

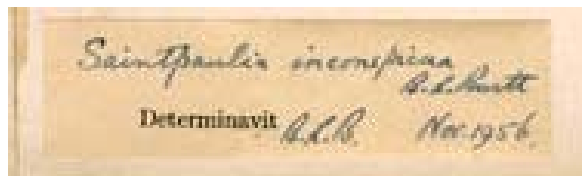
The Newsletter of the Delaware African Violet and Gesneriad Society

Volume XVI, No. 6

February 2014

Violet Species – One by One

Editor's note: The newsletter will be profiling the species of African Violets in the coming issues. If you have had experience successfully growing any of these, please share your experiences by sending them to the Editor.



This herbarium specimen from the Herbarium at Kew Royal Botanical Gardens was collected by B.L. Burtt in November 1956 in Tanganyika. It is considered the holotype or single specimen designated as the type for naming a species or subspecies. The tag below the voucher is enlarged to show the species and collector names.

Saintpaulia inconspicua: is one of the 20 confirmed species of *Saintpaulia*. It is a small trailer with small blue and white flowers. Though only identified as a species of *Saintpaulia* in 1958, *S. inconspicua* is believed to be extinct. The species name “inconspicua” is derived from the Latin “inconspicuous” (inconspicuous) presumably in recognition of its small size and the fact that it was overlooked for so long. It was first recorded and discovered in the Uluguru Mountains of eastern Tanzania.

Water and African Violets

Each year our members are in awe of the award winning African violets and gesneriads that Libby Behnke enters in the Chapter's Annual Show. Barb borleske often quips that it must be her well water, and in jest Libby quips maybe she should bottle it!

There is some truth that the quality of water used to moisten the potting mix in which our plants are growing can affect the outcome. So the recent article by Sharon Rosenweig which was reprinted from “Ye Bay Stater” in the January/February 2014 issue of *African Violet Magazine* caught my interest. Of course it generally is not the water quality, but too much or too little which is the problem!

Rosenweig points out that there are many sources of water - some good; some not so good. She notes that the water should not be too hard (i.e. too many dissolved particles and minerals) nor too soft (too much salt) and should have a pH range of 6.5 to 7.2 to produce the best growth.

She notes that city water often contains added chlorine, chloramine, and fluoride to the water supply to make it potable. These chemicals are known to cause leaf burn and can reduce flowering. Chlorine will dissipate over time if left to sit in an open container, but chloramine and fluoride will not dissipate naturally.

She states that aquarium stores offer products which will effectively remove these chemicals, but they are somewhat pricey and may affect the water in other ways like adjusting the pH, which may or may not be beneficial. If a product states that it removes chlorine and chloramines, but has no mention of ammonia, beware. Products such as these are designed to break the chloramine bond, separating the ammonia from the chlorine, at which point the chlorine is eliminated, but

the released associated toxic ammonia remains in the water. Make certain you read the label and consult with a knowledgeable sales associate.

Another source of water is well water. Rosenweig adds that most well water contains lots of dissolved minerals and has a high pH. Using it with a fertilizer containing trace elements can lead to mineral toxicity, which causes nutrient lockup. It is advisable to have well water tested before using on African violet and other Gesneriads.

Many of the elements most used by plants in their growth are less available when the pH is in the acid range, below 6, and many of the micronutrients, those used in small quantities, are less available when the water, or soil, is alkaline. Some plants prefer, even require, acid soils and are not bothered by the lack of nutrients. Other plants will tolerate, but do not require, pH levels above 7, and are adapted to the lack of micronutrients, such as iron and zinc.

Softened water should be avoided. Water softeners function by exchanging calcium and magnesium for sodium particles. Softened water is not recommended for use in the garden due to its sodium content. Softened water increases the level of soluble salts in plant soil. Excessive amounts of soluble salts can decrease nutrient and water uptake, leading to plant decline. Houseplants, such as chlorophytum, African violets, calceolaria, chrysanthemums, geraniums and petunias are particularly sensitive to high levels of soluble salt.

