



CHATTER

The Journal of the African Violet Society of Canada

Volume 57, Number 4

October-December 2012

SAMPLE MAGAZINE ISSUE



Programs & Projects

Annual AVSC membership includes 4 issues of "**CHATTER**"

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POSTCARDS

In this feature, we will be taken on a tour of a recent exhibition or event. If you have pictures that you'd like to share, contact the editor.



From: Anne Brown, Yuliya Skazhenyuk & Patti Vaison

Event: First Halifax African Violet Society

Date: May 5-6, 2012 Location: Halifax, Nova Scotia

Theme: Violets in Nova Scotia



Above: Ness' Cranberry Swirl exhibited by Anne Brown.



Above: Happiness is....
Peggy's Cove won Best in Design and Best in Interpretive Plant Arrangement for Audrey Moir.

Right: Anne Brown stands next to the Court of Honor.





The African Violet Society of Canada La Société de la Violette Africaine du Canada

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Chatter

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Please note that the deadlines for submissions to *Chatter* are:

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Contributors to this Issue: Bonnie Batchelor, Sayeh Beheshti, Anne Brown, Doris Brownlie, John Brownlie, Karyn Cichocki, Ruth Coulson, Arleen Dewell, Laurel Goretsky, Winston Goretsky, Stanley Ko, Susan Kotello, Paul Kroll, Norma Kunzel, Nancy Ley, Nancy Robitaille, Frances Shilliday, Yuliya Skazhenyuk, Stan Sudol, Patti Vaison, Beverley Williams.

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CHATTER

Volume 57, Number 4
Oct. - December 2012

The Journal of the African Violet Society of Canada

Front Cover: To illustrate the theme of different programs and projects for clubs, three pictures from this issue's articles are featured: **Top to bottom:** *Pixie Blue Trailer* picture by Norma Kunzel, *Strep seedlings* picture by Frances Shilliday and *Winnipeg AVS rooting experiment* picture by Susan Kotello.

In this Issue:

FIRST HALIFAX AVS - 2012 SHOW.....	On inside covers
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - Nancy Ley.....	3
EDITOR'S NOTES - Sayeh Beheshti.....	4-6
PICTURES FROM THE CNE - Julie Thompson.....	6
POINTERS FROM PAUL - Paul Kroll	7
GET TO KNOW OUR CLUB – Stan Sudol.....	8-10
MY THIRTY YEAR ADDICTION - John Brownlie	11 - 15
ROOTING EXPERIMENT - Bonnie Batchelor	16 - 17
JAPANESE-STYLE AFRICAN VIOLET TRAILERS – Norma Kunzel....	18 - 21
MY TOP TEN TIPS ON STREPS - Frances Shilliday.....	22 - 25
PRIMULINA 'AIKO' - Beverley Williams	26 - 27
OVER THE FENCE - Nancy Robitaille	28 - 29
ROUNDTABLE CHATTER	30 - 34
MEMBERSHIP UPDATE - Laurel Goretsky.....	35
UPCOMING EVENTS	35
SHOWSTOPPERS.....	36

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Email: chatter@avsc.ca, Opinions expressed in articles in *Chatter* are those of the authors and are not necessarily the opinions of AVSC or of the Editor.

President's Message

By: Nancy Ley



It is hard to believe that fall is upon us. Where has the summer gone? This time of year is, for most societies, program-planning time and this issue of Chatter is full of wonderful ideas thanks to the members who wrote the articles. I have been on the program planning committee of my local society and know sometimes how difficult it is to come up with new ideas.

Bonnie Batchelor has a very interesting article about an experiment that she and Theresa Pastrick conducted by comparing success rates of starting leaves in various mediums. What a great idea this would be to take this on as a group project to see if the results they got would be the same for members of your society.

Paul Kroll's methods of sharing his plants would also make for an interesting night at a group meeting and would help keep those rare and vintage plants in circulation.

Have you ever wondered how the best in show trailers are grown? Maybe trying Norma Kunzel's Japanese-style growing would be something to discuss, or growing streps with Frances Shilliday's method might be other program projects .

I'd also like to point to the ad the Toronto AVS has published in this issue, outlining upcoming presentations. This idea of advertising the presentations in your society, might be one you could take to your local library or other public places to encourage attendance from the general public.

I hope you can feel the passion I have for keeping our AVSC alive and growing. Programming is a great way to encourage new members to join as well as keep the ones we have motivated.

And finally, in this issue, we begin a new section that I think is long overdue and that is getting to know our Affiliate clubs. Stan Sudol has written an informative article about the Toronto Gesneriad Society that allows readers to connect with the TGS despite the geographical distance.

Will you be next to showcase your club?

Nancy Ley

Editor's Notes

By: Sayeh Beheshti

chatter@avsc.ca



Every issue of *Chatter* brings something special and this issue is no exception. Take a closer look and see if you spot it..... It may not be so obvious at the start, but the more you read, the more you'll appreciate the diversity of material submitted by members from all over the map. Bonnie Batchelor, Norma Kunzel and Frances Shilliday are three members who took the initiative to submit material through the chatter@avsc.ca email address. I asked them my standard questions about whether it was original and unpublished and then collaborated with them to edit and polish the articles for publication. It was a pleasure to work with all three and I look forward to even more original submissions from members. Trust me, it's not as daunting as you may think!

This issue marks the debut of Nancy Robitaille's new section: Over the Fence and Across the Country, aimed at answering and sharing your questions.

I have always been an avid reader, but this summer, I have taken reading to a whole new level. It began with John and Doris Brownlie kindly lending me their *Chatter* back issues from the 1970's and 80's. There were also some photocopies of the two very first *Chatters* ever printed by Joan Copeland. I was so excited to see the origins of *Chatter*. A couple of days later, I innocently told a friend, Don, that I wished I could find a way to get a complete set of *Chatter*. Before I knew it, Don had sent me his collection of old magazines, some of which he had purchased years ago from a lady on the east coast. I couldn't help grinning from ear to ear as I began reading through those early issues.

So, what have I learnt from all this reading? you may ask....

I have learnt that every great grower starts out as a novice. The most interesting section has been reading the show results and spotting names of growers as they took their first steps and enter a show in the novice section. John Brownlie's article on page 11 is an excellent recount of the influences and challenges that shaped him as a grower, exhibitor and hybridizer.

The old pages of *Chatter* have also revealed something dark: the names of so many clubs that have disappeared over the years. Did you know that, in Ontario alone, we used to have clubs in St. Catherines, Windsor, Niagara Falls, St. Thomas, Essex County and Owen Sound? I worry that if we each don't make strides in maintaining and growing membership in our existing local clubs, they too will also disappear.

This issue begins a new "Get to Know Our Club" section that will feature a different AVSC Affiliate club each time. The articles are compiled through answers to a series of 7 simple questions:

1. When was the club founded / by whom?
2. How Long have you been an Affiliate of AVSC
3. What were those early days like?
4. How has your club evolved over the years?
5. How do you conduct your meetings?

6. What are your special activities?
7. What are your plans for the future?

Questions 1-4 are historical and may need some research, but if you are having any hesitation to answering questions 5-7, your club may not be on solid ground. Each and every club member should be able to tell someone about your club's meeting structure, special activities as well as plans for the future. That sense of belonging and participation is what excites and motivates members to come to meetings and be a part of your activities.

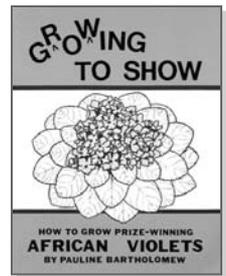
Take a moment to read about the Toronto Gesneriad Society on page 8 to get a sense of how you can use this section to motivate not only your members, but other AVSC members and begin sharing the unique aspects of your club.

Another thing that has amazed me in the older issues of Chatter has been the size of some violets I've seen in pictures. I remember that the first time that I saw the cover of the Fall 1972 issue that featured the two Susan Leslies: the first one an Ernie Fisher AV hybrid and the second one, a cute little girl for whom the plant was named, I thought to myself that either that is one small child or it's one large violet! And then when I saw the picture of Ernie Fisher holding one of his plants, I knew that the plants had to be large.



