



THE DIXIE NEWS

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

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Vol. 71, No. 3

President's Message

By Betty Ferguson



Hello Dixie Family,

We're going to have a convention! Yes, we are! Our theme is, "It's a Garden Affair." BUT **we need you to help.** October is right around the corner, and at this point we have a lot of open chairman positions. Below is a list of opportunities for you to choose from. Or if you can assist in another way, your involvement will certainly be appreciated. So please do your part, and as advertisements on TV and YouTube tell us to do, email or call now!

Here's Robbie's contact info:

Phone or text: (985) 855-0439
Email: mcmeel@bellsouth.net

Here's the rest of the where and when:

Birmingham Botanical Gardens in Birmingham, Alabama.

Thursday October 19, Friday October 20, and Saturday October 21, 2023.

And here are the committees needing someone to head them up or assist:

Show Chairperson
Co-Show Chairperson
Show Treasurer
Awards Chairperson
Judges Chair
Publicity Chair

Registration Chair
Co Registration Chair
Classification Chair
Education Exhibit Chair
Entries Chair
Placement Chair
Possible Vendors Chair
Staging Chair

We're accustomed to having a host club or clubs to take care of much of the preparation work for conventions. But our new convention style dictates that we must all pitch in.

We owe a special thanks to Michael Jackson and Robbie McMeel for their behind-the-scenes work of moving us to this point and for securing the Birmingham Botanical Gardens for us. The Birmingham club holds their annual show there. I've judged the Birmingham show in the past and can verify it's a beautiful setting, and the set-up for us will be perfect. Parking is easy and free, and remember Dixie registration for conventions is always reasonable. Robbie will be sending out more info as soon as the schedule is approved.

In the meantime, do your last repotting, pull out your notes on when to disbud and increase your light time, and talk to you plants very sweetly. Designers, we have fewer classes this year, but they're oriented toward a visit to the botanical gardens, including a garden wedding, spring in the garden, and native plants. So be on the lookout for line and transition material and check your mechanics to see if there's anything you need to pick up, such as floral glue, or straws to use as blossom vases.

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President's Message, continued from p.1

Oh, and I'm sure I don't need to mother you about putting some money back from your personal allowance for the sales room.

At our general business meeting you'll have an opportunity to voice your suggestions for Dixie's future and future conventions.

I'm really excited about the convention, and I'm especially excited about seeing my Dixie family again after so long.

Betty

DIXIE AFRICAN VIOLET SOCIETY

2023 ANNUAL CONVENTION AND SHOW

October 20-21, 2023



'It's A
Garden
Affair'

Birmingham Botanical Gardens

2612 Lane Park Road
Birmingham, AL 35223

See separate attachment for Schedule of Events
Show Schedule will be emailed separately

**DON'T FORGET TO
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



Rhapsodie
Ingrid
(Holtkamp)



**JOIN THE
AFRICAN VIOLET SOCIETY OF AMERICA**

An AVSA membership offers the following benefits:

- Six full-color issues annually (64 pages each) of the African Violet Magazine (AVM) filled with great growing information
- Regular columns include
 - For Beginners
 - Question Box
 - In Search of New Violets
 - Gesneriad Advice
 - Registration of new cultivars
 - Thinking Small
 - Coming Events

The AVM gives members continuous information on the latest developments in the African violet world. Commercial members advertise and sell the latest and most popular violets and products. Each issue contains commercial ads as well as

an Index of Advertisers. Members have access to this information on AVSA's website www.africanvioletsocietyofamerica.org.

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.

Individual Membership in AVSA is \$35 per year. Register online or send check with contact information to:

AVSA
P.O. Box 22417
Beaumont, TX 77720

Last, but not least, SUPPORT AVSA. AVSA needs the support of its individual members, its affiliates and commercial members. **Donations can be made online or mailed to:** AVSA Office, P.O. Box 22417, Beaumont, TX 77720. Dixie encourages all Dixie affiliates and members to support AVSA. AVSA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. All donations are tax-deductible.

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

ears in the making! The Magic of Moss will discuss the oldest living plants on earth, including their biology, growth, cultivation, propagation and use in African violet shows, in dish gardens and terrariums.

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	

GEORGIA STATE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

by Phillis Hinkle
pchinkle@bellsouth.net

Greetings from the Peach
State,

Greetings from the Peach State

It's the end of July and the summer that began so beautifully has finally reared its ugly head. I hope you are able to stay cool and your plants as well. I think it has affected my mind because I forgot about the newsletter.

The AVSA convention was a great success. We enjoyed all the seminars, seeing friends (some not since COVID), the fabulous salesroom, and without a doubt the beautiful show room.

Our club always takes July off. This is giving much needed recuperation time. Our club show will be September 23. This show will be our first AVSA judged show since 2019. Our schedule has been approved and with a little over 7 weeks to go we are forging ahead.

We are looking forward to a zoom program August 5 with Robbie McMeel on Episcias. These gesneriads are becoming more popular with our members. It's the stunning foliage that really appeals to me. I usually remove the stolons because I also enjoy the blooms as well.

