jane Di Lorenzo who was the **organizer extraordinaire** behind it all. Thank you, everyone!!

Following are a few pictures from the Council's display and plant sale.



As you can see, we had lots of plants from which to choose.

The weekend following the Council's display and sale, Tampa AVS participated in the Fall Plant Festival at the University of South Florida's Botanical Gardens. There were almost fifty other vendors selling orchids, tillandsia, fruit trees, rare fruit and other varieties of plants. This was the Gardens' first open event in almost two years and

the public was super excited to be able to once again buy their favorite plants. It's a two-day event, and almost all of the African violets were sold on day one!

Unfortunately, an 'other Gesneriad' focused group in Apopka -- Sunshine State Gesneriad & African Violet Society -- has disbanded. I am so sad. Several of us from Jacksonville had made the trip to one of their meetings and really enjoyed listening to Jay Sespico of Brandon, FL, talk on his hybrid Sinningias.

The good news, however, is that there is another NEW club that has formed in Ocala. It is Blooming Violets of Marion County, and is headed by Laura Perdomo (of Peacock Cottage and Dandy Pot fame) and Carolee Carter (who is just famous for being herself). There is an article about this new club elsewhere in this newsletter.

Have you all been able to connect with your club members and violet lovers in your areas? Looking forward to the BIG shows in 2022! Let's keep our fingers crossed that they are able to proceed as scheduled, and we look forward to seeing you there!

Bobbi Johannsen, Florida Director

LET'S WELCOME Blooming Violets of Marion County



There's a new affiliate in Florida! Yep, Blooming Violets of Marion County made its debut in September, and we plan to meet every month between August and May. We already have 14 members -- several from an old Ocala club and several newbies.

Our first two meetings were spent getting to know the people who attended, why they love African violets and want to learn more about them as well as sharing what our plans are going forward. Our November meeting will focus on Back to Basics. We are developing a full round of programs,

perhaps with guest speakers, and definitely with lots of hands-on demonstrations!

We meet from 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. on the 1st Saturday of the month between August and May (the 2nd Saturday in September and January because of the holiday) at the United Way of Marion County, 1401 NE 2nd Street, Ocala.

Who are we? Laura Perdomo of The Peacock Cottage and Carolee Carter, both from Ocala and both former African Violet Council of Florida Presidents, started this affiliate after a long search for a venue that offered their meeting room for free. Laura has a wonderful shop to purchase African violets and other household plants. Carolee has been growing, showing and judging African violets for over 40 years! Drop us a line if you want more details: thepeacockcottage@gmail.com or caroleeviolets@gmail.com.

LOUISIANA DIRECTOR'S REPORT



by Becky McMeel
beckymcmeel@gmail.com

Good Happy Fall everyone!

I am enjoying the cool weather, but NOT the time change. By 8:30 pm, I am ready for bed! Lol...

The last three months have seen us experience Ida, the storm that just wouldn't move on. Our area way down the bayou looked like a bomb went off. We are still dealing with the aftermath, and here's hoping all is right with bayou country by New Years. I am so ready for the holidays!!

Sundowners will be undergoing a name change in January, 2022. We will be known as Louisiana Lagniappe African Violet Society. We will also have a name change on our Facebook account. Look us up and keep in touch.

Sundowners was supposed to have their show and sale in October, but Covid AND Ida had other plans. Good news, though! We have re-

scheduled for April 23rd and 24th, 2022, at the Baton Rouge Garden Center. The theme is Violets celebrate the 20's. It will be 2-1/2 years since we had a show, so it ought to be good!!! Make plans to come!

As of this writing, another lover of violets is interested in starting up a new club in Louisiana. I will keep you posted as I get the details!

Sundowners will be meeting in person this Saturday in Port Allen. It has been a while since we had a meeting, zoom or otherwise. Can't wait!

Well! That is about it, y'all! Stay warm and dry and keep growing our beautiful violets!

Your Louisiana Director

Becky McMeel

FYI -- my new email address is beckymcmeel@gmail.com. I no longer have the lilmama account.



