

THE ABCs OF GROWING AFRICAN VIOLETS



A - Allow Ample Indirect light

B - Be sure to water only to dampness ... feeding each time

C - Continually groom

That may seem simplistic – but truly...those are the three easy steps to growing violets you will be proud of showing off. So let's dive in just a little deeper.

Allow Ample Indirect Light. Violets like sunny-feeling rooms that provide the light to make them want to stretch their wings and blossom. So whether you grow in a window sill or under artificial lights on a plant stand, your plant should have about 10 hours of good indirect light daily. If you're growing for show, as you come closer to show time, you will want to increase that light up to about 12 to 13 hours daily in order to encourage a strong head of bloom.

- For windowsill growing – make sure the leaves don't touch the window or they will burn and brown out most assuredly. Make sure to turn your plants a quarter turn each day so the symmetry will remain beautiful.
- Under artificial light, the plants should more naturally retain a symmetrical shape because the light is above them ... not coming from one side or the other. For miniatures and semiminiatures – the artificial light source should generally be about 8" above the plants. For standards the lights should be about 12-14" above the leaves of the plant.
- Leaves that curl under MAY BE a sign of too much intense light.

Be Sure to water to only dampness – feeding each time. There are many methods of watering your African violets, and how you water is up to each grower.

- Wick Watering is preferred by many. Use a piece of acrylic yarn in each pot, fill the pot with soil, add your plant, and top water just a little. Cut a 1/2-inch hole in the lid of a plastic container, fill the container with water, then set the pot on top of the

container, with the yarn hanging down in the water.

- Top watering is fine.
- Bottom watering is ok, but don't let the plant sit in water more than 30 minutes each time you water. Keep the soil evenly moist – not soggy and not dry.
- Misting your plant is fine, too, but keep the plant out of the sun when the leaves are wet.
- Experiment with your collection to determine what works best for your conditions and your lifestyle.

Feeding is the one thing that should be consistent regardless of your watering method. Most violet growers feed EVERY time they water using half strength of whatever the fertilizer calls for in the directions. In warmer weather perhaps even less than 1/2 strength.

- It's a good idea to rotate fertilizers about from time to time.
- If orange-ish or white residue begins to appear along the edges of your pots or on top of the soil ... that is usually an indication of fertilizer salts build-up. Either leach the soil by running water through the soil, or repot the plant. It's a personal choice.
- If the centers of your plants begin to be very tight and curly --- You may be using too much fertilizer or it could mean a pest problem.

Continually Groom. This is important especially if you're growing for show. Here are some things to look for:

- Spent blossoms – remove them as they occur
- Suckers – remove them as soon as they are noticeable. Suckers are actually new plants that begin in the crown of your plant. If left intact, they will soon destroy the symmetry of your plant. Plants entered in an AVSA-judged show may not have suckers.
- Baby leaves – remove them. They are leaves that are smaller than the row of leaves immediately above them, sometimes remaining hidden from view. They add nothing to the beauty of the plant. As a matter of fact, they detract from the plant's beauty.
- Dirt or other debris on the leaves. Use a soft brush to clean the leaves. You can also wash the leaves at your sink, letting a gentle stream of water or spray remove any foreign objects. Dry the leaves away from the sun.