The Dixie Convention will be close on the heels of our September show so there will be no slowing down. I hope to see many of you there. Until then grow well.



WELCOME TO DIXIE!

by Johnnie Berry,
Treasurer and Membership Chair
johnniepearl@comcast.net

New Members

Dianne Duggan, Webster, TX

Renewals

Jo's Violets

Central Florida African Violet Society

Ruth Goeke

Early Bird African Violet Club

Geneva Stagg

ARKANSAS STATE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

by Betty Ferguson
bettywithviolets@gmail.com



The Central Arkansas African Violet group has a new home! Our library frequently gave away our meeting room to other groups, booting us out and leaving our VP in the lurch having to find another meeting place for that month or that series of months. It was a nice place and convenient, but having to change locations is a good--or rather bad--way to lose members, not to mention frustrating for the vice president, Frankie.

She found a permanent home for us this time. St. Michael's Episcopal Church offered a beautiful room with table-cloth clad tables, each with a vase of daisies. They even provided us the code to unlock the door. We may bring drinks and snacks, which some libraries we met at did not permit.

Not only do we have a new home, we also have a new club president, Diane Riley, and a new secretary, Debbie Tait. Both are newish members, but they were diligent workers at the AVSA Little Rock convention last year and are regular attendees and contributors to monthly meetings. Frankie Taylor and Alice Brown will continue as vice president and treasurer, respectively.

DON'T FORGET TO 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

One of our brand-new members, Karen Kelley, lives in northwest Arkansas, but has attended our last two meetings, even overnighing in a hotel. She presented an exciting June program on miniature Sinningias. At our July meeting, she reported on the 2023 Gesneriad Convention, which she attended. Our July meeting program, by Danny Tidwell was, "What to Do Three Months before the October Show."

FLORIDA STATE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

by Carolee Carter
caroleeviolets@gmail.com



African Violet Council of Florida

The African Violet Council of Florida is working on plans for our fall general assembly on Saturday, September 30. The meeting will be by Zoom and our guest presenter will be Jere Trigg of Spanish Fort, AL. We're also planning a judging school on November 4. The Council is actively encouraging all its members and club associations to become proactive in recruiting new members and resuming pre-Covid shows and sales. The Council held a sale in Orlando on May 6th. Attendees were delighted with the wide variety of plants and AV paraphernalia offered.

Blooming Violets of Marion County

Blooming Violets of Marion County has taken a summer hiatus, and we are excited to kick off our new year again in August! As we enter our second year as a club in Ocala, we have over 30 members and have a good time together. Each meeting from August - May includes a brief business meeting, delicious refreshments, an informative program and robust raffle. We meet at the Brian Litz Sheriff Office at 9048 SW State Road 200 in Ocala from 10:30-12:30. Our next meetings are August 5th and September 9th, come join us for fun and information!

Bloomin' Violets & Gesneriads of Palm Beach

Very hot summer here in South Florida but we are getting some rain! Our club meetings are not held in the summer and will resume on September 16th. at the Palm Springs Public library. Joe Sammons is giving a Violet 101 presentation at Mounts Botanical Gardens on August 19th at 10:00 am and will have violets for sale. Hope everyone stays happy and healthy.

Central Florida African Violet Society

The Central Florida African Violet Society held a plant sale in May and hosted a sale for the African Violet Council of Florida in June. Both events attracted new members to our club. We have been introducing these new members to the basics of African violet care. Tammy Cambre, shown in the photo, is conducting a workshop on removing suckers from minis/semis. At the following meeting we held a hands-on session where members were asked to demonstrate what they had learned by getting "down and dirty." They potted up plantlets, suckers from mature plants and gesneriad leaves following different styles of cutting the leaves to be put out.

First Lakeland African Violet Society

First Lakeland African Violet Society continues to meet the 4th Saturday of the month. We are working on our show schedule for next February. We are also working on preparing for our October events (Fall Extravaganza in Munn Park and the Presbyterian Church in the Highlands craft fair.) We should have several other craft fairs in November and December. They are always fun and give us the opportunity to get new members. This year, we are also going to participate in Lake Alfred's craft fair in August. We are thankful for the support of our members.

Heart of Jacksonville AVS

Several members of our club went to the recent AVSA convention in Atlanta and had a great time!!

Special congratulations to Bobbi Johannsen for wrestling a few ribbons away from Wayne Geeslin (in classes he didn't enter...LOL!) It did whet our appetite to attend another show and see many of our friends again. Looking forward to Dixie in October!!



a potluck feast. No one went away hungry from this one. Then the real entertainment began. Sandi Mynatt presided over the introduction of the first ever meeting of AVAA (African Violet Addicts Anonymous). During this presentation many qualifications were listed. Groans were heard as members identified with the symptoms. The question was asked: "Do you know why African Violet Addicts go to meetings? ... because they always come home with MORE plants, of course!" A warning was given. Leaves are the gateway drug to this addiction. They are pretty, they are soft, they are free.

