

AFRICAN VIOLETS

The tropical African Violet is one of the most popular houseplants in the world!

Light. Proper light is necessary for good blooming. Artificial or natural light are both good options.

Natural Light. African Violets want bright, indirect light, an east or north facing window is ideal.

Artificial Light. Many violet enthusiasts agree that African Violets bloom more profusely under grow lights. Use full-spectrum bulbs a total of 12-15 hours a day. Proximity of the light fixture depends on the wattage, so read the package for how close to position the light.

Temperature. African Violets prefer temperatures between 65-75 degrees. Keep them away from drafty windows or areas in which they could get chilled at night.

Watering. When watering African Violets make sure to use tepid water; cold water can cause spotting on the leaves. If water does get on the leaves, gently wipe it off with a cloth. African Violets are sensitive to dryness and prefer moist but never soggy soil.

African Violets can be watered from the top or the bottom. Traditionally, self-watering pots are commonly used. These pots consist of a smaller porous pot which fits into a larger pot that holds water. This type of watering can push excess salts to the surface and harm the plant. Once a month pour water through the plant to flush away these salts.

Fertilizing. African Violets need a regular supply of nutrients. This is especially important during the active growing season (March-September). A water soluble fertilizer designed for blooming houseplants is the best choice.

Repotting. African Violets like to be kept tight in their pots, but usually need repotting at least once a year as plants "neck" up. As the plant grows older, leaves drop off. Removing those leaves creates a "neck" on the plant. When you repot the African Violet and bury the neck below the soil surface, new roots will form giving the plant a boost.

Propagation. The easiest way to propagate new plants is by rooting leaves. Break off a mature, but not old, leaf; dip in rooting hormone and plant in a loose seed starting potting mix. Roots will start to form in 4-6 weeks.

Humidity. Homes are typically lacking the high humidity African Violets would prefer. Place plants on a pebble tray with a shallow layer of water. Do not allow plants to sit in the water.

