

The Petal

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



January 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

Happy January!

I really am a MAJOR procrastinator! If The Petal is late, don't blame Sandy; blame Sandi. Sandy reminds me to get my President's Message written and submitted, and Sandi forgets that time is flying, and it's not written yet. My bad, as the young folks say!

Looks like we made it through 2025 without hurricanes, and with a growing membership, both

of which are good things. I want to thank Tammi Fitzgerald AGAIN for ordering, picking up, and delivering our Christmas/Holiday brunch! Getting everything together involved a lot of organization on Tammi's part, and she pulled it off beautifully.

Don't forget our rescheduled Zoom meeting this Thursday, January 8 at 7PM, and no, I can't divulge the topic. And REALLY don't forget our in-person meeting on January 16, when you should bring: the item of clothing you would like embroidered with the TAVS logo and your first name; your Project Plant if you'd like some guidance on grooming etc. for this final month pre-show; and any of the possible entries you'd like to get King James to give you a "yay or nay" with regard to entering!

Next up for TAVS in February is our Hats Off to Violets Show & Sale, and I'm thinking this show will knock the socks off our shows of the recent past. We have more members who have indicated they intend to show, and more who are interested in at least a little of the propagation side of AVs. For the last year or two we've had few

A message from our President (cont.)

entries in the Collection classes, but if the rumors I'm hearing are true, it appears we may have more this year. It's sounding like we could have more than one AVSA Standard Collection, more than one AVSA Miniature/Semiminiature Collection, and at least one AVSA Species Collection. I'm hoping we'll also have a Dixie Collection or two as well.

Looking a little further into our AV future, we have the USF Botanical Gardens Plant Festival April 11-12, and the Florida Council Spring Zoom meeting is planned for May 9. Finally, the AVSA Convention, my favorite week of the summer, is May 25-31 in Dallas, TX.

I'm out of words!

Sandi Soto, President



Birthday wishes go out this month to:

Todd Grandy - January 21

Send us an email and let us know how you are doing if you cannot attend the meetings.
nybleb@aol.com or mlhard@verizon.net

Q&A

A new section to our newsletter this month is Q&A. One of our members posed a question; can one of our many experienced growers in TAVS answer Tom Schaefer's question: "Has anyone ever heard of using a good fungus called mycorrhizae with their plants [gesneriads]? What the product does is attach to root tips and actively searches for nutrients to exchange with the plant in exchange for sugars/carbohydrates to sustain its life. It lives below ground and does not produce its own food so it relies on other plants to live. It produces mycelium, which are thread-like structures that grow outward, searching for nutrients to exchange. I just wondered if any of our members have heard or tried it."

Have an answer? Send it to Sandy at sandylovesviolets@gmail.com and we'll include the answer in next month's issue!



Streptocarpus Black Tie Affair
Photo by Mary Lou Harden

Our Meetings

Our meetings are held the first Thursday of the month via Zoom at 7pm and the third Friday of the month at 10am at:

Hillsborough County Agricultural Extension Service (HCAES)
5339 County Road 579, Seffner, FL 33584-3334



**Zoom/Evening Meeting -
Thursday, January 8 @ 7pm**
It's a secret!

Join Zoom Meeting:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9324792391?
pwd=ZzBkTmxZTmRJOFY0SmxZbHNnU1Evdz0
9&omn=87642162972](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9324792391?pwd=ZzBkTmxZTmRJOFY0SmxZbHNnU1Evdz09&omn=87642162972)

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, January 16 @ 10am

**Hillsborough County Agricultural Extension
Service (HCAES)**

5339 County Road 579, Seffner, FL 33584

Jim Boyer will be going over forms and entrance procedures for the February Show. If you have any plants that you are unsure of being possible entries, bring them to the January meeting.

