

The Petal

Monthly publication of the
Tampa African Violet Society (TAVS)
www.tampaafricanviolets.com



August 2026

The Tampa African Violet Society is an affiliate of the African Violet Society of America (AVSA), the Dixie African Violet Society (DAVS), the African Violet Council of Florida (AVCF) and the Gesneriad Society.

A message from our President

If you were at last month's meeting at the extension office, you know we had a very good discussion about programs for the public. This is timely since several members have either recently given programs or will be giving programs in the near future. What is needed is a program that, once put together, could be given by any member. A concise, consistent means to impart our knowledge is crucial. Participation is key. Do you have input to share? If so, let me know. Educating the public about African violets is as important for us as it is for the community. There is something to be learned from each interaction. TAVS has been busy and will continue to be as more clubs and organizations reach out to us. In the next month or two, we will be focusing on making this program a reality.

See you soon,

Mary Beth, President



A huge shout out goes to those TAVS members who sent photos, recipes and article ideas for this month's newsletter - thanks for making our newsletter great!

Fern Azarian

Tammi Fitzgerald

Mary Lou Harden

Michael Kilcomons

Jim Matula

Glenn Shelton



**Zoom/Evening Meeting -
Thursday, August 6 @ 7pm**

Program is a CD presentation from AVSA on pests, care and culture.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9324792391?pwd=ZzBkTmxZTmRJOFY0SmxZbHNnU1Evdz09&omn=86383195068>

Meeting chat link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/jc/86383195068>

Meeting ID: 932 479 2391

Passcode: TAVS

Mary Beth Bryant will be hosting the virtual night meetings via Zoom! We will have a program to begin and lots of time for any questions. Then we will open it up and do some show and tell. So get your precious blooming babies camera ready; I know we all want to see some flowers! Club business meeting will follow.

What's that you say? You don't know how to Zoom? No problem. You don't need to have a Zoom account or download anything permanently to your computer, tablet or phone. Be on the lookout for an email from Mary Beth/ Mary Lou a few days before the meeting with a link to access the meeting. Hope to see you then!



Day Meeting -

Friday, August 21 @ 10am

Hillsborough County Agricultural Extension Service (HCAES)

5339 County Road 579, Seffner, FL 33584

Fern Azarian will be giving her presentation on African violet botanical history, classification, care, culture and propagation.



MEETING MINUTES

Tampa African Violet Society

July 17, 2026

Day Meeting

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 10:10am by President Mary Beth Bryant, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

MEMBERS ATTENDING: Sandi Soto, Mary Lou Harden, Tammi Fitzgerald, Michael and Irene Kilcomons, Jean Krauchik, Mary Beth Bryant, Sandy Schultz, Celeste Christman, Stu Swayze, Joan Reynolds, Glenn Shelton, Anne Wade Stone, Fern Azarian, Jim Boyer, Elaine McArthur and Lori Louise Davis. Guests: David Wido from Blooming Violets of Marion County

INSPIRATION: "You can't start the next chapter of your life if you keep rereading the last one!"

BIG NEWS: Vice President Sandi Soto and her beautiful Sharon Gartner made the cover of the July/August 2026 issue of African Violet Magazine!



PROGRAM: Treasurer Glenn Shelton gave an informative and lively program on fertilizers, the “Do-Re-Me of Macro and Micronutrients”, including a handout and his plant water recipe. The program included the importance of not overfertilizing (the second leading cause of AV death) and the importance of micronutrients, leaching plants to remove fertilizer build-up, and fertilizers that help with blooming.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: There were no minutes from the June meeting (as the June meeting was cancelled) but the minutes from the May meeting were approved as published in The Petal.

OFFICERS’ REPORTS: Glenn Shelton gave the Treasurer’s Report and confirmed that we will be participating in the USF sale this fall. There was no committee business and no Officer’s Report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: We need to pick a theme soon for the February 2027 show – Mary Lou Harden has suggested “At the Movies”.

NEW BUSINESS:

- ✿ Master Gardener Fern Azarian gave a presentation and leaf demonstration on July 14 to 20 participants at the New River Branch of the Pasco County Library on African violet botanical history, classification, care, culture and propagation. She plans to give this presentation to other libraries in the area
- ✿ Elaine McArthur is looking into TAVS giving similar presentations and demonstrations in local libraries
- ✿ TAVS is in favor of AVSA bringing their annual Convention to Florida in 2028 (likely either Orlando, Tampa or Jacksonville)
- ✿ Elaine McArthur has administration access to Facebook now and will soon have access to update the TAVS website

Anita Adlin is doing much better and says hello!