At the previous meeting last month, members were given a simple questionnaire to fill out and bring back with them. It asked questions like "How many plants did you pot up this past month?" and "How many other Gesneriads do you grow?" and "How many violets do you have in your collection presently?" Little did they know

that those numbers would qualify them for a special "chip" with the number of violets they own upon it. They were told to keep their chip so they could look back wistfully on this day when they only had that many violets.



Of course, there were a few hardy souls that exceeded the 100-chip mark. A special golden chip with a jewel affixed was awarded to them for their stamina and bravery.

In addition to the chips and the good-hearted laughter mixed with various levels of sympathy, each member was inducted into the Sacred Order of the Black Thumb. Certificates were presented. From our research, the green thumb myth is poppycock. After potting



At the AVSA convention

In May, we had our last gathering before our summer break and it was a fantastic party! Members brought in all kinds of delicious food for



up 20-30 or 100 violets, your thumbs are black not green....to match your nails! We now buy plants with the money previously spent on manicures.

In closing we said, "If you are just one violet short of an intervention...then this is the place for you. If you are many violets past all hope of an intervention, you definitely BELONG here. Come join us at the next meeting!"

Tampa African Violet Society (TAVS)

Tampa AVS continues having 2 monthly meetings – a Zoom meeting the first Thursday each month at 7 pm and an in-person meeting the third Friday at 10 am at the Seffner-Mango Library. Recent programs included an excellent Zoom presentation by Terri Vicenzi on Streptocarpus, a program titled "These are my Favorite Gesneriads—I'll Tell You Why," by Celeste Christman (Episcias), Mary Beth Bryant (Primulinas), and Sandi Soto (African violets).

Our July Zoom program was titled "Introducing our Affiliates: AVSA, DAVS, AVCF and GS" and featured Mary Corondan, newly installed AVSA President, Robbie McMeel, Vice President of Dixie AVS, and Mary Jane DiLorenzo, Treasurer for the African Violet Council of Florida. This was a most interesting and beneficial program as the strengths of each group were discussed, the connections each has with the other and our dependency on each other.

Four of our members attended the AVSA Convention in Atlanta: Mary Beth Bryant, Sandi Soto, Gladys Cook and Jim Boyer. Gladys handles our website, and Jim was teacher of this year's Judging School. Mary Beth and Sandi loved visiting the Sales Room, and each brought back some new plants.

We've selected a theme for our 2024 show—"Art Through the Ages." The show will be held February 23-24, 2024, in Temple Terrace, Florida, in the Tampa Bay area. And we'll be participating in the Fall Plant Festival at the University of South Florida's Botanical Gardens in October.

LOUISIANA DIRECTOR'S REPORT August 2023



by Becky McMeel
beckymcmeel@gmail.com

Hello fellow DIXIE members! How is YOUR summer going? Is it hot enough for you? I, myself, can't wait for fall/winter. Here's hoping it comes sooner, rather than later!

Louisiana Lagniappe AVS

In May, LLAVS had a program on common insect pests of AV's. Members were shown pictures and had to guess what bug it was. Program chairperson Mary Jo handed out yellow sticky traps for rewards. When was the last time your club talked about bugs? Also, the semi mini project plant, Rob's Boogie Woogie, was handed out, and the 2023 show schedule has been sent to AVSA for approval.

This director attended the AVSA convention in Atlanta. What a beautiful show! It was so great seeing violet friends again.

June's program was a discussion of "What is June 28th?" It is exactly 4 months before the show, and the last chance to repot your violets before the show. Program chair Mary Jo compiled a list of all suggestions on pre-show preparations and shared them with the club. What was her conclusion? There is no right or wrong. Do what works for you.



July's meeting saw a discussion and explanation of major points of the Design Section of the Judges Handbook. There was a dish garden demo by new member Chris Brooks, President of the Acadiana African Violet Society. Members of the club commented and made suggestions on how to improve it. Thank you, Chris! Well done!



In case you haven't heard, DIXIE will have a 2-day show on October 20th and 21st at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens. Y'all come now, ya hear? The theme will be "It's a Garden Affair."

Acadiana African Violet Society members were busy bees in the Months of May, June, and July. There was a sale, a show, and many tips on how to grow! It was great to get to spend time visiting with members outside of a meeting at our plant sale. The AVSA convention at the end of May, beginning of June allowed us to meet so many new friends and see Facebook friends in person. What a wonderful community the African violet hobbyists are.

May saw a successful first plant sale for the society. This was in place of our monthly meeting. Our booth at the Sunset Herb and Garden festival took in more than \$700. We handed out over 100 informational brochures and even some free starter plants towards the end of the festival. Even though we had two good downpours during the festival, it was still a big success. Many plants found happy new homes!