Over the years I have wondered whatever happened to all those large plants. I know that a long time ago, I made the choice of growing minis and semis. I do have some standards, but they are only there because I have some emotional connection with them and can't let them go, but none have ever grown to the stunning proportions we all admire. With all the advances we have made in light, temperature and humidity control and all the knowledge we have about soil, fertilizer and pest, surely we should all be able to grow them. Luckily, Bob Clark submitted the perfect question for our Roundtable Chatter panel on page 30. With their advice, we may begin to see more large violets at our shows.

This summer also marked the passing of one of the most influential people in the cultivation of African violets: Pauline Bartholomew. When a friend of mine lent me her own copy of "Growing to Show", I was a little hesitant to read it. In an age when books had snappy illustrations and sleek formatting, the typed pages seemed to harken to a different era. Through clear text and simple illustrations, Pauline, singlehandedly, demystified the entire process of growing an award-winning African Violet. I know that I won't be alone in saying that we were truly lucky to have had Pauline amongst our community.



Several members from California and Michigan contacted me about our July-September magazines that had been delivered in a damaged condition. Usually, magazines mailed to our U.S. and international members are enclosed in a plastic bag prior to shipment, however, our printer overlooked this step for our last issue. I apologize for any inconvenience this has caused members and have been assured that this won't happen again,

My final word comes in the form of a correction: my sincerest apologies for switching the captions on the pictures for Donna Coleman and Kathy Garbarino on page 32 of the July-Sept. 2012 *Chatter*. Donna is on the left and Kathy is on the right..... My excuse can only be that I was distracted by the sheer number of rosettes and ribbons they had each won.

All the Best!

Pictures from the 2012 Canadian National Exhibition

Pictures by: Julie Thompson



Upper left: Picasso - Exhibited by Doris Brownlie, Best in Show, Standards section for African violets.



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Pointers from Paul

By: Paul Kroll



In this column, I am passing on tips and tidbits of things that work for me. I am a very practical person and make things work for me, sometimes in other, unusual or secondary ways.

Over the years I have given away countless cuttings, leaves, stems, etc. My wife asked me a few years ago to approximate how many cuttings I give away each year. I had no idea! I kept track for one year by counting the number of plastic baggies I went through. The results were staggering! I had taken, prepared and given away well over a thousand cuttings! What a feeling of accomplishment came over me. Finally I was giving back to the hobby what so many had shared with me. Remember that giving away a cutting is your insurance to getting that plant back again, provided you share with others!

When I groom plants, I take off leaves and cuttings on a regular basis. As I remove the cuttings which are usable, I put them into a tub with water that has a few drops of Superthrive added to it. In order to keep the cuttings separated and properly labeled, I use the plastic containers in which annuals are sold. They come in six-packs, usually. I keep those containers, wash and disinfect them and place them into the tub where I want to store my cuttings for a week or so. I draw, on a sheet of paper, a grid replica of the divisions in the tub and then, as cuttings are taken, I write the name and number of cuttings in each square of the grid which corresponds to the location. When the grid is full, I can sit at the computer and make the corresponding number of labels. Attaching those labels to my baggies and then filling the baggies is easy and quick. In this way, I have minimized the time involved and maximized the efficiency of doing so. Try it; it works!



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<http://www.avsa.org>

Get to know our Club: Toronto Gesneriad Society

By: Stan Sudol, TGS Newsletter Editor

This feature introduces you to a different AVSC Affiliate each time. If you'd like to feature your club, please contact the editor at: chatter@avsc.ca



This year the Toronto Gesneriad Society (TGS) became thirty-five years old. Next year will also be special for another reason since it will mark the third time that we will be hosting The Gesneriad Society's Annual International Convention in Toronto.



Top: Classification Chairman - Ron Myhr and Schedule Chairman - Sandra Lex – April 1980 Show – Our first Merit Judged Show. **Bottom:** The TGS Annual Show and Sale is always well-attended and a great source of revenue.

I joined the Society in 1998, (how time flies!) but thanks to our Archives, I can tell you a story or two.

TGS is one of the 39 Chapters of the Gesneriad Society and one of only four in Canada. In 1976, with the guidance of our founder Ron Myhr, a group of plant-lovers got together to launch our society. The first meeting at the Civic Garden Centre (now the Toronto Botanical Garden) was held on March 6, 1977. There were 25 people present; of these 21 became paid-up members and we have been growing ever since. We have also been an AVSC affiliate since 1996.

On July 1, 1977, the Charter was presented to Ron Myhr in his capacity as chapter president at the 21st Annual Gesneriad Society (American Gloxinia and Gesneriad Society, as it was known then) Convention, held in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

TGS has always been governed by an elected executive. They hold a position for a two-year period. The Executive Committee is responsible for the general management of the affairs of the society guided by the By-Laws. Over the years we have had seventeen different presidents; several have held the post more than once.

Our great asset is the togetherness of the chapter. We enjoy a camaraderie, warmth and friendship and that has continued through the years. Our June and Christmas Socials serve as great examples of our club spirit and illustrate that along with our love of the plants, our lust for refreshments and treats follows a close second. Everyone is willing to share their time, talents

and plants. Some of the friendships have extended outside the club and drawn together with the common bond of our love for the plant family known as *Gesneriaceae*.

Our monthly meetings are held at 2:00 p.m. usually on the second Sunday of each month from September to June, and generally follow the same pattern from month to month: we have an Executive meeting about one hour before the scheduled meeting; President Paul Lee welcomes everyone to the meeting and continues with announcements and society business; a Show & Tell is always welcomed; and then a Mini Show, a highlight of our meetings this past year as the amount of entries has been quite large. The Judges are always willing to give a detailed critique of each plant and a winner is selected.

We then have a break and some refreshments and treats that members bring in. Following refreshments, we have our program which may be a group discussion, hands on workshops or a guest speaker.

Our Ugly Duckling Show usually takes place in June. This is a challenge as we have so many excellent plant growers, but as we all know, there can be some difficult ones, I mean the plants of course. As it ends up, this year, I was the lucky winner of the Coveted "Best Ugly Duckling Award."



Jim Bodnar, a local Episcia hybridizer, brought Episcia 'Jim's Magic' for Show & Tell



Top: President Paul Lee captures the attention of everyone at our March 2010 Meeting **Bottom:** Stan Sudol is awarded the coveted Ugly Duckling Award for 2012 with his entry of *Columnea microphylla* by Beverley Williams.

We have a Mini-show each month except when we have an Ugly Duck Show. This is a learning experience both for exhibitors and the Judges. Bev Williams, the Mini-show Chair, keeps track of all the winners and each year a trophy is presented to a member that has the most wins.

Since our inception we have encouraged the introduction and culture of all Gesneriads including African violets. Many of our members belong to local African violet clubs so there is a lot of collaboration amongst us. Annual judged spring shows are open to the public and serve as a valuable means of public education and a source of new memberships. We also have a sales table at the

shows, which has been proven popular with the public, and is an important source of revenue for our society. I believe we always have had an outstanding number of exceptional showers and growers that educate and inspire us all to do the best we can. As we grow with our abilities, we proliferate this ability to others and it grows exponentially.

February 2003 brought the World Wide Web to us, with our first web site hosted being hosted by our parent society, AGGS. In April 2008, we evolved to a new revised web site, with our own domain name: **www.torontogesneriadsociety.org**. The site is kept up to date with the latest information on meetings and programs and has more than 2200 photos going back to 1979. It also has an archive of all the newsletters from the beginning of the society. Visit us as often as you like!



