

Ten plus rules for Primulina success!

Rule No. 1a: If watering from the top or using an Oyama self-watering system, let the planting medium lightly dry between waterings. Primulinas can survive a short drought, but they don't recover from drowning.

Rule No. 1b: If wick watering, the soil must be very light, use at least ½ perlite and ½ peat based soilless mix. The plants will not complain if you take a little while to refill the reservoir. Although not recommended, they will generally bounce back from wilting from being too dry.

Rule No. 2: Use lukewarm or tepid water when watering because cold water can cause unsightly marks to appear on the leaves. Nobody enjoys a cold shower. Do not let the plant sit in water, it must be well drained. Primulinas are among the easiest houseplants to grow and are certainly among the most forgiving of neglect, but it does not like sopping wet feet.

Rule No. 3: Give the plant the proper light. For windowsill growers, morning strength light is best. That means an East or North facing window. A West or South window can be used as long as it is shaded in some way (blinds, awning, trees outside, etc.) Avoid direct sun during the harsh "skin cancer" hours of the day. Usually, if the leaves are recoiling from the light or develop a reddish tint, then they are getting too much light. If they seem to be reaching for the light, try to give them more. Also, give them ¼ turn every week to keep the growth uniform. For light stand growing, they like lower light levels than African violets. If they have a shelf of their own, only have the light on for 8 – 10 hours a day. If they are growing alongside African violets, place them at the ends of the shelves where the light is usually less.

Rule No. 4: Regular, light meals all year long, please. Use a fertilizer with a balanced formula (10-10-10 or 20-20-20) mixed at 1/8 to 1/4 the usual strength. Primulinas can suffer from too much fertilizer, so it is much better to underfeed rather than overfeed.

If watering from the top or using an Oyama self-watering system, fertilize every other watering. If wick watering, use this weak fertilizer all the time, but flush through with lukewarm water once a month to remove fertilizer salt build up.

Rule No. 5: Repot when the plant has filled its current pot, this is generally at least once a year. Increase the pot size by the smallest increment possible but avoid deep pots; they will hold too much moisture. Slightly moisten the new mix before planting and pot the Primulina so that the mix is firmly in the pot but still airy.

Rule No. 6: Remove spent flowers. In particular, do not let spent blossoms drop onto

the leaves and lay there. This will invite rot and disease. Remove old, yellowed, or unhealthy leaves. A clean plant is better able to remain pest and disease free. If you use anything to cut leaves or stems, please sterilize the instrument first.

Rule No. 7: If the temperature feels good to you, it will feel good to the Primulina, too! Primulinas can tolerate wide temperature swings, often surviving anywhere from 45 to 85 degrees. For optimal results, it is best to grow your Primulina in the range between 60 and 80 degrees.

Rule No. 8: High humidity is not necessary for Primulinas. Although they enjoy humidity of 50% or higher, they will tolerate lower percentages than African violets with no harm.

Rule No. 9: Bugs and diseases like them, too! Although the tough, thicker leaves are a bit more resistant to chewing insects, they are still susceptible to mealy bug, powdery mildew and some mites.

Rule No. 10: The best rule is to sit back and enjoy your new companion. It really is not very fussy and will be glad to share its living space with you!

Happy Growing!



Primulina verecunda (previously brassicoides)



Primulina yungfuensis

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Finding Primulina information online:

Associations:

Tampa Bay Gesneriad Club <http://tampabaygesneriadsociety.org/>

Gesneriad Society (International) <http://www.gesneriadsociety.org/>

Blog spots:

Gary Hunters blog <http://garysspecialtyplants.blogspot.com/>

Facebook pages:

Primulina Land <https://www.facebook.com/groups/744026642323306/>

Gesneri-nerds <https://www.facebook.com/groups/149440055208776/>

Where to buy:

Lyndon Lyons <https://www.lyndonlyon.com/primulinas.htm>

Rob's Violet Barn <https://www.violetbarn.com/store/primulina.html>

Publications:

get magazine or online access with membership <http://www.gesneriadsociety.org/publications/>

online magazine – free <http://www.gesneriadsociety.org/current-gleanings/>

Misc. links:

The Plant List <http://www.theplantlist.org/1.1/browse/A/Gesneriaceae/Primulina/>

Gesneriad refence web <http://www.gesneriads.info/new-gesneriad-reference-web/>

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