June was an exciting month. My wife Catherine and I attended our first national convention for the AVSA in Atlanta. We participated in many workshops and presentations on topics such as African violet interpretative arrangements, Primulinas, African violet hybridizing, and collecting and growing moss. The show was a beautiful display, everyone was very friendly, and I took home far too many plants from the sales room! At our June meeting I presented a slideshow summary of the convention. Our



LLAVS discussed the revised classification form for the upcoming show. It was simplified from the previous format, and explained by Mary Jo, Show Chairman. It will be a way for members to give a rough idea of what and how many plants they will have for the show, to the classification committee. It also allows the placement committee an idea of how to place the show sections and classes.

members oohed and aahed at all the beautiful plants grown with such skill. After the slideshow was a program covering what I learned about moss at the convention.



July was all about chimera propagation. The program discussed and then demonstrated propagating from bloom stalks, suckers, and how to encourage suckering for use in propagation. Our gardening topic was weed control and covered many different methods for identifying and eliminating those pesky weeds. There are some excellent phone apps for plant identification and they are very handy for determining what weeds you are struggling with. It is then much easier to research the best means of control. Members were encouraged to download one of



these apps since they are such useful tools and can even help determine what that nice plant in your neighbor's yard is!

The heat is now on in south Louisiana and it is a good time to stay out of the sun and take a little extra time caring for those indoor plants including the violets. I'm off now to do some repotting and a quick clean of the shelves. Happy growing!

Till next time. . .Happy Growing! ☺

Becky McMeel, Louisiana Director

TENNESSEE STATE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

by Marian Zoller

marigregz@gmail.com



Hello fellow DAVS members.

The Memphis African Violet Society is maintaining our membership and enjoying our fellowship. Individually we all have our trials but we try to bring joy to the meetings with our love of African Violets.

At our July meeting we installed new officers and they are:

Geneva Stagg—President
Carolyn Walker—Vice President
Judy Grey—Secretary
Valorie Gore—Treasurer

We are looking forward to their leadership.

We have had a mild spring with plenty of rain, but summer came with high straight-line winds and heat, as well as more rain. This has hurt some of our members depending on where they lived, as much of Memphis suffered prolonged power outages. Everyone is coping as well as possible. I hope none of you have had bad luck with Mother Nature.

In June Geneva Stagg gave a wonderful presentation on "The Wonderful World of Gesneriads"

We had a program in July on Achimenes presented by Marian Zoller. Her husband Greg

is growing about 50 different varieties. This time of year they are beautiful since they love this hot weather. This year is the first time we tried growing one indoors and under the lights. It worked well, although it took a long time to get going and blooming. We'll probably try a few more next year after the fall harvest. Hopefully they will still look good enough to bring to Dixie.

MAVS is planning a fall sale on September 16, 2023, to help us downsize our collections. Wish us luck as we often buy more than we sell!

The club is now planning its first actual show since COVID. It will be April 11-13, 2024. This is progress. Members were encouraged to attend the DAVS in Birmingham.

DIXIE AVS AFFILIATES REPORT Third Quarter 2023

by Robbie McMeel
rmcmeel@bellsouth.net

What a change, WOW. We went from a short pleasurable spring to a scorching summer. I know in our area we have been experiencing temps in the 90's with a humidity level in the high 80's and 90's. It is much too unpleasant to be outside to do anything and I know that our plants inside are not happy either. I am already looking forward to the fall season, as I know many of you guys are doing the same. Let us pray that we, along the Gulf and Atlantic coast do not have to deal with any of those nasty storms this year.

I am happy to announce that I will be posting some winners in the future, as I have had several requests for Dixie ribbons. Thanks to Mary Lou for posting the winners from the Tampa club in the last newsletter. I did not receive them early enough to put in the report.

In the past, one needed to send in the show schedule to me along with the money for the ribbons. In order to help streamline this, any club that will have Dixie classes in their show can email me a copy of your schedule, this will help save your club postage fees and time to get it to the post office. I hope that we will have a great showing of Dixie Registered Plants in the

collections. If you don't have the Dixie Ribbons, please contact me, so that a set can be sent to your show chairs. Cost of the ribbons is \$10.00 per set and this is only to cover the postage to get them to you. Dixie has rosettes for Best and 2nd Best Standard Collection and Best and 2nd Best Collection in the Semi/Miniature Collection. In the future, please try to grow Dixie Collections for both. There are a lot of great Dixie registered plants to choose from. To find out what they are, go to Dixie's website and there is a PDF file with all of the Dixie registered plants. If you are unable to get this list on the website, please let me know and I will more than happy to get you a list in the mail. If there is any plant that you would like to show in a Dixie class and it has not been registered with Dixie, please contact me and we will see what can be done with getting the plant registered.

If any affiliate has any questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Let's keep Dixie in all of our shows.

Respectfully and keep up the good growing and be safe in your travels!

Robbie McMeel

DAVS Affiliates Chair

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 payable to

Baltimore African Violet Club
Carolyn Epstein
14317 Yosemite Court
Rockville, MD 20853

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.