Arctic Frost
Photo: AVA of Australia

“When trying creative combinations or new formulations of fertilizers, read the label and remember that more plants have died from over-fertilization than under-fertilization.”

AVSA Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors and Judges, p.25.

DIXIE AVS AFFILIATES REPORT 4th Quarter 2021

by Robbie McMeel
rmcmeel@bellsouth.net

Is your club planning a show in 2022?

If so, let me remind you to include the Dixie Collection classes in your show schedule! There are a lot of Dixie registered plants in circulation and we need to encourage our members to continue growing them for the Dixie Collection classes. A list of all Dixie Registered Plants is on the Dixie Website. We have ribbons for the best and second-best Dixie Collections for (1) standards and for (2) miniatures and semiminiatures. So please remember to include Dixie in your show schedules!

Respectfully and keep up the good growing,
Robbie McMeel

ROSETTES AVAILABLE

BALTIMORE AFRICAN VIOLET CLUB BEST FANTASY ROSETTE. The Baltimore African Violet Club is offering a rosette for the **Best Fantasy** in any MAAVS or AVSA affiliate show. Send request and a check for \$5 made out to

Carolyn Epstein at
Carolyn Epstein
14317 Yosemite Court
Rockville, MD 20853.
inky4ever@aol.com

OPTIMARA BEST OF SHOW ROSETTE FOR OPTIMARA & RHAPSODIE. To order this rosette and a sample kit of Optimara products, send your request to:

Optimara
Attn: Best of Show Rosette
P.O. Box 78565
Nashville, TN 37207
sales@optimara.com

Include your name, name of the AVSA-affiliated club holding the show, dates of the show, your complete address (NO P.O. Boxes), and daytime phone number.



Friends for Life!

Convention times are good times. . .when we get together with our friends! Let's plan to see each other in 2022 – in early June at the AVSA Convention. . .and again in October at the Dixie Convention!

Photoperiodism

and Other Plant '-isms'

for Gesneriad Growers

by Betty Ferguson
bettywithviolets@gmail.com

“Remember, we don't grow plants. They grow themselves. We're there to steward and shepherd them on their journey.” (Kevin Espiritu, founder of 'Epic Gardening')

In previous articles we've explored some of the mysteries underlying plant intelligence. We've noted that almost all plants can photosynthesize from light, and photosynthesis is key to those plants' survival. It lets them make sugar molecules which serve as fuel and entices microbial assistants. This article focuses on plants' response to light in different ways and suggests research methods we may use to provide for special needs of our individual Gesneriads.

We know to turn our window grown African violets regularly to provide all sides of the plant with light and to prevent lopsidedness. **Phototropism** is the scientific word for a plant's knowledge of the availability of a light source and its ability to grow toward or away from that light. Leaves and shoots move toward the light. Roots usually move away from it.

According to [Khanacademy.com](https://www.khanacademy.com), “Light sensing in plants involves special molecules called **photoreceptors**, which are made up of a protein linked to a light-absorbing pigment called a **chromophore**. When the chromophore absorbs light, it causes a change in the shape of the protein, altering its activity and starting a signaling pathway. The signaling pathway results in a response to the light cue, such as a change in gene expression, growth, or hormone production.”

While phototropism refers to a plant's ability to grow or lean toward or away from light, **Photoperiodism** relates to plants' and animals' response to day and night length. It enables plants to effectively adapt to seasonal changes in their environment so they don't flower in the middle of winter or when pollinators are not available. Regulation of growth and times of flowering and dormancy are some of the transitions brought about by photoperiodism.

Day length is perceived in the leaves of a plant, but other parts respond to the messaging, for example, by producing flowers or moving sap from the leaves to the root system promoting dormancy.

I kept a Christmas cactus in my office window. If I failed to turn the plant regularly, the side against the window bloomed, whereas the side facing into my office didn't. I thought this phenomenon was



due to **vernalization**, which is the requirement of a period of low temperatures for a plant to flower. The side against the glass certainly experienced colder temperatures. It was later, when I was learning about long- and short-day onions, that I realized my Christmas cactus' bloom response was due to the longer period of darkness it experienced on the window side.