This year, we are skipping our usual Spring Show to focus on the 2013 Gesneriad Society Convention in July. The theme for the 2013 Gesneriad Convention was selected as Toronto, a Gesneriad meeting place. If you know a bit about the origins of Toronto, you will immediately grasp the connection since in the Huron language, Toronto means “the place of meetings”. The logo was

designed by TGS member Andrew Schram and represents the Toronto skyline with three locally hybridized Gesneriads in the foreground. You will recognize them as *Episcia* ‘Canadian Sunset’ hybridized by Jim Bodner, *Primulina* ‘Cynthia’ hybridized by Vincent Woo and *Streptocarpus* ‘Toronto Silver Splash’ hybridized by Paul Lee.

Our convention will be held in the Hyatt Regency hotel in downtown Toronto, right in the middle of the Entertainment district. Did you know that after New York, Toronto boasts the largest number of theatre productions in the world? Toronto is a cultural paradise with live entertainment, galleries and sightseeing destinations to suit every palate. We are still planning the presentations and excursions for this exciting convention but I sincerely hope that you take the opportunity to experience the warmth, hospitality and camaraderie of our members first-hand.

Club: Toronto Gesneriad Society

Location: Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Website: www.torontogesneriadsociety.org

Founded: 1977

Members: 75

Meets: Second Sunday of the month. Visitors welcome.

What you should know: Hosting the 2013 Gesneriad Society Convention in Toronto on July 2-6, 2013



Violets down Memory lane

By: John Brownlie



In this feature, John will introduce vintage African violet hybrids you should consider growing as well as some of the stories behind them.

My Thirty Year Addiction

In 1972 Doris and I were given our first African violet as a housewarming present when we moved into our townhouse. I didn't know anything about it and did everything to kill it Watering it with cold water and no fertilizer but somehow managed to keep it alive on a glass shelf on a south facing window. After a while I decided to keep it under a fluorescent desk lamp and it produced a single bloom, purple with yellow anthers. I thought it was amazing but 3 or 4 days later the petals looked like it had powdered sugar on them. I wondered what it was and later found out it was silky mildew which killed the bloom very quickly. This started my interest.

A short while later we went to Erie, Pennsylvania to visit my mother. She grew about 25 – 30 African violets on a Christmas tree tiered stand in a window and they were all in bloom. I thought to myself: "Gee, if she can do this, I can do it too!"

Ongoing back problems forced me to stay in bed for a week. Doris went on a mission to our local library in Mississauga to find any books on African violets that they might have. She returned with several including Helen van Pelt Wilson's and Montague Free's books on African violets. During that week I read 2 or 3 books cover to cover and began getting interested in what they were saying. Around that time I first heard about Ernest Fisher who sold African violets in Downsview, Ontario.

When we visited his place and saw what he was doing, it blew my mind! He was at that time, Canada's leading hybridizer. He had all those amazing violets all over the place! He told us about a violet society that met in Mimico , Lakeshore, and that was how we were introduced to the Lakeshore African Violet Society.

The first Lakeshore AVS meeting Doris and I attended had a presentation by Carol Plevin's brother who was talking about soil and PH and a lot of technical language we could not understand. We were "green as grass" and thinking: all we want to do is grow violets and don't know anything about this scientific information. We were slightly intimidated. Sylvia Richardson was the president of Lakeshore AVS at the time. She came up, talked to us and made us feel welcome so we decided to come

back. We continued to go to the meetings and picked up one tip after another and began to improve with our growing.

We were so interested in violets that we were willing to drive anywhere to get a leaf cutting. That Summer we traveled to New York State, Michigan and places here in Ontario. We were told about Granger's Gardens down in Ohio and Hugh Eyerdom who was a great hybridizer.



Sylvia Richardson

At the time Lakeshore AVS was getting ready for their first AVSC convention at the Japanese Cultural Centre.

In 1975, Sylvia encouraged me to enter some of the plants I was growing in the basement because she thought they were show-worthy. I didn't enter the show that year but between 75-76 really got into growing large show plants and entered the Lakeshore show in 1976. We won 2nd Best in Show.

That year, Ed Bruce, from the Toronto AVS came and asked me to join so I joined and entered plants in 1977 in their show and won Best in Show and Second Best in Show.

In 1978 Doris entered Mark, one of Max Maas' plants, in the Canadian National Show that TAVS sponsored at Edwards Gardens along with several others and won AVSC Best in Show.

I also entered the first 4 hybrids that I had grown from seeds that had been given to me by Ernie Fisher. At the time, the rules about who could register the plants was not clear, but since, it has been clarified that the hybridizer does not need to be the applier of the pollen. The seedlings were "Lakeshore Southern Belle", "Lakeshore Sweet Sixteen", "Lakeshore Midnight" and "Lakeshore Star." Since that time all my seed pods I have crossed on my own.

We entered the 1980 AVSC convention hosted by Lakeshore AVS. There were 6 commercial tables at that convention – I didn't know much about how to place the 25 plants and interweave them to fit the 8 ft length of the table, so we ended up taking a lot of leaves off to make everything fit... so needless to say that we didn't win. It was a bitter pill to swallow since before the removal of leaves, the plants had been magnificent. But we learnt our lesson and never made that mistake again.

The next year we had the only commercial entry at the Lakeshore Show at Sherway Gardens and it was the best table display we have ever entered. Among the judges that came up from New York State to judge that show was Cordelia Reinhardt, a well respected violet grower, judge and leader. She encouraged us to go down to the AVSA convention that

would be held just across the border in Syracuse the following year. We had never been to an AVSA convention as a commercial member, but decided to go. This was also to be the year that AVSA would give Ernie Fisher the bronze medal for hybridizing perfection. He was the very first Canadian to receive it. Since we wanted him to get it personally, we offered to drive him and his wife to Syracuse.

We were both working and couldn't take time to go and set up our commercial table. Our dear friends, Betty and Bud Tapping, rented a cube van to take their plants down so they offered to take our plants down to Syracuse. Carol Davey offered to set up the table. We later learnt how much work it had been for them to transport the plants since the show-room had been on the 10th floor and they had to take plants individually up an elevator to the show room.

Thursday I took a sick day, went to pick up Hilda Caruso, Ernie Fisher and his wife. We picked up Doris at her school and ate some packed sandwiches along the way.

As we stepped into the hotel somebody came shouting to us: "You did it! You did it!"

We were stunned and wondering what had happened. It turned out that out of the 16 commercial table displays, we had won the commercial table award in our very first year! We were on cloud nine! What made it even more special was that my mother came to see the show and was amazed. The whole journey happened in a matter of a few years. We had gone against some of the most established greenhouse growers and hybridizers.



Above: Pictures of our commercial display tables from various conventions.



Above: Pictures on the bulletin board in my plant room : (Top-bottom):

Postcard of my hybrid Yvon Decelles, named in honor of the hybridizer, Picture of our 1982 AVSA winning Commercial Table, my hybrid: Sylvia's Choice

My golden years were the 80s and early 90s. There were improvements in hybrids that had never happened before. One such case was the creation of true red African violets. In 1980, Hugh Eyerdom from Granger Gardens, who was one of the leading hybridizers of that area, was working on hybrids to remove the wine/burgundy hues that violets had to get to a true red. Hugh was the first one to get a sport that showed much more blood red. Other hybridizers such as Sydney Sorano from Lyons Greenhouse and Kent Stork obtained stock from Granger Gardens and other sources and better hues of red developed.

Within a short while Sydney Sorano came out with a plant called "Red Robe" that was really red! Kent Stork came out with his own red called "Tomahawk" and a number of other reds.

Shortly afterwards, I came out with my very first red – ACA's Red Feathers but that wasn't a good plant. I took it and hybridized onto a pink variegate and got ACA'S Tornado and ACA's Red Ember and those two are the two best reds I have ever produced – especially ACA's Red Ember. At that time someone asked me to name a violet after Robert Serbin, a member of the BC African Violet Club who had moved from Manitoba to BC, so I named a new violet, a red with the white edge after him. I've never actually met Bob Serbin but he sent me a thank-you note afterwards. Of the 200 or more hybrids that I have, I consider "ACA's Tornado", "ACA's Red Ember" and "Bob Serbin" as the three best hybrids I have ever produced.

