

# The Petal

Monthly publication of the  
Tampa African Violet Society (TAVS)  
[www.tampafricanviolets.com](http://www.tampafricanviolets.com)



December 2025

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 December TAVS!

Another year is almost gone, and another Christmas season is almost upon us! If you were in attendance at the November in-person meeting, you know that we discussed moving our Christmas meeting to a Saturday, but due to the number of members who could not attend on a Saturday, the decision was made to stick to Friday, December 19. We hope our working members can arrange a morning off to join us, but

we do understand if that's not possible. We're planning a catered Christmas brunch at the Hillsborough County Agricultural Extension Office, and we hope to see as many TAVS members as possible. The members approved a \$15 limit for Secret Santa gifts that are plant related in some way – that should be fun!! If we remember, your VP and I, possibly joined by Tammi Fitzgerald, may just come up with some AV trivia questions and door prizes to go with them. Stay tuned!!

We haven't given up on getting nationally known speakers for our ZOOM meetings, but lately we've had a bit of difficulty making the arrangements. The Thursday ZOOM this month will feature two videos that tie in well with our November leaf propagation program. I watched both and learned better ways of separating and potting up the baby plants we all hope to be seeing break through the soil soon! The two videos raise a few interesting questions, and I'll be curious to see if your questions are the same as mine!

## A message from our President (cont.)

Here's hoping you all have special wishes for the holidays that get fulfilled. Hannukah begins this year on December 14 and ends December 22, followed by Christmas December 25 and then we're on to 2026. Personally, I'd like to add a beautiful African violet, Alliance, to my collection, but I don't really NEED or want any more plants or leaves or . . . I think I have the full complement of everything I need!

Happy Holy Days!

*Sandi Soto, President*



A hearty holiday thank you goes out to the following TAVS members who contributed to this month's Petal: Jim Boyer, Tammi Fitzgerald, Mary Lou Harden and Michael Kilcomons. I'd like to gently remind you that this is YOUR newsletter, members; it's your pictures, recipes, stories and tips that makes this publication special.

*Sandy Schultz, Petal Editor*



Merry, merry, merry birthday wishes go out this month to:

✿ Celia Howe - December 11

✿ Jim Boyer - December 25

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



LE-Moonlight Sonata  
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, December 4 @ 7pm**

You potted up a leaf and now it has sprouted. What's next? We will show you how to separate and pot up your new babies.

### Join ZOOM Meeting:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9324792391?  
pwd=ZzBkTmxZTmRJOFY0SmxZbHNnU1Evdz09&omn=84430042206](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9324792391?pwd=ZzBkTmxZTmRJOFY0SmxZbHNnU1Evdz09&omn=84430042206)

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!

# MEETING

### Day Meeting -

**Friday, December 19 @ 10am**

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

**5339 County Road 579, Seffner, FL 33584**

**Holiday Party and catered brunch!!!**



# **MEETING MINUTES**

**Tampa African Violet Society**

**November 21, 2025**

### Day Meeting

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 10:17am by President Sandi Soto, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**MEMBERS ATTENDING:** Sandi Soto, Mary Lou Harden, Tammi Fitzgerald, Celia Howe, Irene and Michael Kilcomons, Mary Beth Bryant, Sandy Schultz, Glenn Shelton, Joan Reynolds and Stu Swayze. Bonnie Smith came to the meeting after a long absence. Sandy Schultz brought a guest, Michele Garber, from Punta Gorda. Michele attended the Council show last month in Lakeland.

**INSPIRATIONAL:** "Whatever you do, always give 100% unless you're donating blood."

**PROGRAM:** President Sandi Soto presented and led a leaf potting demo and hands-on potting activity

and got input from experienced growers Mary Beth Bryant, Mary Lou Harden and Glenn Shelton on their potting techniques. Michael Kilcomons showed how he easily measured wicks.

**SHOW & TELL:** Glenn Shelton brought "Steffano's Azure Diamonds."

Club members held off approving the minutes of the October 2025 meeting as The Petal was published late and members had not had a chance to read it.

**OFFICERS' REPORTS:** Glenn Shelton presented the treasurer's report, Sandi Soto and Mary Beth Bryant did not have anything to report.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** "What have you done for me lately?" - Sandi Soto again posed the question to club members as many club members do not show or grow plants to sell. A motion was made by Sandi Soto and seconded by Sandy Schultz to have members bring an item (t-shirt, apron, golf shirt) and the club would have the member's name and the club logo embroidered on the item. Discussion followed, looking at a January timeframe with the items ready for the club show in February. Mary Beth will check with Briony about embroidery companies and will also check with Bobbi Johannsen (Heart of Jacksonville AV Club), as the Jax club has embroidered shirts. All members agreed. Motion carried following discussion.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**TAVS Holiday Party** - Motion was made and seconded to hold the TAVS Holiday Party on a Saturday so working members could attend. The members discussed holding the club holiday party and club meeting on Saturday next month so that working members could attend. Because



**Steffano's Azure Diamonds (11157)**

03/21/2019 (S. Covolo)

**Grown by Glenn Shelton**

**Presented by Tammi Fitzgerald**

several regular members cannot attend on Saturdays, following discussion the motion failed, and the club meeting and holiday party will be Friday, December 19 as scheduled.

**Florida State Fair** - Because the Florida State Fair booth/display would need to be broken down during the same week as our February show, the members discussed whether we can skip this year and still participate in future years. Mary Beth will find out from her Fair point of contact.