Photoperiodism is generally divided into three categories. Although the terms pertain to the day length, the terms long-day and short-day *don't* refer to the *length* of the critical day. Over time scientists found it is the hours of uninterrupted darkness that triggers flowering, not the hours of light.

1. *Short day plants*. These plants require a long night to bloom. They include poinsettias, Christmas cacti, and short-day onions, which are recommended for the South.
2. *Long day plants*. This group needs short nights and long days to flower and includes cabbage, black-eyed Susans, potatoes, and varieties of onions recommended for states north of Arkansas, Tennessee and South Carolina.
3. *Day neutral plants*. These do not depend upon the amount of darkness or daylight hours to bloom and include tomatoes, squash and sunflowers.

Night length is the most predictable of the variables affecting plant growth and flowering. Fertilizer and weather may vary but the very day you are reading this article is precisely the very same length as the same calendar day and night in your area 10,000 years ago.

To provide for holiday sales, the flower industry has learned to imitate long and short day needs of plants by placing long-day plants under grow lights and by covering short day plants for a few extra hours.

How does photoperiodism affect Gesneriad hobby growers? Our best solution is to research the native location of the specific species. The majority of Gesneriads are tropical or subtropical plants. On the equator every day of the year is comprised of 12 hours of darkness and 12 of light. Some of our Gesneriads are native to

mountainous regions even in tropical countries. Botanists don't yet know to what extent plants in mountain regions are photoperiod sensitive, nor do they know how photoperiodism interacts with temperatures in these environments.



Some of our Gesneriads continue to present us with challenges. We tend to guess, plying them with lime and humidity and warm conditions, hoping for success. I suggest that, rather than just plopping a new Gesneriad onto the violet shelf, we do as much research as possible about the area where the species or a hybrid's grandparents were initially found growing. In addition to temperature, humidity, lime, epiphytic versus terrestrial conditions, we should learn about the day/night hours in plant's native land.



Senk's Snow Fairy thinks 12 hours of sleep a night is just right.

Good places to research are past issues of *Gesneriads* and "Gleanings Newsletter" (gleaningsnewsletter@gmail.com). Ask on Gesneriphiles forum; it is composed of the most knowledgeable Gesneriad growers in the world. After you learn about the species' native land, here's a good place to learn the hours of light, and thus darkness, in that specific area: <https://www.timeanddate.com/>

Ramonda, for example, hails from the Pyrenees and adjoining mountains in north-eastern Spain and the Balkan peninsula. Before ordering seed from the Gesneriad Seed Fund, it would be reasonable for us to learn about day and night length in the Eastern Pyrenees area. Can our home setup provide the 15 hours of darkness in mid-December and the 9 hours of darkness in June when *Ramonda* normally flowers? Or do Gesneriad experts describe it as tolerant of various photoperiod conditions?

Our plants know what they need. Any good shepherd learns the needs of his individual sheep. A good plant shepherd must provide for each species and each individual plant's need in the same fashion, including light and darkness requirements.

Spotlight

ON HYBRIDIZER DAVID ROLLINS*
AND CEDAR CREEK VIOLETS
Stanford, KY

by Joshua McKinney
jmck5@icloud.com

Even though I (Josh) moved to Alabama several years ago, I am originally from the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Furthermore, African violet hybridizer David Rollins resides in Kentucky and has been growing violets for forty years. He has nine varieties registered with DAVS. I have fond memories of ordering my first chiritas (before they were reclassified as

primulinas) from his paper catalog. I still grow *Primulina 'Kazu'* and *Deinostigma tamiana*. David currently sells African violet plants and cuttings on eBay; Just search for Cedar Creek Violets. The source of all variety descriptions is from their eBay listings.

A favorite hybrid of mine is 'Kentucky Baby Bells'. A cute semiminiature with TL or edge variegation with beautiful pink bells (D #1598). It is very easy to grow and has great symmetry. Another classic beauty is Kentucky Rambler (shown below), a crown-variegated semiminiature trailer with double pink flowers with variable darker edges. Kentucky Baby Sister is a cute one also, with white flowers and pink centers.