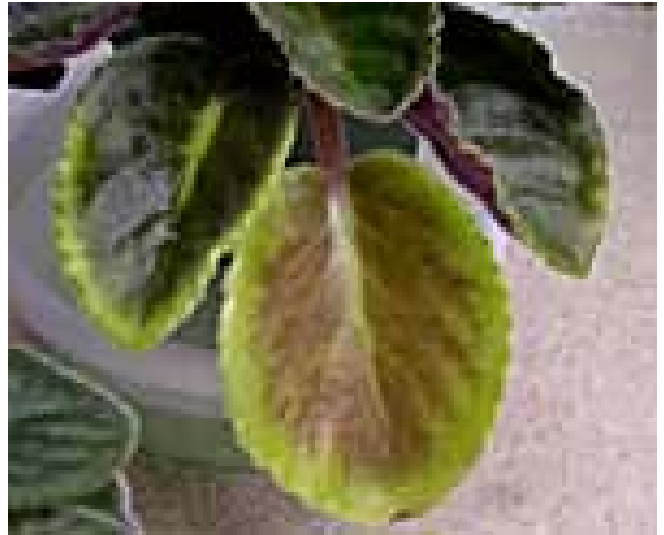
Even if you don't have softened water at home, it is imperative to inquire if bringing plants to a Convention Show at a hotel to verify that the hotel does not use a water softener since it can damage the show plants you plan to enter.

Bottled water may be an alternative for a grower with a small collection of plants, but it is important to define what is meant by "bottled water," since some may contain minerals not especially good for plants. Additionally, it is not a good choice environmentally and is expensive.

Another type of water is distilled water which is devoid of minerals and trace elements. Rosenweig suggests that the grower check the pH since it may tend to be acidic, and it is important to use a soluble fertilizer which contains essential trace elements to avoid deficiency symptoms in the plants. Nutriculture by Plant Marvel with an analysis of 12-31-14 contains both macro and micro elements required for healthy

plant growth. It is available on the plant sales table at the Society's monthly meetings.

Many growers swear by rain water, but it can have a wide pH range due to air pollution, so if it is used, the pH should be monitored carefully. Also, be vigilant about the surfaces from which the rain water is being collected to avoid substance harmful to houseplants.



Yellow edges called Halosis Could be a Nitrogen deficiency. Check the soil and water pH

Dehumidifier water is another source some growers use. While generally there are no solid particles, pH can vary. Also, depending upon the material of the coils, the water can have some leached metal content and since the tank provides a warm and humid environment bacteria and fungus could be growing in the water

Reverse osmosis results in water that has gone through several layers of filters and membranes designed to remove minerals and dissolved solids. Adding fertilizer with trace minerals to the water or soil can help counter this. Unfortunately, these systems are expensive. costly. Some saltwater aquarium shops will sell reverse osmosis water. Bring your own containers.

Rosenweig concludes that if your plants look fine, don't change anything. If your plants don't look fine, check your water! She also cautions that if you make any changes to your watering, do it on just a few plants first and check results after several weeks before applying to your whole collection.

I continue to use the local tap water, but allow it to sit for 24 hours before watering my plants. More frequent repotting and consistency in watering seem to be the best recipe for better plants!

2014 Philadelphia Flower Show Explores the Fusion of Art and Horticulture

PHS philadelphia flower show



Beautiful flowers, gardens and landscapes have always been an inspiration for artists, while great horticultural design has become a form of living art.

The fusion of art and horticulture will be celebrated in “ARTiculture,” an extraordinary presentation of the PHS Philadelphia Flower Show on March 1 to 9, 2014, when guests will be inspired to let their inner-artist bloom in their own gardens.

An unprecedented collaboration of Flower Show designers and the nation’s great art museums will turn the exhibition space of the Pennsylvania Convention Center into a 10-acre living canvas of exquisite landscapes, gardens and floral arrangements.

PHS also will announce the hot new flowers, plants, products and design ideas for Spring 2014 at the Flower Show to serve as a consumer’s guide to creating fantastic home gardens.

The entrance garden of “ARTiculture” will be inspired by the paintings and dynamic sculptures of Alexander “Sandy” Calder, a member of the historic family of artists whose works are found throughout Philadelphia, and will feature a remarkable vertical dance troupe who will perform above and within the multi-dimensional display.

The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society will partner with internationally renowned art museums, organizations and institutions for the exhibits in “ARTiculture.” Participants include the J. Paul Getty Museum (Los Angeles), the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New York City), the Smithsonian Institution’s National Portrait Gallery (Washington, D.C.), the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Barnes Foundation (Philadelphia), and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (Philadelphia) among many others.

Visitors also will show their artistic side in an expanded “Make & Take Room,” where they can create a variety of craft and garden projects. The family attractions at the show will include the Butterfly Experience, where visitors will interact with 20 species

of exotic and domestic butterflies, and the Camden Children’s Garden.

The PHS Philadelphia Flower Show is the nation’s largest flower show, which blooms every March at the Pennsylvania Convention Center. The show features the world’s premier landscape designers and florists, who turn 10 acres of the Convention Center into a floral fantasy of beautiful plants and cutting-edge designs.

In addition to the major garden displays, the Flower Show hosts world-renowned competitions in horticulture and artistic floral arranging, gardening presentations and demonstrations, special events, a mammoth indoor Marketplace, and a Flower Show Week celebration throughout the Philadelphia region.