SHOW & TELL: Sandi Soto brought and passed around a “zipper” leaf from K’s Autumn Palette and Glenn Shelton brought Rob’s Slap Happy and Cajun’s Blueberry Hill.

MEETING ADJOURNED: at 11:55am followed by a raffle.



Birthday wishes go out this month to:

- ✿ Joan Reynolds - August 4
- ✿ Gladys Cook - August 7
- ✿ Sandi Soto - August 27

Send us an email and let us know how you are doing if you cannot attend the meetings.



Zipper Leaf
K's Autumn Palette



Glenn Shelton with
Rob's Slap Happy (9040)
(05/31/2001) R. Robinson



Cajun's Blueberry Hill (10573)
(01/11/2013) B. Thibodeaux
Grown by Glenn Shelton

Community Outreach

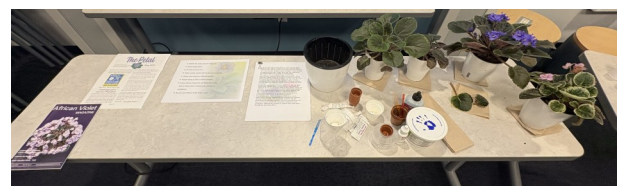
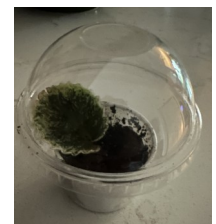
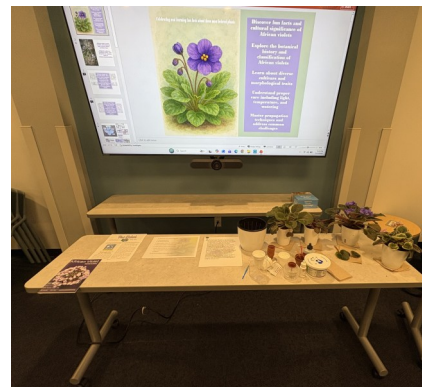


On July 14, 2026 Master Gardener Fern Azarian gave a presentation to 20 participants at the New River Branch of the Pasco County Library on African violet botanical history, classification, care, culture and propagation. She also had participants plant a leaf and go home with a domed leaflet. They had a blast! Future dates/locations:

August 1 - Canterbury Farms

October 3 - Wesley Chapel Park

October 19 - St. Leo University Library





Our condolences go out to Mary Lou Harden on the loss of her brother-in-law Joe Thomson of Valley Center, Kansas and her cousin Margaret Erickson of Bellefontaine, Ohio, both of whom passed away on the same day.



'Steffano's Shadow Play'

Photo by Jim Matula



Streptocarpus OD Geshart

Photo by Michael Kilcomons



Flan de Leche - Submitted by Mary Lou Harden

"The recipe came to me from my boss' wife (worked at Carlton, Fields law firm for 34 years!) He was a prominent Jewish lawyer in Tampa. I loved him and his wife."

1 cup sugar, for caramelizing

6 eggs

1 14-oz can condensed milk

Water to fill condensed milk can

1 12oz can evaporated milk

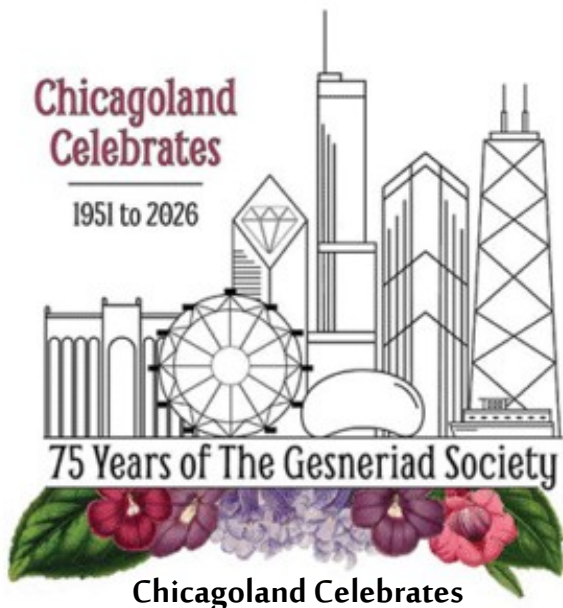
1 T vanilla extract

Heat sugar on low until caramelized. Pour into a Flan mold or a deep Pyrex dish or pan. Let harden.

Put eggs, condensed milk, evaporated milk and water into a blender. Blend until smooth. Add the vanilla extract to the mixture and blend in. Pour into mold. Make a hot water bath by placing the mold in a larger pan with about 2 inches of water.