A more recent David Rollins hybrid is Kentucky Stretch Runner with nice dark girl foliage and blue flowers with white fantasy. Cedar Creek Dogwood Belle is a semi that has blue bell-shaped flowers with dogwood tips. Cedar Creek Flying Pigs has single pink flowers over variegated semi-mini foliage. Kentucky Bluebird Trail produces semidouble white stars with blue centers over girl semiminiature foliage.



Kentucky Rambler

Kentucky Red Devil sports white wasps with red tips over bustled semiminiature foliage. An interesting addition this year is Kentucky Skinny

Genes, single blue ruffled stars with wide white stripes and variegated longifolia ruffled standard trailing foliage. It appears to be a chimera sport of Senk's Try the Decaf.

Moreover, you can also find some of the Kentucky series at DAVS commercial members. Make some space for these and other Dixie hybrids on your shelf; you won't regret it! Good luck and happy growing!

CEDAR CREEK VARIETY LIST FROM EBAY

Cedar Creek Dogwood Chimes (D. Rollins) Single Blue bell with dogwood tips. Light green girl foliage, pointed. Semiminiature.

Cedar Creek Garden Path (D. Rollins) Double pink star with blue fantasy. Variegated Dark green, white and pink foliage. Standard trailer

Kentucky Alien Invasion (D. Rollins) Semidouble dark blue star with white fantasy. Medium green, white and pink variegated foliage. Small Standard.

Kentucky Baby Sunshine (D. Rollins) Double white star/yellow eye. Variegated medium green and white. Miniature.

Kentucky Bat Wings (D Rollins) Single dark blue wasp. Medium green bustle back. Semiminiature.

Kentucky Cool Breeze (D Rollins) Semidouble-double White star with darker blue center. Variegated medium green and white foliage. Standard.

Kentucky Princess (D Rollins) Single two-tone pink pansy. Dark green flat growing girl foliage. Semiminiature.

Kentucky Silver (D Rollins) Double white with light pink highlights. Variegated dark green and white. Standard Large.

Kentucky Valley View (D Rollins) Double dark blue. Dark green girl foliage. Semiminiature trailer.

*David Rollins says his shipping has been limited to the warmer months, normally April through the middle of September.

**COPY DEADLINE
FOR FEBRUARY 2022
ISSUE
January 15**

the other Gesneriads

by Carol Schreck



TRY GROWING GESNERIADS FROM SEED!

Have you ever grown tomatoes from seed? True—tomato seeds are much larger than gesneriad seeds, but the technique is much the same. Some gesneriads that I have grown from seeds are *Kohleria peruviana*, *Diastema vexans*, *Phinaea multiflora*, and lots and lots of *Sinningias*. I tried *Saintpaulia* once, but there weren't any plants in the batch that were an "improvement over cultivars already on the market," so those plants were discarded.

It really is easy to grow gesneriads from seed. The hardest part is sowing the seeds so that the plants will not be too crowded as they germinate and grow. My last seedlings were of *Aeschynanthus micranthus*. When they grew to have four leaves and were about a half inch tall, I potted them up into individual 2-inch pots so they would not become over-crowded.

The soil mix I use for seeds is the same mix I use for propagation of cuttings and putting down

leaves. My mix consists of four (4) parts fine vermiculite, two (2) parts milled sphagnum moss, one (1) part fine perlite and one-half (1/2) part horticultural charcoal. Before using the mix, I dampen it very lightly. It's important that it not be too wet. I also let it stand overnight to allow the milled sphagnum to completely absorb the water.

Fill a 2- or 3-inch pot or other shallow container about ¾ full of the propagating mix and now you are ready for the hard part – getting just a few of the seeds that are almost as fine as the dust on your coffee table! Don't try to plant all of your seeds at one time. Save some to give to a friend or to allow for a crop failure in case your first efforts don't succeed. Besides, if a whole batch of seeds germinate and grow at once, where will you grow them on to maturity?