Another notable hybrid is ACA's Summer Parfait which won the best new AVSA cultivar in 2001. It's a small compact variegate. It was hybridized on a semi mini, which developed a small compact standard. The bloom is unique. It has a big white eye surrounded by dark pink. It was the only plant we took to Chicago and it beat all other commercial and horticultural entries to win the best new cultivar award. We were very surprised.



*John and Doris Brownlie proudly hold one of their all-time favorite hybrids **ACA's Eloise**.*

My Favorite Vintage African Violet

Part of realizing the significance of vintage African violets is realizing what the situation was at the time and what impact that violet had on all others that followed.

Of all the violets I think about, the one that I have grown for years and would grow for the rest of my life would be "Granger's Wonderland". Hugh Eyerdorn was a marvelous man and a great hybridizer. He was just a tomato farmer who became a violet hybridizer but his eye for a violet was phenomenal. "Granger's Wonderland" was one of the first pastel blues that came out in the world. Michel Tremblay used it to create "Picasso" and if it wasn't for "Wonderland", we wouldn't have had "Delft Imperial" and a lot of the other pastel blues that became famous as the years went on.

Big Plans for the Upcoming Years

I have plans that will take me a couple of years to achieve. I have about 100 seedlings that to me are worthless. Anytime I hybridize, I am always trying to find an improvement over what already exists If I can't find an improvement, I throw the seedlings away or give them away. I've always done thatbecause it makes no sense growing things that are garbage.

One of the talks that I gave on hybridizing years ago I said, "I cross the best with the best and hope for the best." That's my philosophy and I have had success for the most part, adding to this wonderful "addiction" called growing, hybridizing and showing African violets.



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Rooting Experiment

By: Bonnie Batchelor

Winnipeg, MB

Pictures by: Susan Kotello

Bonnie Batchelor has been President of the Winnipeg African Violet Society for the last 10 years.



Ever wonder if one method of rooting an African violet leaf is better than another? I've tried various ways of rooting leaves and had success with most at one time or another. However, I wondered if my success was due to the method I used or to the vitality of the leaf itself.

I suggested to members of our club that we try a rooting experiment to test various methods. Fellow member Theresa Pastrick and I decided to give it a try. We chose six different rooting mixtures to test.

In November 2011 we put our leaves down and checked them in January 2012 for progress and concluded our test at our club's March 2012 meeting. Both of us use lights over our shelves but my growing conditions are a bit cooler than Theresa's. My leaves were enclosed in clear plastic cups with lids and Theresa's were in open cups.

Both of us used standard violet leaves, mine were from Simply Smashing and Theresa's were from Optimara EverSpecial. We took all the leaves from the same plant and tried to use leaves of similar size.

The results surprised us. For both of us the most successful method was clear water. The leaves rooted faster, produced the most roots and baby plantlets appeared sooner.

We've all heard that roots produced in water are weaker and the plant struggles when subsequently planted in soil. At our meeting Theresa had already planted her water rooted plantlets and mine have been in my soil mixture for about ten days now and are growing wonderfully.

Two people testing different rooting methods can't be looked at as the final answer but it was interesting and fun. Why not give it a try and see if your usual method is actually the best one for your growing conditions.



Theresa's experiment was based on leaves from **Optimara EverSpecial** (Holtkamp) Single-semidouble purple-blue frilled pansy/white-green edge. Dark green, plain, wavy, scalloped, serrated/red back. Large (DAVS 1680)



Bonnie's Experiment involved leaves of **Simply Smashing** (9954) 03/22/2008 (Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses/P. Sorano) Double dark fuchsia ruffled star. Dark green, ovate, quilted/red back. Large

Overview of the Results

Bonnie - Simply Smashing (STD) Started Nov. 2012				
	Jan 2012	Feb 2012	19 March 2012	Rating
Water	2 roots	Dozens of roots	Dozens of roots, 3 plantlets	1st
Perlite/ vermiculite/ water	No roots		Enough roots to plant, 2 tiny plantlets	2nd
Vermiculite/water	6 roots	Multiple roots	Enough roots to plant, no plantlets	3rd
Soil and rooting hormone	So many roots could not pull from soil	Rotten, dead	dead	Fail
Perlite/water	Rotten, leaf wilted	dead	dead	Fail
Perlite/ vermiculite ½leaf	Rotten, leaf wilted	dead	dead	Fail

Terry - Optimara EverSpecial (STD) Started Nov. 2012				
	Mid Dec.	Feb 2012	19 March 2012	Rating
Water	Roots/baby leaves	Plantlets	Good size plantlets	1st
Perlite/water	nothing	Roots/baby leaves	plantlets	2nd
Perlite/ vermiculite / Fisher's mix/ water	Nothing	Roots/baby leaf	plantlets	2nd
Perlite/ vermiculite / water	Nothing	Few roots	Plantlet grew from crack on back of mother leaf	3rd
Vermiculite/ water	Nothing	Few roots	2 Baby leaves	4th
Fisher mix/water	Nothing	Few roots	2 baby leaves	4th

Growing Japanese Style African Violet Trailers

By: Norma Kunzel

Calgary AB

Norma's love for African violets began in 1966 when her mother gave her one as her family moved to Dawson City, Yukon. In 1972, her mother gave her another violet later identified as White Madonna that she still grows to this day.



I first learnt of the Japanese method of planting African violets in a shallow pot at a 1999 workshop by Louise Johnson. A short while later, I read a related article written by Bob McCabe from the Ottawa African Violet Society who had been awarded "Best Trailer" in the 1997 AVSC Convention for growing Rob's Sticky Wicket in a 12 inch saucer.



In August 2006 I decided to apply Bob's ideas with Pixie Blue from a 3 inch pot moving into a 12 inch saucer. The following year in May, my Pixie Blue was awarded the Best Trailer as well as Best in Show at the 2007 Stamped City African Violet Society Show.

Above: What a thrill for me! Awarded Best Trailer and Best in Show, this is Pixie Blue, in the Honor Court at the 2007 SCAVS Show. The poker chips and dice supported the theme "Violets in Vegas". When I removed the blossoms after the show, I counted over three hundred.

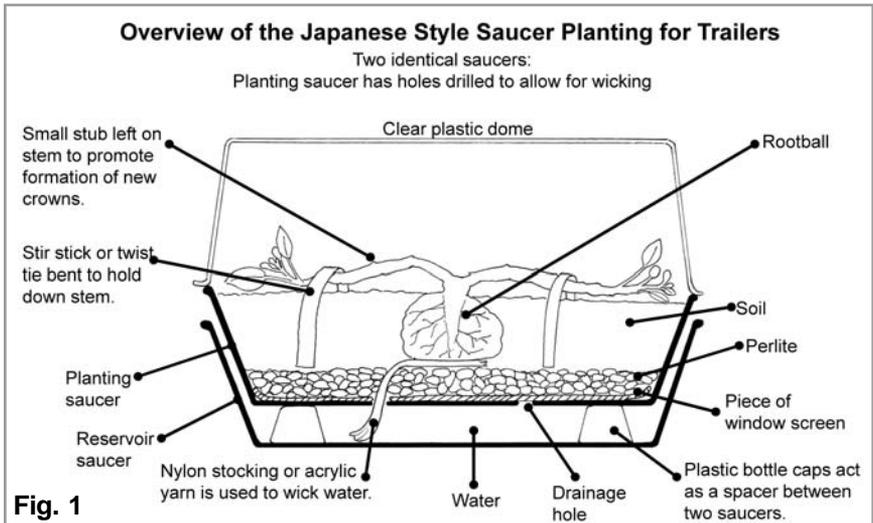
My friend Doug Beagrie urged me to share my journey with other growers so I have written about my project to demonstrate the Japanese method that I used to plant an African violet trailer in a shallow saucer.

Pixie Blue is a miniature trailer hybridized by L. Lyons, September 16, 1974 and registered as number 2598. I began with a plant in a 3 inch pot that was reaching over the edge and showed strong horizontal growth. This made it a good candidate for planting in a saucer.