Bring with you to the meeting:

- ✿ An item of clothing to have embroidered with your name and the TAVS logo
- ✿ Your project plant (if you'd like some grooming advice prior to the February show)
- ✿ Any possible show entries (if you'd like a second opinion on whether they're a go for the show)



MEETING MINUTES

Tampa African Violet Society

December 19, 2025

Day Meeting

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

MEMBERS ATTENDING: Sandi Soto, Mary Lou Harden, Tammi Fitzgerald, Celia Howe, Michael & Irene Kilcomons, Mary Beth Bryant, Sandy Schultz, Anita Adlin, Fern Azarian, Jim Boyer, Lynn Bandy, Celeste Christman, Jean Krauchik, Pat Rutzke, Glenn Shelton, Joan Reynolds and Stu Swayze. Guests, and we anticipate new members, included Elaine McArthur and Phyllis Panozzo.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes from the November meeting were approved as published in The Petal.

OFFICERS' REPORTS: Glenn Shelton presented the treasurer's report. Mary Beth Bryant reported that per the Florida State Fair Committee the club would not be responsible for any presentations, and if the club did not participate in this year's Fair, no repercussions would be incurred. The Fair dates and our show dates are too close together for the club to be able to participate in the Fair and set up for our show. Motion was made (MBB) and seconded (GS) to not participate in this year's fair. Motion carried. Sandi Soto reported that the show schedule was approved by AVSA. Show flyer postcards and flyers are available for distribution display. Contact Sandi Soto or Sandy Schultz for copies.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Focal point ideas are needed since we are not doing the Fair. Celeste Christman has volunteered to chair the Focal Point Committee.

The person assigned as chair for Promotions for the show is not available. Members have been tasked with placing flyers, contacting neighborhood papers and possibly TV Bulletin Boards. Mary Lou Harden is taking donations for show awards. Please bring any donations to the January meeting.

The club will be providing the embroidery for shirts. Please be sure to bring your shirts to the January meeting.

SHOW & TELL:



**Project Plant
Grown by Fern Azarian**



**Primulina Maciejewski
Grown by Elaine McArthur**



**Michaelmoelleria vietnamensis
Grown by Phyllis Panozzo**

MEETING ADJOURNED: at 11am, followed by Christmas lunch provided by the club and flawlessly handled by Tammi Fitzgerald. A fun Secret Santa Christmas gift exchange followed.



TAVS 2025 HOLIDAY PARTY



Congratulations are in order for Glenn Shelton whose yard was recognized and awarded for having Florida-Friendly Landscape by the IFAS Extension. Per Glenn, "The recognition was based on dozens of questions ... I was rated according to certain criteria such as do I fertilize; do I use insecticides; how many native plant varieties do I have; how much do I water; do I use rain barrels ...

I showed them I have many drought tolerant plants, and I respect the environment, encouraging bees, butterflies and birds."



DEEP DIVE

COLLECTION CLASSES submitted by Sandi Soto

What exactly are the Collection Classes, and why are they important? Let's start with the last half of that question first. A show can only receive the AVSA top show award if there is at least one AVSA Collection Class that qualifies, i.e., all three plants in the Collection are awarded blue ribbons. The Collection Classes are "point scored," and so is the show! This means each individual plant in a collection of standard or mini/semiminiature AVs is scored on: Symmetry – 25 pts; Condition – 25 pts; Quantity of bloom – 25 pts; Size and type of blossom – 15 pts; and Color of blossom – 10 pts. The scoring for trailers and species differs a bit, but EACH plant in the collection must score a minimum of 90 points to get a blue ribbon.

For a show to receive any Standard Show Award, the show itself must score 90 points or more. If the score is between 90 and 94, the show will receive a green certificate; a blue certificate is awarded for a score of 95 to 100. The Collection Classes are worth a total of 12 points, so if there are no collections, the show cannot receive either award.

So what exactly are Collection Classes? They are at the least, the first 3 classes in the Horticulture Division. Class 1 is for 3 different AVSA registered STANDARD varieties all of the same type (3 single crown or 3 trailers). Class 2 is exactly the same, but is for 3 miniatures (single crown or trailer) or 3 semiminiatures (single crown or trailer). Class 3 is for 3 different species, regardless of type.

There can be other Collection Classes as well. Since TAVS is a member of Dixie AVS, we can offer our Dixie members awards for Dixie (DAVS) registered plants in 2 classes, standard and miniature/semiminiature. Dixie registered AVs may or may not be AVSA registered.