My method for getting just a few seeds is to open the packet of seeds and touch the seeds with my middle finger of my right hand and then hold my finger over the little pot of soil and rub my thumb against the finger with the seeds. This will scatter just a few seeds over your container.

Other suggestions include (1) moistening the tip of a fine sewing needle, then touching the seeds with it, then scraping the seeds off onto your soil; and (2) folding a piece of paper, placing the seeds in the paper and gently jiggling the paper so a few seeds fall off onto the soil. Each of these methods should work, so experiment and use whichever method works for you.

In order for the seeds to germinate, they will need light so they should not be covered with any soil.



Emerging plants from seed.
Photo: Nadeau African Violet Seeds

When your seeds are sown, place the container in a Ziplock bag, place it under your lights or in a windowsill where you can continually observe it, and then wait patiently! In two to three weeks, you should have germination.

Once you see the green on your soil, make sure the container gets plenty of light or you will have weak, spindly growth. If you are using fluorescent lighting, your container should be no more than ten inches from the light source. If on the windowsill, unless there's a shade tree blocking the light, there should be enough light coming from natural sources.

If you wait until the young seedlings have four leaves, they will be easy to handle. For separating the plantlets, you may want to use long, narrow tweezers. Be gentle and use caution when separating the plantlets as their stems are very tender. When transplanting the babies, I like to use a mixture that is one-half part of my regular African violet potting mix and one-half part of the propagation mix recipe that I mentioned earlier, lightly moistened. For this, I add ten drops Superthrive and 1/8 teaspoon 20-20-20 fertilizer to a gallon of water.

I like to cover the young plants with a piece of clear light-weight plastic, or Saran Wrap to give them extra humidity and to lessen the risk of having the soil dry out. As the plants grow in size and become sturdy looking, gradually remove the plastic covering over a period of about a week to "harden" the plants. Once they have become adapted to room humidity, they are ready for placing on your shelf among the African violets or other gesneriads you are already growing. Soon you will have blooming plants to enjoy, show, share and/or sell!

I recommend the following sources for seeds:

1. The Gesneriad Society Seed Fund.
<https://gesneriadsociety.org/>
2. Nadeau African Violet Seeds,
<https://nadeausafricanvioletseeds.com/>
3. Gesneriad Hybridizers Association
<https://gesneriadsociety.org/the-gesneriad-hybridizers-association/>



Upcoming Events

February 25-26, 2022 – TAMPA AVS, Annual Show and Plant Sale, “Violets Celebrate the Wonders of Space,” Temple Terrace United Methodist Church, 5030 East Busch Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33617.
Information: mlhard@verizon.net.

March 4, 2022, SPRING BRANCH AVC Show and Plant Sale, “Games Violets Play,” Marriott Courtyard, 12401 Katy Freeway (I-10 & Dairy Ashford), Houston, TX. Information: Vickie Crider: vcriders52@outlook.com

April 23-24, 2022, LOUISIANA LAGNIAPPE AVS (formerly known as SUNDOWNERS AVS), Annual Show and Plant Sale, “Violets Celebrate the 20’s,” Baton Rouge Garden Center, 7950 Independence Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA, 70806.

May 29 – June 5, 2022 - AVSA Annual Convention & Show, “Violets Go Hog Wild in Arkansas,” Little Rock Marriott Hotel, Little Rock, AR.

September 15-17, 2022 - OHIO STATE AVS Annual Show and Plant Sale, “Violets in Motion,” Kingwood Center, Mansfield, Ohio.
Information: Mel Grice, melsgrice@gmail.com.

October 12-15, 2022 - DIXIE AVS Annual Convention & Show, Double Tree by Hilton, Murfreesboro, TN.

PUBLICATION DEADLINES

February Issue – January 15
May Issue – April 15
August – July 15
November – October 15

NOW THAT WAS TRICKY! OR. . . . DESIGNER NIGHTMARES

by Mary Lou Harden
mlhard@verizon.net

For those of us who love to create those beautiful designs, there are some things that just go along with the territory—things that are quite predictable. We get excited when the Show Schedule first becomes available and we go directly to the Design Division to see what’s going to catch our eye or appeal to our design senses. We look for descriptions of places or things with which we’re familiar or otherwise capture our attention or are intriguing to us.