FROM THE DAVS AWARDS COMMITTEE
Marian & Greg Zoller
marigregz@gmail.com

Hello Dixie friends and Good Morning from Tennessee.

Everything and everywhere has been hot this summer. Well, almost everything. The Dixie Awards fund has been cold as ice.

We have not been able to make a deposit to the fund in months, maybe years. The Dixie show is only two months away and we would love to fatten up the awards fund so we can give it back to all the winners. So we ask that you consider dropping a check in the mail for the Dixie Awards Fund. Time is short.

You can send your donation to:

Marian and Greg Zoller
4815 Oak Lane Cove
Arlington, Tn. 38002

We appreciate your consideration. Until we see you at the convention we remain

Sincerely,
Marian and Greg Zoller

**WHY SHOULD YOUR CLUB
HAVE A SHOW?**

- African violet shows stimulate interest by club members in horticulture and floral design
- They provide a creative and expressive outlet for club members
- They educate both club members and the general public regarding what's new in the violet world.

- And they broadcast, share and convey the objectives of your club to the local community

**WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO YOUR
CLUB'S HAVING A SHOW?**

- The planning and staging of the show develop camaraderie among club members
- Provides a chance to meet and connect with potential new members
- Conducting a show educates the club members in horticulture and floral design
- Earning individual and club awards develops and instills personal pride and confidence
- When members show their plants, it gives them greater motivation and incentive to learn best practices in order to grow the very best and most beautiful plants
- As a result of participating in a flower show, members may decide to attend an AVSA-sponsored Judging School in order to become a judge and thereby be an additional asset to the club

**DOESN'T IT TAKE A LOT OF WORK TO
HAVE A SHOW?**

- Having a show does take a lot of work, but it mostly requires cooperation of ALL club members. When all members take on a specific responsibility, the show becomes a club project and EACH member is extremely important. Each member must do his/her job and work together with the other members. No one can shirk his/her duty – members must support each other!
- So don't give in to the negative voices! Be a YES voice, set the example, and bring all your other members along with you for a successful show!



DIXIE REGISTERED VARIETIES

Becky McMeel, Plant Registration Chair
beckymcmeel@gmail.com

These varieties were registered July 19, 2023, by Leslie Boyd:

#1906 (Leslie Boyd) Comet's Best Bret. Highly glittered, frilled, single white bloom with pastel pink thumbprint. Serrated, slightly ovate, medium green with pale pink and cream variegation. Semiminiature



#1907- (Leslie Boyd) Comet's Oort Cloud. Dark purple, frilled single bloom with white puff fantasy. Medium green, slightly serrated, heart shaped foliage with cream variegation on edges. Semiminiature.



This variety registered July 22, 2023, by Vicky Richard:

#1908 Vicky's Annie- (V. Richard) Single pink pansy/variable raspberry edge, variable darker eye. Variegated medium to dark green, cream and pink. Semiminiature.



Vicky's
Annie

These varieties were registered July 22, 2023, by Belinda Thibodeaux:

#1909 Cajun's Just George (B.Thibodeaux) Double deep blue star/white edge. Variegated medium green and white Standard.



#1910 Cajun's Remember Me (B.Thibodeaux) Semidouble grape pansy/white ruffled edge, pink fantasy. Variegated, cream and pink. Standard



#1911 Cajun's Voodoo Queen (B.Thibodeaux) Single-semidouble pink pansy/raspberry sparkle edge variegated, cream and pink. Standard.



NAME CORRECTION:

Please note the following name correction on Belinda Thibodeaux's Registered Variety No. 1905. Correct name is CAJUN'S ROUGAROU

the other Gesneriads:

by Mary Lou Harden
mlhard@verizon.net

Michaelmoelleria vietnamensis



One of my favorite gesneriads, which was added to my collection in early 2022, is this beautiful plant, *Michaelmoelleria vietnamensis*. If you have seen it for sale on the internet, you've no doubt noted that it's reported by one vendor as a Begonia and a 4-inch pot is sold for \$45. Another vendor describes it as a "Gesneriad Species Vietnam Violet" and sells the 4-inch for \$60. Still another will sell you a "starter plant" for \$22.50. The only catch is, you must buy two of them!

The Gesneriad Reference Web describes this gesneriad as "the only species in this newly-established (as of 2020) genus. It is distributed in southern Vietnam, in broad-leaved forests on granitic montane hills.

"In Vietnam it is considered a prized decorative plant, resulting in extensive collection from the local forests. Its precarious situation is exacerbated by forest clearing for plantations of Eucalyptus trees, reducing its habitat. The species is considered critically endangered.

"Until recently in cultivation only in China and Vietnam, *M. vietnamensis* has become more broadly distributed in horticulture. Its beautiful flowers and patterned/variegated foliage make it particularly desirable as a cultivated species."

It made its debut at the Gesneriad Society's 2020 convention and was again shown in 2022. This plant grows easily for me and I get excellent results from starting new plants from leaf cuttings. Not only is the foliage distinct, but the blooms are also. If you're not already growing this beautiful plant, I hope you'll soon add one to your collection and enter it at your next show.