**MEETING ADJOURNED:** at 11:54 am, followed by a raffle.

*NOTE: We don't always follow the rules, but anything that's voted on should have a motion and a 2<sup>nd</sup>, and the names of person "moving" and "seconding" should be included. Technically, only that info, the wording of the motion, and the outcome of the vote are needed. Not a problem for us, but in some groups, you don't want a contentious discussion spelled out in the minutes.*

# SHOW & TELL

This month's Show & Tell comes from Michael Kilcomons about his experience with ordering and growing Russian African violets from leaves.

In July 2025, I ordered some Russian African violets from Elena at [www.growviolet.com](http://www.growviolet.com). They were shipped on 7/28 and received 7/31. Each cutting was well packaged. One of the cuttings I ordered was Cosmic Art (pic #1). Pic #2 is when first opened. Pic #3 was taken 11/7. Pic # 4 shows other cuttings from the same order. Very satisfied with the quality of cuttings from Elena at Grow Violet.



**207 Cosmic Art (Sorano)**



*Pic Stitch*



We've got two delicious recipes this month, submitted by TAVS members Tammi Fitzgerald and Jim Boyer.

**Love This Banana Bread** - "Here's another yummy recipe that makes the moistest banana bread I've ever made. I believe the key ingredient is the sour cream." - Tammi Fitzgerald

1 C brown sugar  
3 overripe bananas  
1/4 C soft butter  
2 large egg whites  
1/4 C milk  
1/4 C plain yogurt or sour cream  
1 tsp baking soda  
1/2 tsp salt  
1/2 C chopped walnuts or nuts of choice (optional)  
2 C flour

Beat butter and sugar until mixed well and begins to fluff. Add eggs, mix. Mash bananas and add them while mixer is on low. Add milk, yogurt & dry ingredients and mix on medium. Stir in nuts if desired, then pour into pre-greased loaf pan, or 4 mini loaf pans. Bake at 350° for almost 45 min or until top is firm.



**Cranberry Cherry Relish** - "This is my favorite Christmas recipe. I still don't understand why I don't make it year round!" - Jim Boyer



Serves 12

24 oz fresh cranberries  
1.5 cup sugar, or to taste – probably more  
1/2 cup orange juice  
1/2 cup cranberry juice  
1/2 cup amaretto  
Zest of 1 orange  
10 oz dried cherries

Pick thru cranberries, rinse & drain well. Combine all ingredients, except cherries, in a pan. Place over medium heat; boil slowly until the berries pop open, about 10 mins.

Skim foam off surface with a metal spoon, stir in the cherries & let cool to room temperature.

Cover & refrigerate (will last up to 1 mo.).

## WE WANT TO SEE YOUR PLANTS!

The Petal is looking for photos of your beautiful plants to share with our readers. So snap a couple of pics the next time you water and send them to The Petal at [sandylovesviolets@gmail.com](mailto:sandylovesviolets@gmail.com) or text them to 904-955-2947. NOIDS are fine, but please include the plant name if you have one.



## TIPS FOR KEEPING YOUR AFRICAN VIOLETS PROBLEM FREE

submitted by Mary Lou Harden

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

### OBSERVE YOUR PLANTS OFTEN.

Daily is best. Whether it's your plants, your children, your husband – checking on them often is important to their (and your) well-being. If there's a problem, it's always easier to "nip it in the bud." So, if you see a sucker forming, remove it earlier rather than later. If allowed to grow, suckers often destroy the symmetry of your plant.

### CONSISTENT CARE IS KEY.

- ✿ Watering – keep your plants (and you) hydrated
- ✿ Fertilizing – just like you, plants need food
- ✿ Repotting – and just like babies, plants grow – so it's necessary to "pot-up" (although sometimes you'll need to "pot-down")
- ✿ Cleaning trays, matting, pots, labels – My mom always said that "cleanliness is next to Godliness" – and just like us humans, our plants and growing areas look a whole lot better when they're clean. In addition, dirty conditions often promote fungus, hiding places for bugs and other problems.

## GOOD AIR CIRCULATION IS IMPORTANT.

If you don't have ceiling or other type fans, use clip-on fans. If you don't have good air circulation, you're more apt to get problems such as mold or powdery mildew.

## NO OVER-CROWDING!

Easy to say, hard to do! We've always got to have "just one more plant!" You'll never have a show plant if your plants are crowded or even touching other plants.

## IF BUYING NEW PLANTS:

- ❖ Buy only from reputable sources – those which have proven themselves to sell only high-quality, bug-free plants.
- ❖ If you're concerned about buying plants and introducing them into your collection, perhaps it would be wise to just buy leaves.
- ❖ When adding new plants to your collection, be sure to isolate for one month at a minimum. Some suggest a 3-month quarantine.

Keep in mind that **African violets are really quite inexpensive**. What's the worst thing that can happen if your plant has a problem and doesn't look good? That's right – death! Get tough on your plants. If they don't perform well, get sick or otherwise just don't bring joy to you, give them a nice funeral and buy a new plant!



**Maas' Janet (4633)**  
11/30/1981 (M. Maas)  
Photo by Sandy Schultz

# 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](mailto: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

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**Tampa African Violet Society**

Sandy Schultz  
Petal Editor  
**[sandylovesviolets@gmail.com](mailto:sandylovesviolets@gmail.com)**

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