After we select the design classes we want to do, our thought processes go into high gear. But then they are interrupted by the things that are happening in our lives, the mundane things like going to work or cooking a meal or doing laundry or attending meetings. However, those design class titles keep surfacing and they don’t seem to ever go completely away. .



.because our brains constantly remind us of ideas and possibilities of what we’re going to need to execute a certain design.

Once we have come up with our brilliant ideas for a design, we usually work feverishly to create the design and to make it work. We’re concerned with things like color combinations, stability, height, width, depth and whether the design actually represents the class title.

Sometimes things happen over which we have no control. .like the underwater arrangement at a show in a mall in Tampa. When we were busy selling plants and talking to the many guests who were enjoying the show, a slice of pizza ended up

in the previously beautiful underwater arrangement. Needless to say, the arrangement was ruined.

Some of you may remember that a few years ago at a Dixie convention show, Lynne Wilson had an exhibit in the Interpretive Plant Arrangement class. Lynne was Judges' Chair that year and was busy giving instructions to the judges when we learned that her design had collapsed. Show Chair Johnnie Berry sent word to Lynne who reported back – "just remove the design." Bob Green and Mel Grice both thought the design could be salvaged and made an attempt to fix it. It didn't work. At that point, I stepped in and, with the help of some florist wire, was able to upright and stabilize the design. To the surprise of all of us – and especially Lynne – that design won Best in Show!

At a more recent show sponsored by the African Violet Council of Florida, I entered a design in the Interpretive Flower Arrangement Section – the Section in which you use cut African violet blossoms along with other material.

During judging of the show, I was summoned by the head judge and informed that my design had not been entered in the correct Section – it should have been prepared as a Plant Arrangement and entered in the Interpretive Plant Arrangement Section. For designs in that Section, you use one or more blooming African violet plants—not blossoms—removed from the pot, with their rootball encased in plastic, along with other material.

The judges gave me a choice: Remove the design or fix it, in which case I had up to ten minutes to do the fixing! And fixing it was the tricky part – get rid of the blooms and quickly find a plant, remove it from the pot, and figure out how to incorporate the whole plant into the design—in ten minutes! Being an eternal optimist, I chose to fix the design which I did in the allotted time and subsequently found that I had won Best in Class and Best in Section with that design. Whew!

I'm sure we've all attended shows where a design collapsed or part of the line material fell and ended up resting against the side or back of the niche or an accessory fell – things that are under the designer's control and could have been

prevented. But. . .we're all human, subject to error, and sometimes things just happen.

Moral of the story: Don't quit! Never give up! And pay attention! Read . . .and follow. . .the Show Schedule!

WHAT ARE VIRAL DISEASES?

According to the AVSA Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors and Judges, pp.33-34, "Virus-infected plants are usually more susceptible to rot. Viruses also cause abnormal growth, spotting, mottling and streaks. Control: Immediately discard infected plants. Viruses spread on contact and there is no known cure. Avoid infecting your other African violets by being very careful in selecting plants and by using only mix and pots that have been sterilized. If you suspect that a pot or mix may have been contaminated by a virus, throw it out to protect your other African violets."



Live Wire



Blue Dragon

HELP!

MY VIOLETS ARE DYING!

by Mary Lou Harden -
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So, what am I doing wrong? I love my violets. They had been blooming SO beautifully. But now some of them are not doing well and I'm frustrated. When I first noted the changes, I tried changing my routine but I wasn't sure I was doing the right things. A little research has shown me some of the most common problems with African violets and what I can do prevent the problems or to nurse the violets back to health.

As is true with many other types of plants, African violets will let you know there's a problem and, if you're observant, you'll be able to address the problem before it's too late. They will actually let you know what they need. Here are some of the most common problems and what to do about them.

CROWN AND STEM ROT. This is easy to notice if you are checking your violets every day. If the center (crown) of your plant doesn't look good, it's very likely crown and stem rot which is caused by fungi. Plants wilt or droop, wither and die, sometimes quickly. By the time you observe this, your plant has already been damaged by decay and fungus which causes the plant to rot. You may be able to save the plant by removing it from the pot, cutting off all the rootball and all the affected stem, then placing it in a coarse, well draining soil mix. However, you should dispose of badly infected plants.