The material you need for the Japanese method of shallow planting is:

- Two identical plastic saucers, approximately 3 inches deep, one used for planting, the other one as a water reservoir for wick watering.
- One piece of window screen or paper towel cut to fit the bottom of the planting saucer (optional)
- Three plastic bottle caps to act as spacers to keep the two saucers separate.
- Wick material such as cheap nylon stocking or acrylic yarn. The stocking strips are cut about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wide and stretched to about 10 inches long. In my experience the cheaper stocking make better wicks. Cotton yarn is not suitable since it will break down.

- Perlite
- Potting mix
- Coffee stir sticks or twist ties to hold down the branches



1. Drill 6 holes in the saucer which will hold the plant. Three holes will provide drainage and 3 will accommodate the wicks.

2. Place the screen in the bottom of the planting saucer. The screen is helpful component for stabilizing the soil and will keep it from shifting when moving the plant to a new or larger pot.

3. The plastic bottle caps can be attached with glue or plastic adhesive to the reservoir saucer or just lay them in the saucer.

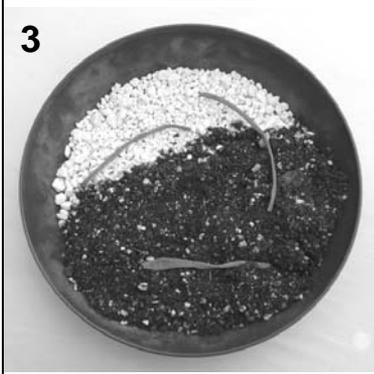
4. Pull the wicks through 3 different holes in the planting dish, and through the screen (a needle with a large eye or crochet hook will be useful here.

(Figure 2). Some articles mention wetting the wicks before placing them in the pot or saucer, I find this is messy. I use nylon stocking strips and find they will absorb the water easily once placed in the reservoir.

5. Add about 1/3 inch of perlite and a little charcoal if you like, to the bottom of the planting saucer.

6. Lift the three wicks up above the perlite and add a layer of soil. Now spread the wicks around the saucer on top of this first layer of soil to encourage an even distribution of water. **(Figure 3)**

You can prepare your plant in advance by removing most of the leaves from the stems. Following Sue Gardener's advise I left the stubs so as not to damage the axel from which new growth will appear. Bob McCabe's instructions said to removed ALL foliage but I was not so brave and I left the crowns with 4 or 5 leaves on each. **(Figure 4)**



7. Squeeze the old root ball to remove some soil and cut the root ball if necessary so it will fit in the saucer. Place your plant on the first layer of soil. For best results, your plant should be on the dry side.

To meet the requirements of a true trailer (to be entered in an AVSA approved show), please notice that all the stems must come from one center root.

8. Gently place the second layer of soil on top and around the root ball, rearranging the wicks if necessary. The wicks should rest between the two layers of soil.

9. Gently move the stems left or right to encourage even growth around the saucer.

10. If necessary use coffee stir sticks 3 1/2 inch in length, cut in half lengthwise (to make them more pliable) to stake down the stems. Gently press the soil down around the plant. As the soil is moistened it will settle and you can top dress later. If necessary spray the surface soil to keep it moist.

A reminder here from Bill Price, "water only when the pot is quite dry as the roots have not grown out into the new soil" and can not absorb large amounts of water.

11. With a soft bristle brush clean soil residue from the leaves.

12. Place the planting saucer in the reservoir saucer, ensuring the wicks are in the water. Place a clear dome over the top to increase humidity however, watch out for excess humidity and remove the cover for a few hours if this happens.

Most of us have seen the lovely trailers that Bill grows for show and he advises to start pruning out the larger leaves on a young plant in 2 1/2 inch



Use a dome to create extra humidity

pot to allow better development of the small crowns. However he does not remove the tips of the crowns.

Rich Follett advises that “trailers must be grown for foliage first and blooms second. Don’t let your plant bloom until foliage is thick and dense.”

I hope that these ideas and tips will help you embark on your own journey of growing a stunning trailer in a new way. **Good Luck!**



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My Top Ten Tips on Streps.

By: Frances Shilliday

Frances Shilliday from Middleton, Nova Scotia, is a member of the Annapolis Valley African Violet Society. Originally from Northern Ireland, she was unable to find any streps for 3 years after coming to Canada in 1998. Since then she has been propagating madly and spreading them around ever since.



One of the toughest and prettiest flowering houseplants you can grow is the fibrous rooted streptocarpus, a member of the gesneriad family. Its long lasting and often strikingly beautiful blooms are borne tirelessly over many months. I have grown them for many years and would like to share some things I have learnt over the years:

1. Electrical Tape

I use white electrical tape and permanent ultrafine marker to label plants. This discovery has been so useful to me and other growers I have passed it on to tell me they love it as well. Electrical tape is waterproof so the writing won't run and the label won't rot or grow fungus like a paper one. It is not easily dislodged like a stick type label. It will peel off cleanly so there is no gooey residue on the pot, can usually be reused on the next pot when you are potting the plant on and doesn't fade if you use the right marker (Staples or Staedtler brands are best - I have found that Sharpie fades). Electrical tape is cheap at 99 cents a roll in the hardware store.

2. Forests of Africa

When growing and propagating streps, you will have greater success if you can provide an environment like their natural habitat: the mountains and forests of Africa. In the wild they grow in shallow soil on the rocky forest floor of a tropical mountainside, so they prefer a shallow pot with the soil on the dry side and the air humid. They like bright light but not direct sun, like the filtered light they enjoy under the tropical forest canopy.

Watering should always be done with warm water - as warm as you would use for a baby's bath. The plants just seem to prefer it. I find room temperature water is too cold. Warm water runs off the leaves much better so there is less risk of accidental splashes causing damage. The soil should be evenly moist but not soggy; then allow it to dry out till the pot feels light and the plant is almost to the point of wilting before the next watering.

3. Summer Wilt

If your strep suddenly wilts in Summer don't assume it is dry and give it more water. Extreme Summer temperatures will sometimes cause streps to collapse. Simply move your strep to a cooler place and wait till the cool of evening, when it will most likely revive miraculously.

4. “Lines of Abscission”

Most streps will rest in Winter. This means that you should use plain water and reduce watering frequency. It is normal to have some browning of the leaf ends known as “Lines of Abscission” when the plant is resting, so don’t panic if your plant starts to look ugly. This is simply nature’s way of ensuring the plant survives its dormant period. When Spring comes and you repot, simply trim the leaf ends with scissors to a natural looking shape. You can eventually remove these old leaves when they are no longer producing buds and by this time the plant will have put on some new growth in the centre.



*Strep. showing seasonal die back also known as **Lines of Abscission**.*

5. Domes

I root cuttings under ordinary fluorescent lights in shallow containers that I place in clear plastic boxes (known as domes) since this provides the extra humidity they love. Some common grocery store containers that can be used as domes are cake covers, roast chicken or salad boxes. Choose ones that allow enough headroom for the developing leaves. For planting cuttings always use the shallowest container you can get away with as they seem to root faster in less than an inch of rooting mix.

A rooting medium of equal parts peat, perlite and vermiculite will work well. For best results use hot water to moisten rooting medium in a mixing bucket before planting cuttings as it is too easy to over water them when watering in. Mix thoroughly and feel it before filling your trays – it should be lukewarm, evenly damp and fluffy.

If you find your cuttings always rot try using 100% perlite in a polystyrene cup with no drainage holes and a shallow layer of water in the bottom of the cup.



Above: You can simply use clear plastic single-use food containers as domes.



Above (Left-right): Three methods of making cuttings: whole leaf, cross section and midrib cuttings.

1: Whole leaf cutting (left) and cross sections (right).

2: Use a paint stir stick to make indentations to place the midrib cuttings.

3: Midrib cuttings of Midnight Flame with baby leaves appearing. They have been planted in a fudge tray and enclosed in a roast chicken container. The clear dome was removed to take the photo.

4: The babies are ready for dividing.