Bake at 350 degrees about 1 1/2 hours until the sides are solid. The middle of the Flan should be firm but creamy. Remove Flan from oven and let cool. Refrigerate at least 2 hours or more.

Before inverting Flan, place the pan on a warm burner for a few minutes, just to liquefy the syrup and loosen. Use a knife or metal spatula to loosen Flan from sides of the pan, then invert into serving dish.



Chicagoland Celebrates
75 Years of The Gesneriad Society
June 28 - July 4, 2026

Last month The Gesneriad Society hosted its 69th annual convention in Chicago and our very own Treasurer, Glenn Shelton, was in attendance. Here are some photos and comments from Glenn:

Wen Fang

He is a celebrated botanist who searches for new species in the caves in Chicago. I am completely impressed with his knowledge, dedication and strength.



Primulina
'Joanne Martinez'
Our local friend hybridized
this gorgeous variety



Best small sinningia - 'Dale's Twice as Nice' -
Gorgeous plant. I was a clerk on the panel that
judged this plant

This was the societies' 75th anniversary celebration. Every activity was impressive from the tours to Chicago to view the buildings along the Chicago River and others tours. After the days of tours were over, the assembling of the show room and placement of plants began. I volunteered to be a clerk. In all these years, I had never clerked. This was a great experience. The showroom was splendid. There were numerous programs mainly about primulinas and petrocosmias. The speakers gave leaves and plantlets to attendees. I met many, many knowledgeable experts such as Wen Fang and Olive Ma. For most of these experts, I only knew names. I hadn't been to any plant related convention in years. This proved to be the absolute best for me since I know or have grown various gesneriads.

Glenn Shelton



Best Ornamental Foliage
Plant without Bloom
'Primulina sinovietnamica'

African Violet Summertime Fun Times! Saturday, July 25, 2026



More than 60 people attended the Summertime Fun Times mini-African violet conference, held in Ocala, Florida on July 25, 2026 and hosted by Blooming Violets of Marion County, the African Violet Council of Florida (AVCF) and The Peacock Cottage. Several TAVS members attended including Mary Lou Harden, Angela Newell, Tammi Fitzgerald, Joan Reynolds, Lori Louise Davis and yours truly (SS2). AVCF President Laura Perdomo opened the conference and later gave a great presentation on African violets. Our own Mary Lou Harden introduced TAVS and shared all the exciting projects, shows and outreach activities TAVS has been undertaking. The legendary Kathy Spissman gave a fascinating talk on the gesneriad family and Bobbi Johannsen gave a recap of the 2026 AVSA Convention. Following a delicious lunch provided by The Peacock Cottage and Blooming Violets members, each attendee participated in a plant separating activity and took home four baby plants! A silent auction and raffle rounded up the conference and each attendee took home a free plant - what a fun day to catch up with old friends and meet new ones and geek out about our favorite blooming houseplant! One of the TAVS attendees had this to say about the event:

"Mom and I had a wonderful time at the Florida African Violet Council's first-ever mini-conference in Ocala, Florida. We especially enjoyed meeting up with friends from other clubs, buying from seasoned growers across the state and adding more AV varieties to our collection. After the event, mom, Mary Lou and I paid a visit to the Peacock Cottage, a cute little shop owned by the Council's newly elected President (and mini-conference coordinator), Laura Perdomo. Overall, it was a great time, and we are looking forward to the next meet-up as new members of the Florida AV Council."

Tammi Fitzgerald





TAMPA AFRICAN VIOLET SOCIETY

presents

PLANT SALE!

at the upcoming
USF Plant Festival 2026

OCTOBER 10-11 | 9AM to 3PM

LOCATION: 12210 USF Pine Drive, Tampa FL



'My Growing Shelves'

**In Bloom: Michaelmoelleria Vietnamensis,
Optimara Arkansas, Sharon Gartner &
Ness' Crinkle Blue**

Photo by Tammi Fitzgerald



**Linda Darnel (3621)
(03/01/1979) P. Tracey
Working on 4 crowns
Photo by Michael Kilcomons**

Become a **MEMBER**

Tampa African Violet Society (TAVS)

Annual membership (April 1 to March 31)

Current dues are \$15 per year, includes an annual Yearbook and monthly newsletter, **The Petal**.

Send an email to Glenn Shelton if you're interested in becoming a member:

Floridainorchidsss@gmail.com

Checks payable to Tampa African Violet Society can be sent to:

Glenn Shelton, Treasurer
7142 62nd Ave, North
Pinellas Park, FL 33781

Visit us at:

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