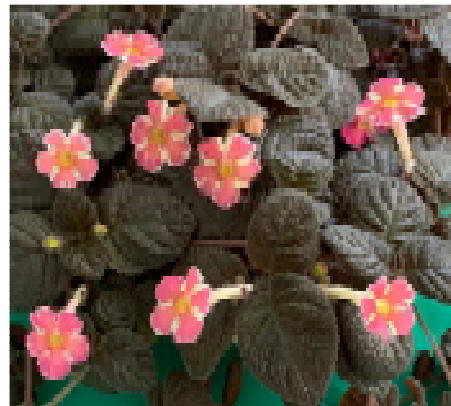
DROOPING LEAVES. This is usually the result of lack of water. If the plant is completely dry, give it just a bit of water at a time until the leaves once again become turgid. If the plant had just been repotted, you may want to place it in a terrarium-like enclosure or cover it with clear plastic. In addition, temperature may be a factor. Violets prefer temperatures of 70-75 degrees.

FLOWER LOSS OR LIMP BLOOMS. If the blooms are strong, your violet is apparently doing well. If blooms are wilted or quickly spent, it's probably a sign that your plant needs some care. It could be a water issue – either too much or too little, or it may need some fertilizer.

WILTED PLANTS – PLANTS STOP BLOOMING. Time to repot and check the soil and rootball to make sure there are no soil mealybugs. These are tiny, white sucking pests which suck juice from the roots. They are sometimes doing their undercover work for months before they are discovered. Isolate the plants and use individual watering reservoirs. If you choose to treat the plant, use a Malathion/water soil drench. When repotting violets, you may want to consider sprinkling Marathon granules on the soil before placing the plant in the pot.

CENTER LEAVES ARE BRITTLE, STUNTED AND DISTORTED. This is most likely the work of Mites – which are not insects but are a part of the spider family. They are tiny and not usually observable except using a magnifying glass. They suck the plant juices and inject their toxic chemicals into the plants. Don't think twice – just dispose of the plant!

These are some of the more commonly seen problems with African violets. These and other problems can be avoided by keeping your pots, trays and growing area clean and by regularly observing your plants. Also, by repotting every three to six months, you'll be able to observe anything unusual or concerning. So, keep growing your beautiful African violets and be generous in sharing them with others!



Episcia 'Star of Bethlehem'

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From the Editor. . .Mary Lou Harden
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Dear Dixie Members,

As kids, riding along in the backseat of the car with our Dad driving us to Grandma's for Thanksgiving, my brother, sister and I took turns asking "Are we almost there?" Thankfully both Dad and Mom were very patient with our incessant questions. Today, many of you have been asking the same question but it's all about no longer hearing about or being impacted by Covid-19! Yes! Will this pandemic be gone by 2022? I know we're all hoping and praying that the worst is behind us and we can truly look forward to more normal times. Hopefully you haven't forgotten what your club members look like!

As Bobbi Johannsen pointed out in her column, Floridians have been enjoying some great times together – in person. We were pleasantly surprised that we had customers come from near and far to our statewide plant display and sale in Lakeland in early October. And my own club, Tampa AVS, had a hugely successful plant sale in mid-October at the USF Botanical Gardens. The Gardens sponsors both a Spring and Fall Plant Festival. Before the event opens on a Saturday morning, customers come very early with their wagons and other carts and line the street, eagerly waiting to get in. Both these events gave us a renewed sense of hope for the future. I hope your clubs are getting back to in-person meetings and planning shows and plant sales in the spring.

Check out the list of Coming Events, as well as the good information and articles in this issue of *The Dixie News*. Also, please send me your articles, pictures and growing tips. Let us know what your club is doing.

Meantime, I send good wishes to all of you for a wonderful and blessed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year! Be grateful for every day, stay safe and enjoy your plants, your pets, your friends and your family!

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