Creativity Behind Floral Design

By Betty Ferguson
bettywithviolets@gmail.com

Creativity and talent are topics that have interested me for a long time, I guess since I was about nine and my musically talented older cousin told me my six-year-old sister could already sing better than I could. Ouch. It's amazing how words can affect our personality and self-confidence—others' words and our own self-doubts. I've always wondered how well those Teach-Yourself-to-Sing courses work, but I was afraid I might flunk and never tried one. I did sing (quietly) in my church choir. And I did a most impressive job of lip synching, "It Is Well with My Soul," at a funeral this week. I whistle well. My parrot thinks so. I've always wanted to play a musical instrument and to sing well. I remember begging for a banjo and bellowing out, "Candy Kisses Wrapped in Paper," as a three-year old while handing clothes pins to my mother at the clothesline.

But how does the topic of musical talent and desire relate to creativity and design for African violet shows? Hold your horses while I dance around the topic a while longer.

In the middle of the speaker's presentation at my bonsai club meeting last Saturday, the lady beside me timidly raised her hand and asked the speaker, "Can you learn to be creative?" A lively discussion followed with yeses and noes before our patient presenter brought the topic back to, "Trunk and Apex Development."



This design was truly a design of desperation. I left my niche fabric, vase and frog at home and had to make do at the last minute.

When I studied creative writing, my teacher stated that nothing we write is original. Our ideas come from others before us. We put together those ideas into a form that appears original. A novel has a predictable form. Think of romance novels. They have three parts—the setup, the confrontation, and the resolution. In the setup portion, a small percentage of words (approximately 1% of the book) is used for the hook, another percentage (about 12%) for the inciting incident, and 25% for the first plot.

Likewise, show schedules and our AVSA *Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors, and Judges* provide a skeleton--rules and considerations for designers. Even most non-designers know that a good design fills the niche but doesn't touch the niche, and they know when a design just doesn't feel balanced. Those are methods of design—the technique. Everyone can learn and utilize these bones of design.

According to blogger James Clear, "John Hayes, a cognitive psychology professor, studied the most talented creators in history — people like Mozart and Picasso — to determine how long it took them to become world class at their craft."

Hayes found "not a single person produced incredible work without putting in [at least] a decade of practice first." Flutist James Galway says he practices at least eight hours a day and totals the practice time of his career to be 11,000 hours -- on top of performances.

Like musicians and writers, even floral designers with natural talent must work on their skill. I can picture a design in my mind, but without the skill to make it work, it's likely to, quite literally, fall flat. (I know. I've had that happen.) Skill involves learning about various mechanics used in floral design—glue, wire, floral tape, "frog" pin holders—and using them until it becomes natural.



Container gardens call for skill and technique, too

Joyce Stork, a florist, often speaks on the topics of technique and mechanics of design but doesn't claim to be a particularly gifted designer. However, her designs place well in convention shows, and I've heard her speak of very creative ideas for designs such as using the flower stalks of common sorrel she found along the roadside. I wonder if she has more creative talent than she claims or if she has learned and practiced the mechanics so well that she has learned to be creative? I asked her for her thoughts on whether creativity can be learned. Here are excerpts from her response:

Creativity learned? Perhaps it might be. I think that creativity often grows out of desperation--when we are forced to expand the boundaries of our thinking. Of course, it helps a great deal to

have studied mechanics and design techniques so we can put them to use when that desperation moment arrives. [Desperation] seems to open up our creative thinking because we have created a problem that needs to be solved.

That's an approach I hadn't thought of. Mary Lou Harden presented a Dixie convention program some years ago. She provided all sorts of materials and mechanics and chose about five of us from the audience as participants in the workshop. She set the timer, allowed each of us to choose our materials and set to work. It was truly an act of desperation that forced me to put together a design in my short amount of time that I was pleased to present to our audience. At the end, Bob Green complimented my design! Yes, it was a creation born of desperation. And some exciting material to choose from. Plus, a knowledge base I could call on in time of need. There was a plenty desperation when I played ladies softball. I learned the techniques, but I always hoped for rain and the end of the season. So, one last time: Can creativity be learned or not?



Mary Lou was the creator of this elegant design

I think my flute teacher came as close as anybody ever will to answering that question. One day during a desperate struggle over a particularly difficult passage of

Syrinx by Debussy with its five flats and frequent accidentals, my cousin's critical words from long ago played in my mind. "Do I even have any musical talent at all?" I asked my teacher. Turning to face me, she said, "Betty. If you didn't have a musical talent, you wouldn't even want to play."

If you have enjoyed the designs in shows but didn't have the confidence you could do that, too, you probably have innate creativity and can learn the techniques to go with it. Give design a try at our next show.

Upcoming Events

September 30, 2023 – African Violet Council of Florida Fall Membership Meeting by Zoom.
Guest presenter, Jere Trigg, Spanish Fort, AL.

