

MAAVS, was founded in 1991 as a regional affiliate of the African Violet Society of America (AVSA) operating in the Middle Atlantic States. We stimulate a wide spread interest in the propagation and culture of African violets and other gesneriads, provide opportunities for fellowship and friendship among and between all member clubs and individual members, and bring information to the public about our hobby. Visit our web site at www.maavs.org

Advantages of joining a local African violet club

- Learn how to grow plants
- Attend local club shows
- Purchase new hybrids
- Meet new friends

Advantages of joining MAAVS

- Informative quarterly Newsletters by mail or on line
- Annual Convention and Show in Mid-Atlantic area (South Carolina North thru New York and Maine)
- Opportunities to meet national African violet hybridizers
- Opportunities for MAAVS awards at Affiliate Shows
- Opportunities for CASH awards at the Annual NAAVS Convention Show

JOIN US

CONTACT one of the Affiliate African violet clubs in your area, or call our President, Brenda Petry at 717.528.8268 mpetry@embarqmail.com

Find a local club on the AVSA web site at www.avsa.org/affiliates

Application for Membership
Mid-Atlantic African Violet Society

Date _____ New _____ Renewal _____

Individual _____ \$15.00
Joint (2 members, same address) _____ \$20.00
Affiliate/Commercial _____ \$20.00
MAAVS Pin _____ \$ 5.00
(If new member dues are paid between June 30th and December 31st, your membership will expire on December 31st of the following year)

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
Phone _____
E Mail _____
Local Affiliate _____
Member of AVSA _____

Check here to receive MAAVS Memo by e mail _____
(Please make checks payable to MAAVS)

Send membership application to:
Ken Barbi
1809 View Top Court
Annapolis, MD 21409-5973
410.757.5044

E Mail questions to: kenbarbi@verizon.net

Grow African Violets and Other Gesneriads



S. goetzeana

presented by

The Mid-Atlantic African Violet Society

www.maavs.org

How to grow African Violets and Other Gesneriads

African Violets and Other Gesneriads are the most popular indoor house plants. They bloom year long and come in an abundance of colors, sizes, and types. Other gesneriads such as episcias, chiritas, streptocarpus, gloxinias, and sinningias to name a few, have different blooming characteristics, and are very exciting to grow. Treat gesneriads as you would any African violet giving them similar care.

Natural Light Adequate light is the most important factor in promoting blossoms. Place the plants near any window that has bright, but filtered, light. An east window is good because plants do very well in the light of the morning sun.

Fluorescent Light If you use a light stand, use double tube fixtures, have the lights on 12 to 14 hours a day, and place the plants so the foliage is about 8 to 10 inches below the tubes. If you have a cubical in an office lighted with fluorescent lights, put your plants on top of your partitions.

Watering Over watering is the most common reason plants don't do well. They may be watered from the top, the bottom or by wicking. Use room temperature water, and add water when the top of the soil feels slightly dry to the touch. Wait about 1 week before watering them again. Reverse osmosis units or rain water are fine sources of water for your plants. If your house has a water softening system, do NOT use tap water on your plants-the salt in the water will kill them. Use your untreated water obtained from an outdoor spigot which is usually bypassed from the water softening system, but check.

Feeding Lack of fertilizer or too infrequent fertilizing is another of the primary reasons for lack of blossoms. Mix a commercial African violet fertilizer at a quarter the proportion called for in the manufacturer's brochure if wick watering. If it

calls for 1 teaspoon per gallon of water, use 1/4 teaspoon per gallon of water. African violet fertilizers typically contain 12-36-14 parts of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium which is optimum. Be consistent in your regiment from week to week.

Atmosphere If you are comfortable-not too cold, not too hot, not too dry-your plants will thrive. Fresh air with gentle circulation (no drafts) and a relative humidity of 40 to 50 percent. Daytime temperatures between 70 and 75 degrees; nighttime temperatures between 60 and 65 degrees with a 10 degree day-night difference. Variegated varieties prefer cooler temperatures to keep their variegation-so go with 70 degrees days and 60 degrees nights.

Potting Most of the commercial potting mixes sold today are the "soiless" type. This means the mix is light and airy to allow easy root growth. Many of our members have found that these mixes are too heavy and dilute them 3 parts commercial mix to 1 part medium horticultural grade perlite. Make sure you buy a top quality mix especially formulated for African violets. If you want to make your own mix, here are three popular varieties. **One - Hortense Pittman's "Texas" formula:** 5 gallons sterilized fine peat moss, 5 gallons coarse horticultural grade vermiculite, 2 ½ gallons coarse horticultural grade perlite, 1 cup crushed horticultural grade charcoal, 5 quarts of water, 1 teaspoon frittered trace elements, and 1 cup of pulverized dolomite lime. **Two - Marie Burns' "Show" mix:** 5 gallons Baccto African Violet Soil, 3 gallons coarse horticultural grade perlite, 1 gallon sterilized fine peat moss, 2 gallons coarse horticultural grade vermiculite, 6 cups horticultural grade charcoal, 1 cup dehydrated cow manure, 2 tablespoons Ferban, and 10 tablespoons dolomite lime. **Three - Fisher's Soil Formula from Canada:** 2 quarts sterilized clay loam (garden loam or top soil), 2 quarts perlite, 2 quarts medium or coarse vermiculite, 2 quarts fine chip horticultural charcoal, 8 quarts

sphagnum peat moss (screened to remove sticks or buy fine screened). Mix separately the following: 1 cup bone meal, 1 cup calcium carbonate OR dolomite lime powder (not granular), and 1 tablespoon Fermate or Ferbam. Combine the above ingredients with about a half a gallon of water.

Grooming A properly groomed, fresh, clean African violet or other gesneriad is a pleasure to behold. Keep dead leaves and faded blossoms removed. With a soft brush, flick away soil particles, lint, animal hairs, etc., or damp-wipe the foliage with a soft wet sponge. About once a month, the foliage can be washed under a gently stream of tepid water. Pat excess water with a soft sponge or tissue. Allow the plant to dry in a warm draft-free place away from direct sunlight.

Pests and Diseases African violets and other gesneriads are very palatable plants as more than 50 species of insects and mites have been found feeding on them. Remember to quarantine new plants for 60 to 90 days after purchase in the event they have bugs, before you combine them with your primary collection. Keep in mind many pesticides on the market have not been specifically tested on African violets, and may not work as they do with other house plants or kill them. Always read the label to make sure the pesticide can be safely used on African violets, and follow those instructions precisely. The best source of information on pests and pesticides is published by AVSA in, *Insect and Mite Pests of African Violets* by Dr. Charles L. Cole, \$15. Call AVSA at 844.400.2872 to order it.

Other Information *The Handbook For Growers, Exhibitors, and Judges*, 2011, \$20.00; and Pauline Bartholomew's seminal work, *Growing to Show*, first published in 1985, for \$16. Call AVSA at 844.400.2872 to order them.