

The Petal

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



March 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 March!!

Well, we did it, and in excellent fashion! Our "Hat's Off to Violets" show received a score of 98.85 out of 100, giving us the highest award a show can get. Every one of our ACTIVE members contributed in some way to making the show a success. More members than usual had entries, 91 in horticulture and 9 in design. I'm hoping we can beat those numbers in 2027!

So now, we turn back to other activities, and those of us you have selected as leaders have some ideas. I'm going to share some here, and hope to get input at our Zoom and day meetings. We need to know whether what we *think* you might want is close to what YOU, the membership, actually want.

The first idea is simple: devote **up to 15 minutes** at each meeting to tips on how to grow African violets and/or other gesneriads. We could have



A message from our President (cont.)

had over 100 horticulture entries if we had done more than just hand out the show schedule. We have done a less than stellar job of explaining what constitutes a show plant, and it's time for us to fix that! We can do this at the beginning of the meeting, or at the end so those who just love the plants but don't want to show can head home. Whichever works is fine, and we can let you decide.

The second idea is bigger in scope, if we have enough interested members AND mentors to make it happen. We're looking for a group of 5-7 members who **SERIOUSLY** want to learn how to grow show-worthy plants. I have a strong belief that if you (a) have 5 PROVEN blue-ribbon winning varieties; (b) will spend UP TO 1 hour a week on those 5 plants; and (c) will follow weekly advice/instructions on what steps to do, you can have plants that not only win blue ribbons, but win Best in Class, Best in Section, or even Best in Show.

Your current VP, Mary Beth Bryant, is ready to be on the mentoring team, as am I, but we would love a couple of other successful show growers to volunteer to join us. Our task will be to email, text, or call the "growers" and remind them of what they need to do that week, whether it's as

simple as watering, repotting, grooming, etc. By having 4 mentors following the same pre-arranged schedule, each of us will only have to do the contact work every 4th week.

So, those are a couple of our ideas. We'll also be looking for members who are interested in working on publicity, a seasonal job; and, as our webmaster Gladys Cook, who lives in Tallahassee, has expressed a desire to be replaced, we would definitely love to find a member who knows how to build and maintain a website, **possibly** using WordPress.

There's a lot of info in this issue, including, I hope, the Nominating Committee Report, show results and pictures, and the normal fun news. Read, digest, and most of all, let us know whether you like our ideas for the future! This is my next to last letter as President, and I hope I've made things fun & interesting! When I'm a bit less busy, I may even be willing to do it again down the road!

Sandi Soto, President



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, March 5 @ 7pm

We will get the results of our recent club show and vote on the slate of officers.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9324792391?pwd=ZzBkTmxZTmRJOFY0SmxZbHNnU1Evdz09&omn=81582745073>

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!

There are no member birthdays in March

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



Day Meeting -

Friday, March 20 @ 10am

Hillsborough County Agricultural Extension Service (HCAES)

Show wrap-up and awards, as well as a discussion of Sandi's "grow to show" mentoring program. And don't forget, your annual TAVS dues (\$15) are due!



MEETING MINUTES

There was no day meeting in February; we were all busy with the show.

Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee of Tampa African Violet Society, having met on February 19, 2026, and carefully considered all eligible candidates, submits the following nominations for the upcoming election:

- 🌸 President, Mary Beth Bryant
- 🌸 Vice President, Sandi Soto
- 🌸 Treasurer, Glenn Shelton
- 🌸 Recording Secretary, Sandy Schultz
- 🌸 Corresponding Secretary, Celia Howe

We confirm all candidates are members in good standing.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Beth Bryant, Chair; Sandy Schultz, Member;
Fern Azarian, Member