October 19-21, 2023 – Dixie AVS Convention and Show, Birmingham Botanical Gardens, 2612 Lane Park Road, Birmingham, AL 35223

October 28, 2023 – Louisiana Lagniappe AVS, Baton Rouge, LA, Fall show and sale, "A Violet Spooktacular." Baton Rouge Garden Center, 7950 Independence Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70806.

November 4, 2023 – African Violet Council of Florida AVSA-sponsored Judging School, Seffner, FL. Jim Boyer is teacher. Information: Jasb39@gmail.com.



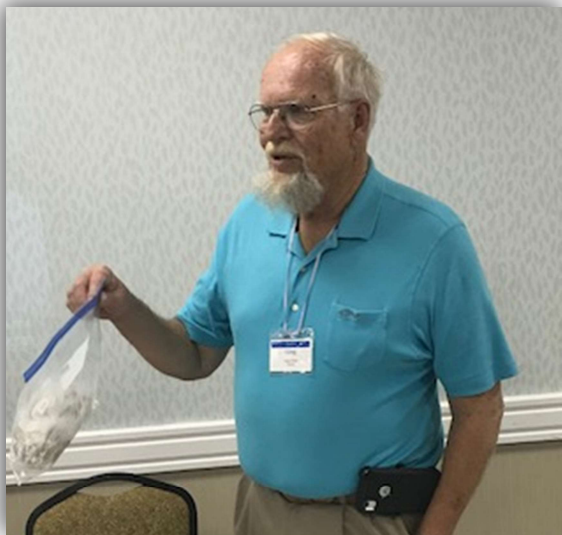
2023 SHOW AGENDA

by Robbie McMeel
rmcmeel@bellsouth.net

You'll find the agenda for our Fall show in an attachment to this newsletter. This will not be a convention as we have had in the past. Due to COVID restrictions in the past that have cancelled our conventions, we decided to go with a show instead to see what our participation will be. The show will be held at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens in Birmingham, AL. Parking is free and admission to the gardens is free also. We will be

posting local hotels and eateries that are in close proximity to the gardens. We will need help and participation from ALL of our members to make this show happen so that we can continue having Dixie shows in the future. The Show Schedule will be the same as in the past, so that you can get your plants ready accordingly. Once the show schedule has been approved by AVSA, we will send it out in an email to all and it will also be posted on the website.

REMEMBERING THE 2019 CONVENTION



Awards Chair, Greg Zoller



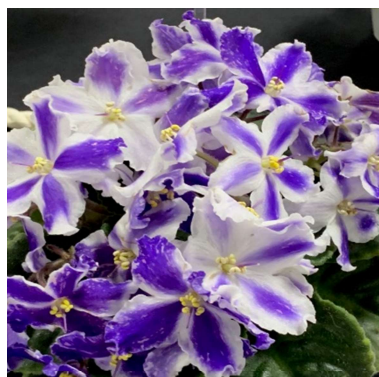
Design class with Becky McMeel



Laura Walker and Johnnie Berry



Focal Point



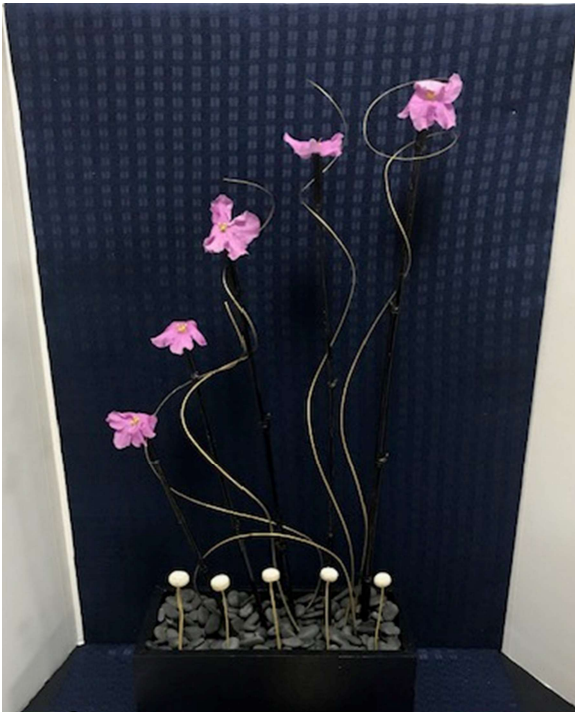
VaT
Winter
Landscape

**COPY DEADLINE
FOR NOVEMBER ISSUE
OCTOBER 15**

**JUDGING INTERPRETIVE
ARRANGEMENTS**

Space: Design begins with the space allowed. If any material (excluding the base, anchor, draping or backdrop) touches the sides of the niche, points are deducted. If any material extends beyond the dimensions given in the schedule, it is eliminated from consideration.

AVSA Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors and Judges, p.67.