It usually takes about 4 weeks for cuttings to root and another 4 for the new little leaves to appear. Resist the temptation to tug on cuttings to check whether they are rooting or not. If they still look green and firm all is well.

Cuttings

Choose a strong healthy leaf with lots of veins for best results, as a new plantlet will form where each vein is in contact with the soil. Avoid using the outer leaves as they are less vigorous. There are three different methods of taking cuttings – whole leaf, cross sections and midrib cuttings, depending on how many new plantlets you want.

6. Using a Whole Leaf

A whole leaf will usually produce just one plant; The whole leaf method is easiest for beginners. Insert the base of the leaf into the growing medium as for African violets and firm it in gently. Plant it just deeply enough to keep it from falling over. Cutting the top off the leaf will improve stability and stop the leaf's upward growth so that it will root more quickly.

7. Cross sections

These types of cuttings are best for narrow leaved varieties or where only a few plants are needed. Cut the leaf horizontally across the midrib into sections about two inches long. The sections nearest the leaf base will be the most vigorous and give the best results. Use a ruler or a paint stirring stick to make a slot in the growing medium. Insert the cutting (remembering to keep it the right way up) and firm it in gently.

8. Midrib Propagation

The midrib method suits large leaves and will produce more babies than you'll know what to do with. Start by cutting out the midrib. Discard it and plant the two sides of the leaf on their edges with the cut edges in the growing medium. This method maximises the number of leaf veins in contact with the growing medium so you should end up with dozens of new plants.



Top: tease babies apart. **Lower:** Use an artist's paintbrush to plant the babies.

The midrib method is said to be more challenging but I have not found this to be the case as long as I use a dome. It helps to choose a very vigorous leaf which shows wrinkled growth near the leaf base like the one pictured here.

Each side of the leaf can be cut into smaller sections for easier planting. Again use a paint stirring stick to make a slot in the rooting mix and firm in the cuttings. Make sure your knife or scissors are clean and don't keep your cuttings too cold or wet and you should see the little leaves appear in about 8 weeks. The very shallow container I am using here is a fudge tray. It is such a hardship to eat all that fudge but I do it for the sake of the plants!

9. Separating babies

To separate babies from the mother leaf, unpot the whole lot and bend the mother leaf gently back while holding the row of babies. (Your thumbs will be parallel when doing this.) The leaf should snap off leaving the babies with most of their roots intact. Tease them apart gently and handle by the leaf tips. Each little leaf may be a separate plant, although older plantlets will have two or more leaves.

Use a pencil to make a planting hole and firm the soil gently around each plantlet. The handle of an artist's paintbrush is my favourite tool as it doubles for brushing off soil. Do not plant the babies too deeply, but make sure they are deep enough to be stable.

10. Removing leaves

Once you have three strong leaves, remove the first leaf with the long thin petiole (base) and then snip the end off the longer of the two remaining leaves. This will encourage the plant to concentrate its growth to the centre.



I hope these tips will encourage you to experiment with different methods, containers, lighting and locations and find out what works best for you. Have fun and spread those extra streps around so everyone can enjoy their beautiful blooms.

Primulina 'Aiko'

By: Beverley Williams

Brooklin, ON



What's that over there in the gesneriad section of the show? It has dark, shiny, almost black-green pointed succulent type leaves and **YELLOW FLOWERS!!** In 1999 the AVSC Convention was held in Toronto at the Civic Centre (now called the Toronto Botanical Garden) and it was the first time I saw *Primulina 'Aiko'*¹

It caught my attention. It was something very different that I had never seen it before. The yellow flowers were very striking. I checked the entry card and found out that it had been exhibited by Carolyn Conlin-Lane, a member of the American Gloxinia & Gesneriad Society. I immediately went to talk to her. Where did she get it and what was it?

Up until this time very few *Primulinas* had been grown or even shown in the Toronto and surrounding area. I had seen a *Primulina sinensis*, a rosette type of *Primulina* with silvery veining and medium green leaves, exhibited at our local show by Betty Tapping on one previous occasion.

Hybridized by Toshijiro Okuto of Kakogawa, Japan, *Primulina 'Aiko'* is a hybrid of *Primulina lutea* (formerly known as *Primulina eburena*) x *Primulina subrhomboidea*. John Boggan², describes it as one of the best *Primulinas* every hybridized.³ This herbaceous gesneriad has many features from its parent *Primulina lutea* such as its bright yellow flowers, but is easier to bloom and produces more flowers, and it still has the remnants of the large white bracts commonly associated with *Primulina lutea*.

Well, it turned out that the plant that I saw exhibited by Carolyn Conlin-Lane in 1999, was one of two plants that carry the same name. The one originally hybridized by Toshijiro Okuto has large medium green leaves and yellow flowers and grows quite large. The one Carolyn exhibited is now referred to as *Primulina 'Aiko'* (red) and has shiny black-green leaves and does not grow as large. The real distinguishing factor is the red stripes and dots in the throat of its yellow flowers. In *Primulina 'Aiko'* two pairs of leaves grow opposite each other in a perfect cross and it can get large, more platter size. *Primulina 'Aiko'* (red) exhibits a similar growth but has a more rosette pattern and only gets to be about a dinner plate in size.

We have two different hybrids with the same name only distinguished by the colour and size of the leaves and blooms. I grow both in my collection and I can definitely see a difference in these two hybrids.

Primulina's do not like a soil mix that is too heavy or wet. You can use the same soil as you do for your African Violets. Additional perlite can be used to keep it well-aerated and well-drained if your soil is too heavy. If



Can you tell them apart?

Above: *Primulina 'Aiko'*

Lower: *Primulina 'Aiko' (red)*

you live in an area with soft water, adding a small amount of lime can be helpful. If you have hard water in your area, no additional lime is needed.

Primulinas will rot if over watered, don't mind drying out but should be kept evenly moist. As they are not heavy feeders, a reduced water soluble fertilizer at about half strength is fine. The addition of a bit of bone meal in the soil, about one tablespoon to each quart of soil, helps.

Primulina 'Aiko' whether it is the original form or *Primulina Aiko'* (red), is easy to grow and tolerate the same conditions as African violets. *Primulina sinensis* is the most common Primulina grown in cultivation and has many different variations and hybrids which have been introduced recently. Some Primulinas are annual and you must collect seed to maintain them and others are shrubby perennials which are less commonly grown and have other cultural requirements. But, overall Primulinas are easy to grow and most people who grown African violets can grow a Primulina.

The genera *Chirita* have been reclassified into the *Primulina* genera as of June 2011 and therefore resulted in the change of name.¹

Molecular systematics and remodelling of *Chirita* and associated genera

(Gesneriaceae) Authors: Weber, Anton¹; Middleton, David J.²; Forrest, Alan³; Kiew, Ruth⁴; Lim, Chung Lu⁴; Rafidah, A.R.⁴; Sontag, Susanne¹; Triboun, Pramote⁵; Wei, Yi-Gang⁶; Yao, Tze Leong⁴; Möller, Michael⁹**Source:** *Taxon*, Volume 60, Number 3, June 2011, pp. 767-790(24) **Publisher:** International Association for Plant Taxonomy <http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/iapt/tax/2011/00000060/00000003/art00012>

² John Boggan is a Research Assistant at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C., where he works closely with Dr. Laurence E. (Larry) Skog. John holds an undergraduate degree in entomology, and an M.S. in Systematic Botany, both from Cornell University. His master's research was on the genus *Sinningia* and its relatives, and he has a continuing interest in morphology and genus-level relationships within the Gesneriaceae.

John has been a member of AGGS since 1985 and is currently president of the National Capital Area Chapter of AGGS. He has written extensively for *The Gloxinian* and for *CrossWords*, and has a strong personal interest in hybridizing. His current hybridizing interests focus on *Chirita* and *Kohleria*. <http://www.gesneriads.ca/frfrag.htm>

³ (From *Petal Tones Volume 28, Number 9 May 2000—The newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of the American Gloxinia and Gesneriad Society*.) How to Grow *Chiritas* by John Boggan.