Hats Off to Violets

TAVS ANNUAL PLANT SHOW & SALE

FEBRUARY 20-21, 2026

AWARDS

- | | |
|--|--|
| Best in Show – Sandi Soto | 🌸 S 5b clone Grotei silvert |
| 2nd Best in Show – Glenn Shelton | 🌸 Steffano’s Azure Diamonds |
| Best AVSA Standard Collection
– Glenn Shelton | 🌸 Sharon Gartner, Wrangler’s Dixie
Celebration, Steffano’s Azure Diamonds |
| 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection
– Sandi Soto | 🌸 LiK-Tanets Flamingo, Ma’s Debutante,
Eva |
| Best AVSA Mini/Semimini Collection
– Sandi Soto | 🌸 Jolly Magic, Rob’s Slap Happy, Rob’s
Oolong |
| Best AVSA Species Collection
– Sandi Soto | 🌸 S 5b clone Grotei silvert, S 5b clone
dificilis, S 5b clone grandifolius #299 |
| Best DAVS Standard Collection
– Sandi Soto | 🌸 Hunter’s Tranquility, Sharon Gartner,
Maggie Lee |
| Best Standard – Glenn Shelton | 🌸 Steffano’s Azure Diamonds |
| Best Semiminiature – Sandi Soto | 🌸 Anna’s Harmony |
| Best Miniature– Sandi Soto | 🌸 Tiny Tim |
| Best Trailer– Sandy Schultz | 🌸 Rob’s Boolaroo |
| Best Species – Sandi Soto | 🌸 S 5b clone Grotei silvert |
| Best Gesneriad – Mary Lou Harden | 🌸 Primulina Max Timer |
| Best Design – Mary Lou Harden | 🌸 Fascinated by the Fascinator |
| Best Chimera – Sandi Soto | 🌸 Island Charm |
| Best Streptocarpus – Mary Beth Bryant | 🌸 Dale’s Polar Express |
| Best Novice – Michael & Irene Kilcomons | 🌸 Streptocarpus Tequila Sunrise |

Hats Off to Violets

TAVS ANNUAL PLANT SHOW & SALE

FEBRUARY 20-21, 2026

AWARDS - CONTINUED

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Best Club Project Plant Seasoned Grower
– Jim Boyer | 🌸 Rob's Slap Happy |
| Best Club Project Plant Novice Grower
– Michael & Irene Kilcomons | 🌸 Rob's Slap Happy |
| 2nd Best Design – Mary Lou Harden | 🌸 Natural Garden |
| Best Interpretive Flower Arrangement
– Mary Lou Harden | 🌸 Let's Play Ball |
| Best Interpretive Plant Arrangement
– Mary Lou Harden | 🌸 Fascinated by the Fascinator |
| Best Container Garden
– Mary Lou Harden | |
| Best Terrarium – Mary Lou Harden | |
| Best Dish Garden – Mary Lou Harden | |
| Best in Section 3 - Standard Variegated
– Mary Beth Bryant | 🌸 Cajun's Rum Boogie |
| Best in Section 4 - Miniatures
– Sandi Soto | 🌸 Tiny Tim |
| Best in Section 5 - Semiminiatures
– Sandi Soto | 🌸 Anna's Harmony |
| Best in Section 6 - Trailers
– Sandy Schultz | 🌸 Rob's Boolaroo |
| Best in Section 7 - Special Classes
– Sandi Soto | 🌸 Smooch Me (Vintage) |

Hats Off to Violets

TAVS ANNUAL PLANT SHOW & SALE

FEBRUARY 20-21, 2026

AWARDS - CONTINUED

Best in Section 8 - Other Gesneriads

– Mary Lou Harden

🌸 Primulina Max Timer

Best in Section 10 - Interpretive Flower Arrangement – Mary Lou Harden

🌸 Let's Play Ball

Best in Section 11 - Interpretive Plant Arrangement – Mary Lou Harden

🌸 Fascinated by the Fascinator

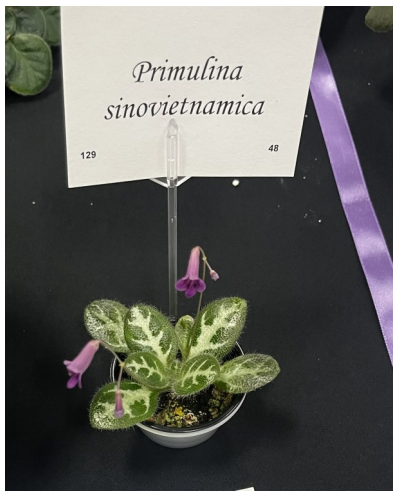
Best in Section 12 - Design

– Mary Lou Harden

🌸 Natural Garden







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:

www.tampaafricanviolets.com

Join us on Twitter:

Twitter.com/TAVSviolets

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Find us on Facebook

Tampa African Violet Society

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THANK YOU!

A HUGE shout out goes to our show photographers, Celia Howe and Elaine McArthur. They took all of the photos in this month's issue.