BEST IN SHOW - DESIGN

"Vienna, Austria"

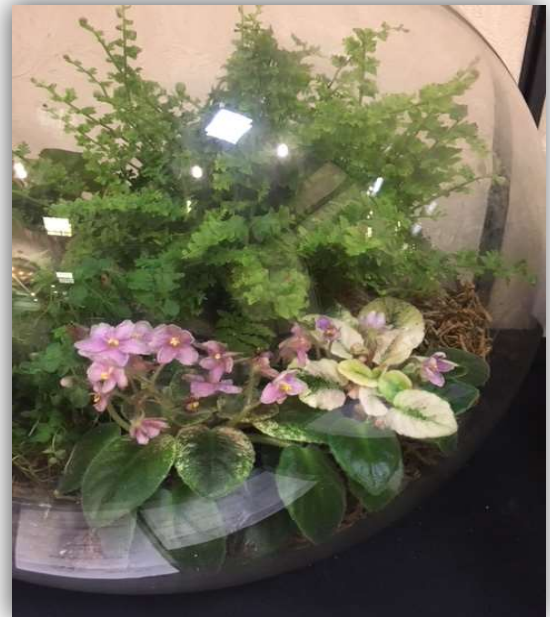
Won by: Linda McQueen from Fruit Cove, FL

CREATING A TERRARIUM

by Mary Lou Harden



Hunter's
Hoochy
Koochy



Hunter's
Diablo

A **TERRARIUM** is a miniature garden (miniature landscape), planted in a covered, transparent container. The size of the container will depend on the rules in the show schedule. Although a glass container is heavier than plastic, glass is preferred because it is less likely to get or show marks or scratches, and plastic containers often become discolored. The terrarium can be round, square, rectangular or octagonal and

can be footed. A base is not permitted, nor is draping.

Terrariums are arranged so that plants and the container together complete an artistic design. All parts of the design should be in proportion or scale. There should be one focal point or center of interest. All plants must be removed from their pots and planted in the container. No treated or cut plant material is permitted.

Accessories may be used, but must not predominate and must be placed within the container, not outside. There can be only one planting area -- no multiple or divided planting areas.



Prohibited items include: The American flag, state flags, flags from other nations, plants on the endangered list from any state or nation, artificial plant material and live creatures.

The garden should contain plants with similar culture requirements, as well as one or more blooming African violets. All of the plants must have similar needs as to soil, temperature and watering. Select plants of different heights, contrasting but harmonious colors, and some with interesting textures. Choose 5 different kinds of plants. If you use too many varieties, your garden may appear crowded and confusing.

Unlike a dish garden, a terrarium must have a cover. None of the plant material may reach above the opening.

AVSA's Scale of Points for judging Container Gardens is:

Landscape Plan.	40 points
Suitability of Materials.	20 points
Condition of Materials.	20 points
Cultural Perfection.	10 points
Relation to Container.	10 points

STEPS TO MAKING A TERRARIUM

Read the Schedule – the Schedule is the law of the show

- Does it require a theme?
- Any size limitations?
- Choose an appropriate Container - glass or plastic (clean)
- Prepare a Landscape Plan. Doesn't have to be an "architect's drawing," but it should be comprehensive enough to give you an idea of how your garden will look.
- Drainage. First layer should be gravel, rocks or perlite, maybe even Styrofoam bits.
- Cover with light layer of charcoal to absorb acids produced by soil bacteria.
- Add moistened, porous soil in small amounts. Build up the soil at the back, make hills and valleys, and make it low in front. In one of the valleys you may want to create a lake using a small mirror.
- Add the tallest plant at the back. If your plant isn't as tall as it should be, add an appropriate size piece of wood.
- Add remaining "filler" plants – small-leaf gesneriads, ivy, mondo grass, fern, palms, aralias, etc. Then add your African violets and Sinningias. Make sure that all of your plant material is clean.
- You can create a pebble path down the side of a hill or add colored sand. The path should lead the eye of the viewer deeper into the scene.
- Stand back and admire your garden. You may decide it is complete or you may wish to add some final touch such as an unusual small stone or a

- piece of wood.
- Cover exposed soil with moss and/or gravel.
- If you plant your garden 2 or 3 weeks before show, be sure to keep it in a well lighted area and mist it occasionally.

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Mail application or a copy with check payable to Dixie AVS to:
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From the Editor. . .Mary Lou Harden
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Hello, Dixie Members and Friends,

Thanks to all of you who have generously contributed articles and news items for this issue of *The Dixie News*. You are the reason that our readers give us the coveted

I have thoroughly enjoyed reading about all the good things that our affiliates are doing as well as their programs. It's important that we share ideas.

And thanks to Michael Jackson and Robbie McMeel for their diligent efforts to secure the

Birmingham Botanical Gardens for our 2023 show! This one will be a little different from shows past, but it's certainly do-able and we WILL do it! I hope all of you are growing lots of show plants and those of you who love doing design are making plans for some spectacular entries!

I hope you'll enjoy the remaining days of summer, even though they are sometimes very warm! Take good care of yourself and your plants! I look forward to seeing you in Birmingham!

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

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