OVER THE FENCE...and across the nation

By: Nancy Robitaille

Nancy has been raising violets and other gesneriads since 1980. In this feature, she will answer any questions you may have.



Q. Does anyone know where the Fisher hybrids can be purchased? I am happy to pay cost of leaves and postage to PEI. I have the ones Tina has and I emailed Mr. Brownlie about the ones mentioned in his article but have not heard back yet. I know of 4 growers on PEI but there is no show or society now. Percy, PEI

A. Ernie Fisher hybridized 226 hybrids including standards, trailers, mini and semis from the 60s to the mid-80s. It is difficult indeed to find sources for his hybrids. Most I would say, have faded from the scene unless people are growing his varieties but not sharing. If they are not sighted on Ebay or with our commercials, they can be extremely difficult to find....so private collections may be the only answer.

Maybe we should keep a list of his varieties that people are looking for. As *Chatter* crosses the country, if growers from East to West would be willing to share these varieties, we may be able to keep them from extinction.

An internet forum attempts to do this:

Violet Search: a forum where you can search for favorite hybrids.
<http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/violetsearch>

Other interesting Canadian violet groups are:

Canadian African Violet Exchange:

<http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/canadianavx>

African violets Canadian Friends:

http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/av_can

African Violet Insects:

<http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/africanvioletinsects>

Q. I've heard that before you register a hybrid you have to determine its stability...what does that mean, and how do hybridizers do that? Jeff Jackson, Alberta

(Note: Jeff Jackson is a new hybridizer from Alberta. He already has several series of hybrids on the market. One is Imp's, the other, Sylph's. Watch for them at Bloomlover's and Violet Gallery.)

In order to attain stability in violets, the hybridizer must take that one hybrid through about three years of growing. By that time, he/she is able to determine if the plant will stay true to description. A plant that mutates often is not stable so the grower would not be able to know if the plant would remain true to description or not.

Hybridizers must take the plant through the first few cycles of blooming then make a description of foliage and flowers. He/she would have to take a cutting or sucker to see if the plant remains true to description. This is its stability. When a baby from the cutting has grown to maturity it may be verified for trueness to original description. Then, for a third time, a cutting must be taken from that plant to test the next generation. Three generations are necessary to test a hybrid's stability. This can take place in a little less than three years of growing.

If the plant can remain stable, true to the original description, and if it is different from anything else on the market, it can be registered by writing to Joe Bruns: Janice@qwip.net



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- 23/10/2012 - Growing African Violet Trailers - Bill Price
- 20/11/2012 - Back to Basics Workshop - Doris Brownlie & Emma Bygott
- 15/01/2013 - Canadian Hybridizers - Sayeh Beheshti
- 19/02/2013 - Modern Designs with African Violets - Ursula Eley & Judy Zinni
- 19/03/2013 - Gesneriads - Paul Kroll
- 16/04/2013 - Grooming for Show - Julie Thompson
- 21/05/2013 - Preparing Plants to Last Over the Summer

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Roundtable Chatter

In this feature section, our panel of experts from all over the world answer the same question. If you want to submit a question, please email it to: chatter@avsc.ca



Question: How do you get "standards" and "large" plants to get large and stay large? I always seem to have a problem keeping large plants large. The outer leaves tend to yellow or halo and then have to be removed to improve the appearance.

Bob Clark, Seattle, WA



Anne Brown – Halifax, NS

Anne has been growing and showing African Violets and other Gesneriads since 1993. She is a Senior AVSA Judge and a new AVSA Teacher about to give her first course this fall.

I have been growing mainly mini and semi-mini violets since, I too, have difficulty growing big, beautiful standards. I am eagerly awaiting the replies of the other panel members.



Karyn Cichocki – Lafayette, NJ

Karyn comes from a family of gardeners and has been interested in indoor and outdoor gardening since childhood. She joined her first violet club in 1982 and became a AVSA judge in 1984. She is currently a Senior AVSA judge and Master Gesneriad Society judge.

I'm sorry to say that I'll have to be left out of this one. Even when I lived on Long Island, NY, I didn't grow very many standards and those that I did never got very big for me. I have had the same experience since I moved to NJ since I grow mostly species and don't really have the room to grow plants that get too large.



Ruth Coulson - Australia

Ruth has been growing African violets for over 35 years, but believes there is still plenty to learn. Her hobby has taken her from a few plants on a window sill, to a large collection that gave rise to the material for several books on growing African Violets.

It is pretty difficult to keep all your African violets looking picture perfect all the time. I try to remember a number of different things in order to grow big gorgeous show-style plants.

- I choose an African violet that is known for its ability to grow large.

- Taking care of the general health of the plant assists in its ability to grow.
- I try to keep it growing rapidly, repotting as soon as the roots appear to have grown enough to hold the mix in the pot together. I am convinced that if I let the roots become solid in the pot the plant will stop expanding.
- A fertiliser that is a bit higher in nitrogen is useful in growing strong sturdy leaves on a large plant.
- Disbud! Removing all flowers and flower buds as they appear really does spur an African violet to grow larger, so I would always like to do that in the early stages of growing a large plant for show.

Too high a light level can prevent the leaves expanding, so I make sure that the light level is adequate to keep the leaves flat, but no more. The light level can be increased when it is time for flowers to come up on the plant.

The oldest leaves of an African violet normally deteriorate simply because of their age. To keep the plant looking good and of a good size for as long as possible, this is my strategy.

- I have a routine to ensure that my plants don't suffer any periods of dryness; that fertiliser is constant and that lighting and temperatures are suitable. This will keep the leaves as green and healthy as possible.
- When, inevitably, a row of leaves needs to be removed, It works well for me if I immediately take the opportunity to take the plant out of the pot, trim the bottom of the root-ball and lower the plant slightly in the pot. This stimulates growth so that the plant soon looks just like it did before.

An alternate strategy that I sometimes employ is just to remove the rows of leaves as they deteriorate until the "neck" on the plant becomes just too obvious. I then take the opportunity to strip off a lot of leaves and restart the plant from a quite small centre. This gives another plant an opportunity to take over the starring role for a while.



Arleen Dewell – Vancouver, BC

Arleen has actively been growing and exhibiting African Violets and related Gesneriads for 27 years. Currently, she is the President of the Vancouver African Violet & Gesneriad Society. She served for many years on the Gesneriad Society's Board of Directors in various capacities and currently Chairs its Shows and Judging Committee.

Genetic predisposition probably plays a role in how large any plant can potentially grow, but the most important factor for achieving and maintaining big, beautiful plants is consistency of care from beginning to end. Providing your plants with adequate amounts of water, fertilizer,

proper duration of good, intense light and humidity every day from the time you acquire them as cuttings, rhizomes, seedlings or tubers is far and away your most important job. Consistent care equals healthy, lush, blooming plants.

Frequent and timely repotting also influences how large plants will grow. Plants that aren't lacking in any cultural aspects will grow very quickly and absorb astonishing amounts of water. As their roots and leaf mass expand as a result of that rapid growth, keep in mind that the containers and soil to which the plants are confined will need to be refreshed and pot sizes increased frequently, as well.

Once your plants are large and beautiful, keeping them looking their best requires frequent grooming in the form of removing spent blossoms and pruning off tired, older leaves and stems that have served their purpose. Every living thing reaches its peak of maturity and then with time, gradually begins to decline in vigor. Life is no different for the plants we love, but the difference is that many have the ability to re-emerge from underground rhizomes or tubers, and cuttings can be taken and propagated into new plants that will eventually become large and lovely once again.



Winston Goretsky - Calgary, AB

Winston is a past president of AVSC, a Master Judge as well as a Judge's Teacher. He is currently serving AVSA as 2nd Vice President. He has been growing African Violets and Gesneriads since about 1974, and loves to encourage others by sharing his knowledge and enthusiasm about his favourite plant.

