

African Violet

GENERAL INFORMATION:

In terms of popularity, these plants are first in any list of favorite flowering plants. No other plant equals Saintpaulia in its ability to thrive and bloom indoors for months on end.

Rosettes of velvety leaves on short stems surround clusters of flowers in white, shades of pink, red, violet, purple, or blue. Its compact size makes it perfect for window sills, small tabletop arrangements, and hanging displays. There are thousands of named African violets from which to choose. For beginners, it's best to start with varieties that have plain, green leaves rather than fancier types, which are not as easy to grow. Despite their reputation for being temperamental, African violets generally are not difficult to grow. The fact that millions of indoor gardeners grow and collect them attests to their beauty and ease of flowering.

LIGHT:

Plenty (1-4 hrs) of bright, direct light (East, North or West exposure) is the key factor in achieving constant bloom. Supplement with artificial light if the plant stops blooming, especially in the winter, when the plant receives less than 12 hours of good light a day.

WATER AND SOIL:

African Violet mix is a light, porous mix

Repotting - African violets like being slightly potbound. A pot about half the width of the plant's spread is a good size.

Water - Let plant become slightly dry between waterings. Only use water that is at room temperature. Avoid wetting foliage: Cold water spots the leaves. Leach soil occasionally.

FERTILIZE:

Use fertilizer specially formulated for African Violets. Follow package directions. Provide plant with regular feedings.

PROPAGATION:

In Spring, take leaf cuttings or sow seeds. Plant rooted leaf cutting in 2 ½ in pots and gradually pot up.

African Violet

cont.

GROOMING:

Remove all dead leaves and flowers promptly, stems included. Shape the plant by removing side shoots.

COMMENTS:

Mushy, brown blooms and buds indicate botrytis blight. Pick off diseased parts. Provide good air circulation, avoid high humidity, and reduce amount of nitrogen in fertilizer. *Streaked, misshapen leaves with irregular yellow spots* are caused by a virus. There is no effective cure so plants should be discarded. If a healthy plant wilts suddenly, it has *crown rot*, which results from too much water. Do not allow the soil to dry out completely (only slightly) and then soak it. Maintain a constant level of soil moisture. Severe temperature changes may also cause *crown rot* (cold, below 55°). This is difficult to remedy. Discard the plant. *Lack of flowers* is probably caused by inadequate light. Supplement daylight with artificial light.