Proceeds from the Flower Show benefit the year-round programs of PHS, which is celebrating its 186th year of gardening, greening and learning. PHS initiatives include the PHS City Harvest program, which creates green jobs and supports a network of community gardens that raise fresh produce for more than 1,200 families in need each week during the growing season.

Be sure to look for our members entries at the Show. Lynn Cook, Troy Ray and Stephen Maciejewski are major exhibitors in the Horticulture Classes.

Schedule for Growing Prize-Winning African Violets

Spring Show April 11 & 12, 2014

*Based on How to Grow Prize Winning African Violets
by Pauline Bartholomew*

This schedule appears in its entirety in your yearbook.

9 weeks: (February 7, 2014)

Increase light time by one hour. Disbud heavily variegated varieties and double varieties, such as Rhapsodies, etc., for the last time. Continue to disbud all other varieties. Continue "bloom booster" fertilizer.

8 weeks: (February 14, 2014)

Increase light time by one hour. Disbud doubles and lightly variegated varieties for the last time. Continue to disbud semi double stars and singles. Check for suckers. Continue "bloom booster" fertilizer. Foliar feed once more.

7 weeks: (February 21, 2014)

Increase light time by one hour. Disbud semi double stars for the last time. Change to 12-36-14 or 15-30-15, etc., fertilizer formula for the remaining weeks.

6 weeks: (February 28, 2014)

Disbud singles for the last time. Check for suckers. Wash foliage.

Upcoming DAVS Meetings...

Tuesday, February 11, 2014 – 7:30 p.m.
Rockland Place, 1519 Rockland Rd, Wilmington,
DE 19803

Hosts: Snacks - Mary Schaeffer

Beverages – Bill Dillon

Raffle Prizes – Geno Iubatti/Bobbie LaFashia

Program: “What to do with Your Plants When You Go Vacation” Stephanie Griffith will enlighten us on how to make sure our plants survive when we go on vacation. Members are asked to bring in anything (techniques, gadgets, etc.) they use which keeps their plants alive when they go on vacation. Stephanie would like for as much group participation as possible. Each member is encouraged to bring one plant for a plant exchange. We'll draw names to see who selects first. ***Little Show and Plant/Supply Sale will be held.***

In addition, Bobbi LaFashia will do a brief presentation on Mobile arrangements to encourage participation in Class 27 – “Illusion in our upcoming Show

Mary Schaeffer will do a presentation on starting gesneriads from seed and will discuss the Brazil Seed Club and the opportunities it presents.

Tuesday, March 11, 2014 – 7:30 p.m.
Rockland Place, 1519 Rockland Rd, Wilmington,
DE 19803

Hosts: Snacks - Carol Callaghan

Beverages – Maria Walueff

Raffle Prizes – Gary Hunter/Geri Garvin

Program: “Getting Your Plants Ready for Their Summer Vacation Outside” Complimentary rhizomes will be distributed of a plant which grows well outdoors. Show and Tell and Plant/Supply Sale will be held.

The Delaware African Violet and Gesneriad Society Newsletter

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Upcoming Shows and Sales...

Saturday, April 5, 2014 from 1:30pm – 4:30pm and Sunday, April 6, 2014 11:00am – 3:00pm

African Violet Club of Morris County will hold its 19th Annual Show and Plant Sale in The Haggerty Education Center at The Frelinghuysen Arboretum, 353 E. Hanover Ave., Morristown, NJ 07960. For more information contact Karyn Cichocki, kdc05@ptd.net or 973-579-7914

Saturday, April 12, 2014 from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

"Casting a Violet Spell" will be the theme of The Delaware African Violet and Gesneriad Society's 2014 Annual Show and Sale held Boscov's Department Store Christiana Town Center Delaware Route 273 Christiana, Delaware. Contact Quentin Schlieder at gcsjr@comcast.net or (302) 653-6449 for more information.

Saturday, May 3, 2014 from Noon to 4 p.m. and Sunday, May 4, 2014 from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Violets Under the Big Top! is the theme for the Garden State African Violet Society's 2014 Annual Judged Show and Sale which will be held at the Mercer County Community College Student Center, 1200 Old Trenton Road, West Windsor, NJ 08550. For more information E-mail us at GSAVCmail@gmail.com.

Saturday, May 10, 2014 from noon to 5:00 p.m.

The African Violet Club of Burlington County will hold their Annual Judged Show and Sale at Medford Leas Retirement Community, 1 Medford Leas Way, Medford, NJ. For more information contact Sandra Skalski at sskalski@comcast.net or visit the Club's website at www.AVCBC.PBWorks.com.

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