In order to achieve the success of growing a large standard, the key is CONSISTANCY. When you change an environmental condition, the effect is not immediately seen in the growth of the plant until several weeks or even months have passed. (That is why an exhibitor must own and grow the plant for at least three months prior to a show.) Once you see a change in culture, it can't be reversed.

- Keep your growing conditions stable, repot on a regular schedule and don't make sudden changes to your variables, like trying a new fertilizer for the first time, just before a show.
- Support collars can help keep the symmetry of your plant in proper shape and help protect the leave from accidental damage when transporting them to show.
- Spend time with your plants and continuously groom them. Remove damaged leaves, spent blossoms and check for suckers. Keep a soft brush nearby and use it to remove soil or dust from the leaves and petioles.

- Buy the book, **Growing to Show**, by Pauline Bartholemew. This book contains tried and true techniques for growing Prize-Winning African Violets.



Stanley Ko - Hong Kong

Stanley has been growing and hybridizing African violets for the past 25 years. As the first hybridizer in Hong Kong, he has devoted his efforts into creating unique chimeras that are sought by collectors around the world.

To promote and maintain a large plant, I have adopted “Two S Methodology” which refers to **Selection** and **Skill**.

1. Selecting a suitable variety is the starting point of a show plant. We can often select the plants from our own collection by identifying those who have adapted to your own cultivation environment, grow well and exhibit symmetrical leaf growth. Knowing that those selected varieties already grow well in your conditions will lead to better performance with less effort. The traits you should look for are an overall excellent quality of plants, with large leaves and round shape.

2. Your Skill as a grower should be focused on “Keeping the Plant Healthy” and “Promoting leaf growth” allowing it to achieve its potential as described below:

2a. Keeping your plant healthy— Your plant’s growth should be regularly monitored. You should regularly groom your plant. If your plant gets any damaged leaves, it could lead to bacteria breeding that could lead to plant disease. Remove any withered or rotten leaves regularly.

2b. Promotion of leaf growth – The development of leaf growth depends on the nutrients that are provided. Regardless of their age or condition, all leaves rely on nutrients to maintain their activities. In order to let the plant to grow large rapidly, you must provide more nutrients as well as more room for growth. Based on the concept of eugenics, you must remove the broken, aging, yellow and baby leaves as soon as possible

You must also monitor the growth of flower buds and suckers since bloom and suckers will distort the growth phenomenon. Removal of the flower buds and suckers in the early stages will allow the plant to retain the nutrients for leaf growth.



Sansoucy' Coco (7768)
 08/10/1992 (P. Sansoucy)
 Double blue ruffled/variable
 white-green edge. Variegated
 medium green, white and
 cream, plain, quilted. Large
 Photo: Stanley Ko

Membership Update Oct. 2012

By: Laurel Goretsky



A warm welcome the following new members:

Johnnie W. Berry, Atlanta, GA
Karen Derenia, Cloverdale, CA
Nicole Messier, Anjou, QC
Rona Ostrander, Innisfail, AB
James P. Reilly, Las Cruces, NM
Phyllis Rowe, Bloomfield, In

A special thank you to the following for the recent donations to the Chatter Publication Fund:

Janice Davidson	Nancy Hayes
Marjorie Jackson	Parmatown African Violet Club
Dr. William Price	Sue Ramser

In Memoriam

Our Sincere sympathy is extended to long-time AVSC member **Mrs. Jeanette Sylvestre** (née Jackson) on the sudden passing of her husband Marc Sylvestre on August 12th 2012 in Sturgeon Falls, ON.

The Toronto African Violet Society suffered a great loss recently in the death of **Mr. Roland Schwahn**, past president. He is survived by his wife, Louise McPherson. Mr. Schwahn was also very active in the local Gesneriad and Orchid societies and will be missed by all.

Notice of Change of Advertising Rates For Chatter **New Rates Effective January 1, 2013**

1/4 page (1.75"H x 4.5"W) - \$20.00

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Thank you to the advertisers who have continued to support *Chatter*
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Coming Events

Please send a listing of your upcoming event to: chatter@avsc.ca

Auburn, NY

2012 New York State African Violet Society Convention

"Theme "Violets Hit The Road"

Oct 25 - 27, 2012

The Holiday Inn - Auburn , 75 North St., Auburn, NY 13021

Visit : www.nysavs.org for more information.

ShowStoppers

First Halifax African Violet Society May 5 & 6, 2012

Chairperson: Audrey Moir

Theme: Violets in Nova Scotia

Number of Members exhibiting:11 ,

Number of First-time exhibitors:1

Number of Horticultural entries:172,

Number of Design entries:32

Hort. Sweepstakes - Anne Brown,

Runner-up Hort. Sweepstakes - Ina Beaver

Design Sweepstakes - Audrey Moir

Runner-up Design Sweepstakes - tie between Elaine Davison and Patti Vaison

Ina Beaver - Best Container Garden: Terrarium;

Anne Brown - Best In Show, Best Semi-Miniature, Best Variegated: Ness' Cranberry Swirl; Best Miniature: Cloud Puff; Best Trailer: Rob's Lilli Pilli; Best 8" & under: Von's Moon Shadows; Best AVSA Collection (Mini or Semi): Shy Blue, Rob's Fuddy Duddy, Ness' Cranberry Swirl; Best AVSC Canadian Origination Collection (Mini or Semi): Ode to Grace, Morgan's Miss Manners, Kinky Pinky; Best Gesneriad: Sinningia Heartland's Double Dilly;

Valerie Despres – Best Canadian: Beca's Green Touch;

Maria Fall - Second Best in Show, Best Standard in Show: Optimara Everjoy;

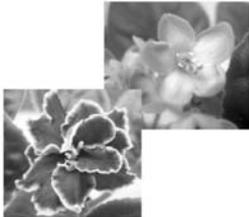
Audrey Moir - Best in Design, Best Interpretive Plant Arrangement: Happiness Is..... (Peggy's Cove); Runner-up Best in Design, Best Interpretive Flower Arrangement: Ciad Mile Failte;

Wendy West - Best Novice (Design): Blossom Time



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Your membership includes 4 issues of *Chatter* per year.

Please check the applicable boxes: New Membership Application, or Renewal
 For myself, or Gift Membership

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For Gift Memberships only, please complete the following:

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For all memberships, please check the appropriate box:

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U.S.A./International: Family Membership: (two people residing at same address)

One Year - \$20.00 Two Years - \$37.00 Three Years - \$52.00

Affiliate Society: One Year - \$18.00

Commercial Member: One Year - \$20.00

Life Membership: \$185.00 (Canada / U.S.A. / International)

Please make your cheque or bank draft in Canadian Dollars payable to
"The African Violet Society of Canada" and forward with this form to:

Laurel D. Goretsky, 32 Scimitar Point N.W., Calgary AB T3L 2B2 CANADA

Yes, I would like to help AVSC in publishing and improving *Chatter*. I have added
a donation to the *Chatter* Publication Fund in the amount of \$ _____ to my cheque.

POSTCARDS continued from front cover



Left: Optimara Everjoy exhibited by Maria Fall; **Below:** Interpretive plant arrangement: Our Nova Scotia Heritage, exhibited by Audrey Moir; **Middle Left:** FHAVS member Bernetta Fisher (Left) helping with show plant sales.



Above: Strep. Salmon Sunset - exhibited by Anne Brown.



Left: Members of one of the Judging panels included (Left -Right): Judges: Karen Campbell, Heather Eakins and Elaine Davison as well as Clerks: Wendy West and Patti Vaison.

The African Violet Society of Canada

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The African Violet Society of Canada

SAMPLE MAGAZINE ISSUE

Annual AVSC membership includes 4 issues of "**CHATTER**"

Visit www.avsc.ca for a membership application.



Photo by: Ron Myhr



Photo by: Bev. Williams

Above: *Primulina 'Aiko'* (red)
grown by Bev. Williams

Top right: *Primulina 'Aiko'* (red) on
left Chirita Aiko on right , both
grown by Bev. Williams

Right: *Primulina 'Aiko'*



Photo by: Toshijiro Okuto