

Russian Hybridizer - Alexey Kuznetsov

(This article is a collaboration between Sue Hoffmann, Ken Barbi, Vladimir Kalgin, and Ekaterina Zybinova. Photos by: Alexey Kuznetsov, Tatiana Stoliarova, Ekaterina Zybinova, Irina Titova, and Alena Koshkarova and appeared in the November 2020 MAAVS Memo)



Russian Hybridizer Alexey Kuznetsov
September 29, 1982 - June 4, 2017

Russian hybrids prefaced with "SK meaning Scales/Kuznetsov" in America and "CK" in Russia and the Ukraine, are crosses from Alexey Kuznetsov who passed away on June 4, 2017, at age 32. His hybrids are in great demand now, and hard to find. Imagine what we would see now if he had lived!!

Sue Hoffmann's original plants came from the Turners - *Starz and Streps*. Sue really enjoys the SK hybrids because they have natural symmetry, seldom sucker, and are always in bloom.



SK-Afrodita (SK-Aphrodite) Semiminiature

What most growers find so intriguing about Russian and Ukrainian hybrids are their hybridizers' methods of achieving their unique trait of **spectacular blossoms**. It has been reported by (Dr. Jeff Smith in the November/December 2018 AVM) that Russian and Ukrainian growers use natural light conditions in their apartments or homes. Window sills with natural light, and cooler shelf temperatures. As shown here in Vladimir Kalgin's **Violet Shop (Dom Fialki)** (<http://www.domfialki.ru/>) in Moscow where Alexey worked, they do well under artificial light.



SK-Lunatic with wasp foliage

In Russia, Alexey's plants are a standard of ideal quality because of his Systematic Approach in hybridizing. He was widely known and respected in Russia though a very modest and private person. His varieties became very successful as being colorful and floriferous. Many international hybridizers do not always produce such varieties that are so easy to grow! From Ekaterina's interview, "Just a few months after planting a leaf, the result is ready as a bouquet of good flowers on the compact rosette". An interesting sidelight is the role of Alexey's wife - "not infected with his passion" - but responsible for naming all his plants.

Alexey's Systematic Approach in Hybridizing



SK-Voliushka

The first successful pollination experiments resulted in the semi-miniatures SK-Osminozhka (SK-Octopus) and SK-Pervotsvet (SK-Primrose), which he first presented at a show in 2007. Their rosettes are large, because one of the parents was the standard Raskolotoie Nebo (Split Sky by Prilutskaya). Rob's Penny Ante (miniature by Ralph Robinson) was taken as the mother plant. SK-Osminozhka inherited from

his father a rare feature of a venous pattern on the petals, and thus immediately attracted the interest of local growers.



Alexey in Dom Fialki with his Violets

Alexey's Growing Methodology

Quoting from Ekaterina Zybinova's Interview:

"The planting mix consists of 70-75% perlite and 25-30% top peat. That's all, there's nothing else in it, not even coal [charcoal]. There is also no drainage in the pots. This mixture he uses for leaves, babies and adult plants. The leaves take root and germinate in the same mixture, but without a wick: just in greenhouses! After the babies are separated from the mother's leaf [mother leaf] start to grow, Alexey moves them



Sprouts and spiked young plants

to wick watering. Pots 2 or 2 1/4 inch, no more. Including for large semi-miniatures (such as Mac's - George McDonald), to restrain the growth of the rosette and encourage the laying of a large number of buds. It is especially important for the hybridizer to achieve the most abundant flowering in order to correctly assess the potential of the variety both when choosing parent pairs and when checking the seedlings obtained.



SK-Osminozhka (SK-Octopus)
the first variety hybridized by Alexey

"The watering reservoirs constantly contain a solution of "green" Etisso fertilizer, diluted in the proportion of 2 ml of per 1 liter of water - for leaves and children [babies], and a little less than 1 ml of "pink" Etisso per 1 liter of water - for plants that need to bloom. As reservoirs, Alexey uses transparent plastic disposable food containers with a capacity of 250ml, making holes in the lids with the above-mentioned punch [Alexey uses an awl to punch a hole in the lids]. The water supply in these reservoirs is enough for about a

month. Fluorescent lamps are the most common, from the hardware store, type L36W/640, on EPRA. He tried the much-vaunted "fluora", but he was not too happy with it - most violets under these lamps turned out to be dark, pink light is uncomfortable for human eyes, and there are practically no pluses (by the way, I came to the same conclusions regardless of Alexey). Each shelf, regardless of its width, is illuminated by two lamps. Distance from lamps to foliage 12 - 15 cm; daylight duration 12 hours. The room temperature is about 23°C in the area of the upper shelves and, accordingly, around 18°C at floor level."

Alexey's Other Hybrids are:

<p>SK-Ablonevyi Sad (SK-Apple Orchard) SK-Afrodita (SK-Aphrodite) <i>semiminiature</i> SK-Aktrisa Brodyachego Tsirka (SC-Actress of the Wandering Circus) SK-Evridika SK-Fenix (SK-Phoenix) SK-Flamingo (SK-Flamingo) SK-In Vino Veritas (SK-In Wine Truth) SK-Konfityur (SK-Confection) SK-Lunatic (with wasp foliage) SK-Na Luzhayke (SK-On the Lawn) SK-Nevskly Bereg (SK-Nevesky Coast) SK-Novaia Zhirn (SK-New Life) SK-Osminozshka (SK-Octopus - the first variety hybridized by Alexey) SK-Pangeia (the last variety hybridized by Alexey) SK-Peizahz v Tumane (SK-Misty Landscape)</p>	<p>SK-Pered Grozoi (SK-Before the Storm) SK-Pervaya Lyubov (SK-First Love) <i>miniature</i> SK-Pervotsvet (SK-Primrose) SK-Planeta Zemla (SK-Planet Earth) SK-Polyarnaya noch' (SK-Polar night) SK-Romans SK-Romance (pink wasp bloom) SK-Satori (SK-Enlightenment) (bell-shaped wasp bloom) SK-Soblazn (SK-Temptation) SK-Tanets Zhuraviya (SK-Dance Crane) SK-Tropikanka (SK-Tropikanka) SK-Utro s Liubimoi (SK-Morning with his Beloved) SK-Vernisazh (SK-Vernissage) SK-Volioushka SK-Yunost' (SK-Youth)</p>
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There are many active Russian and Ukrainian hybridizers who are registering their plants in First Class, however, **none of Alexey's plants have been registered yet**. Something we need to change! It was said that Alexey's new introductions "disappeared faster than cold beer on a hot summer day."

For more information, take a look at an interview posted by Ekaterina Zybinova <http://miniviolets.ru/blog/selekcija/aleksej-kuznecov-interview> which you'll have to translate from Russian with a Google tool. Additionally, Rich Follett has written an article about Alexey on page 54 in the November/December 2020 AVM.