The Collection Classes are special, and are usually the “showpiece” classes. They’re classes you plan for far in advance of the show, and exhibitors try to put their best AVs in these classes. Simply put, most people who enter collections have a LOT of AVs! Some top show growers suggest putting your best AV in a Collection class, along with your 3rd & 4th best, while entering your 2nd best in another class where it is more likely to stand out. Most often, Best in Show comes from a Collection Class, but not always.

While any TAVS member can enter other classes, only AVSA members can enter the AVSA Collection Classes, and each exhibitor can enter only one collection in each collection class.

Personally, the Collection Classes are my favorites. My AV dream is to enter the Vintage Collection Class at an AVSA Convention, where the entries are limited to plants registered between 1960 and 1980. I have 8 AVs that meet the age requirement, so all I need is a Convention close enough to drive to, and 3 of those 8 in full bloom! If wishes were horses, as they say!

PLEASE NOTE

Our February 20 meeting date is our show date, so there will not be a February meeting at the Agricultural Office. Instead, just come to the show, where there'll be plenty of action for everyone.



And speaking of meetings, here’s a list of all the TAVS Zoom and in-person meetings for 2026. Put them on your calendar now so you don’t forget!

January 8 – Zoom

January 16 – In-person

February 5 – Zoom

February 20 – Come to the Show!

March 5 – Zoom

March 20 – In-person

April 2 – Zoom

April 17 – In-person

May 7 – Zoom

May 15 – In-person

June 4 – Zoom

June 19 – In-person

July 2 – Zoom

July 17 – In-person

August 6 – Zoom

August 21 – In-person

September 3 – Zoom

September 18 – In-person

October 1 – Zoom

October 16 – In-person

November 5 – Zoom

November 20 – In-person

December 3 – Zoom

December 18 – In-person

RECIPES

ZESTY LEMON BUTTER FISH FILLET

Submitted by Jim Boyer

Makes 4 servings

4 white fish fillets (such as cod, tilapia, or haddock)

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil (EVOO)

Salt and pepper to taste

1 teaspoon paprika

1 teaspoon garlic powder

1 teaspoon onion powder

For the Lemon Butter Sauce:

4 tablespoons butter

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil (EVOO)

4 cloves garlic, minced

Juice and zest of 1/2 lemon

1 cup heavy cream

1 tablespoon fresh parsley, chopped

Salt and pepper to taste

For Garnish: Lemon slices, fresh parsley, chopped

Pat the fish fillets dry with paper towels. Drizzle with EVOO and season both sides with salt, pepper, paprika, garlic powder and onion powder.

Heat a large skillet over medium high heat. Add the fish fillets and cook for about 3-4 minutes on each side, or until golden brown and flakes easily with a fork. Remove from skillet and set aside.

In the same skillet, reduce heat to medium and add the butter and EVOO. Once melted, add



minced garlic and cook for 1-2 minutes until fragrant. Stir in the lemon juice, lemon zest and chopped parsley. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Add heavy cream & let simmer for 2-3 minutes.

Place the cooked fish fillets on a serving platter. Drizzle the lemon butter sauce over the fish fillets. Garnish with lemon slices and additional chopped parsley.

Tip: For a spicier kick add a pinch of red pepper flakes to the sauce.

NOTES: The sauce will work great with shrimp, chicken, pork or pasta.





One member's AV origin story begins ... "In the Spring of 2025 as Irene and I walked into Publix we were greeted by a display of plants that happened to be BOGO. The African violets brought back memories of my grandmother sitting in her rocking chair next to a window with AVs in it. So, home we went with two AV NOIDs. Luckily an internet search revealed that TAVS was holding a meeting close by. I thought perhaps we can learn how to prevent these plants from becoming compost in a short period. So, off to our first TAVS meeting where we were assured not only could we keep our plants alive, but could also grow others from leaf cuttings! We now have over 70 baby plants from leaf cuttings"

- Michael Kilcomons -



WHAT'S YOUR AV OR GESNERIAD ORIGIN STORY?



How did you become interested in gesneriads? Share your unique AV origin story by sending an email to Sandy at The Petal

sandylovesviolets@gmail.com

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 Africa Violet Society can be sent to:

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

Visit us at:

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Tampa African Violet Society

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