



AFRICAN VIOLETS
(Saintpaulia)

LIKES

- Location: Filtered or indirect light daily, 8+ hrs daily
- If growing under artificial lights, place a 2-tube florescent fixture about 12-18" above plants for 12 - 13 hrs daily. Note: If foliage appears healthy and growing, but no blooms, provide more light. If blooms are abundant, but leaves are pale and stiff, light may be too intense.
- Regular feedings (8-14-8 by "Grow More", 7 drops per qt) or can use 20-20-20 monthly. Can also do "light feedings" (1/4 strength) with each watering.
- Keep soil slightly moist, but not soaked.
- Can tolerate being dry for short periods of time: 2 - 3 days.
- Always use African Violet soil (very light, primarily peat moss, vermiculate)
- Tight fit to pot. African Violets like some room to grow, but don't like a lot of excess space in spot.

Likes, continued

- Temperatures about 70 degrees
- Water at room temperature water.
- Always remove dead or wilted leaves and dead blooms.
- Humidity: Add gravel to saucer. One way of increasing humidity is to group African Violets together, making sure leaves are not touching. This can increase humidity by 15%.
- Turn African Violets weekly, to balance plant/light.

DISLIKES

- Hot sun
- Over watering. Wait until soil is slightly moist or top 1/2" is dry.
- Pot too large for plant. African violets like a "tight fit"
- Water on leaves. Be careful when watering.

SOIL

- African Violets actually use a “soil-less” soil.
 - 1/3 peat moss, 1/3 vermiculate, 1/3 perlite
 - Add small amount of dolomite lime to keep pH between 5.8 - 6.2. (6 tbsp dolomite lime, if using 8 qt bags of peat moss, vermiculate and perlite, or 1 tbsp for every gallon of mix)

How to Propagate African Violets

- Leaves or divisions are the easiest method
- Leaves: Cut an African Violet leaf that's not too old or too young. Healthy leaves.
- Make a 45 degree angle cut across the bottom of the leaf stem, about 2" from where the stem meets the leaf.

Leaf cuttings

- Put the end barely into water. The leaf stem should be barely touching the water.
- Keep in shaded or low light area. Do not put in direct light.
- Since you have the leaf in a very small amount of water, it's necessary to check on the water level daily or at least every couple of days
- Once the leaf develops a strong root system, it's time to put leaf into damp peat moss.
- Once in peat moss (or can use a very light African violet soil), put in window with bright indirect sunlight. **Put under plastic to increase humidity. Don't let plastic touch leaves.**

Dividing or Removing Suckers

How to Remove Suckers From African Violets

African violet leaves grow from a central stem and over time can accumulate suckers or offshoot growth at the plant base. The new plants crowd and deplete nutrients from the main plant, causing diminished growth, health and bloom capacity. Multiple offshoots can also throw off the symmetry that is part of the beauty of the plant. The suckers you remove from your African violets can be thrown out or repotted to create new plants.



How to divide an African Violet, continued

- Oftentimes, an African Violet multiplies in the pot. You can see the natural divisions. If you're lucky, each division has its own root system.
- Can "wiggle" violet sections apart with fingers.
- If violet sections appear to be attached with only one root system, you can cut the division apart with a clean, sterile knife. Sometimes you can reroot this section like you would when rooting a leaf; in shallow water.
- Repot into appropriate size pot using African violet soil. Place in low light until established. Then move to bright light.

Transplanting African Violets

- When an African Violet becomes root bound, it's time to transplant. This is very easy to do, and is similar to the way you would routinely transplant most indoor plants. Typically, you'll transplant African violets about once a year.
- The main thing to remember is to only go up one pot size when transplanting. So, when transplanting an African Violet from a 4" pot, you would typically go to a 5" pot, not a 6" pot.
- If you see small sucker leaves, remove them. Also remove large, older leaves. Keep plant symmetrical.

What to do with the “neck”

- Cut off lower leaves. If neck is very long, you'll need to cut the neck to about 1" - 1 1/2 ".
- Take a sharp, sterilized knife and gently scrape the brown skin off the neck, exposing a nice clean greenish neck.
- Put plant straight down into appropriate size pot, filled with African Violet mix. Water, thoroughly, but not soaking plant.
- Put pot into a “tent” or plastic bag. Blow into bag to add warmth and carbon dioxide. Tie bag closed and put in bright indirect light.













Types of Pots for African violets

- Ideally, African Violets like their roots to breathe, so Terra Cotta pots are typically favorites.
- Here at the coast, I've been more successful with thicker plastic pots. They seem to dislike thin plastic pots, like \$\$ store pots.
- Their root systems tend to grow more outward than downward, so a slightly more shallow pot works well.
- Self watering pots. Some people love these. I haven't had as much success with them. I always need to water from above, but let soil dry out before watering again.

Diseases or Problems

- Water too cold....

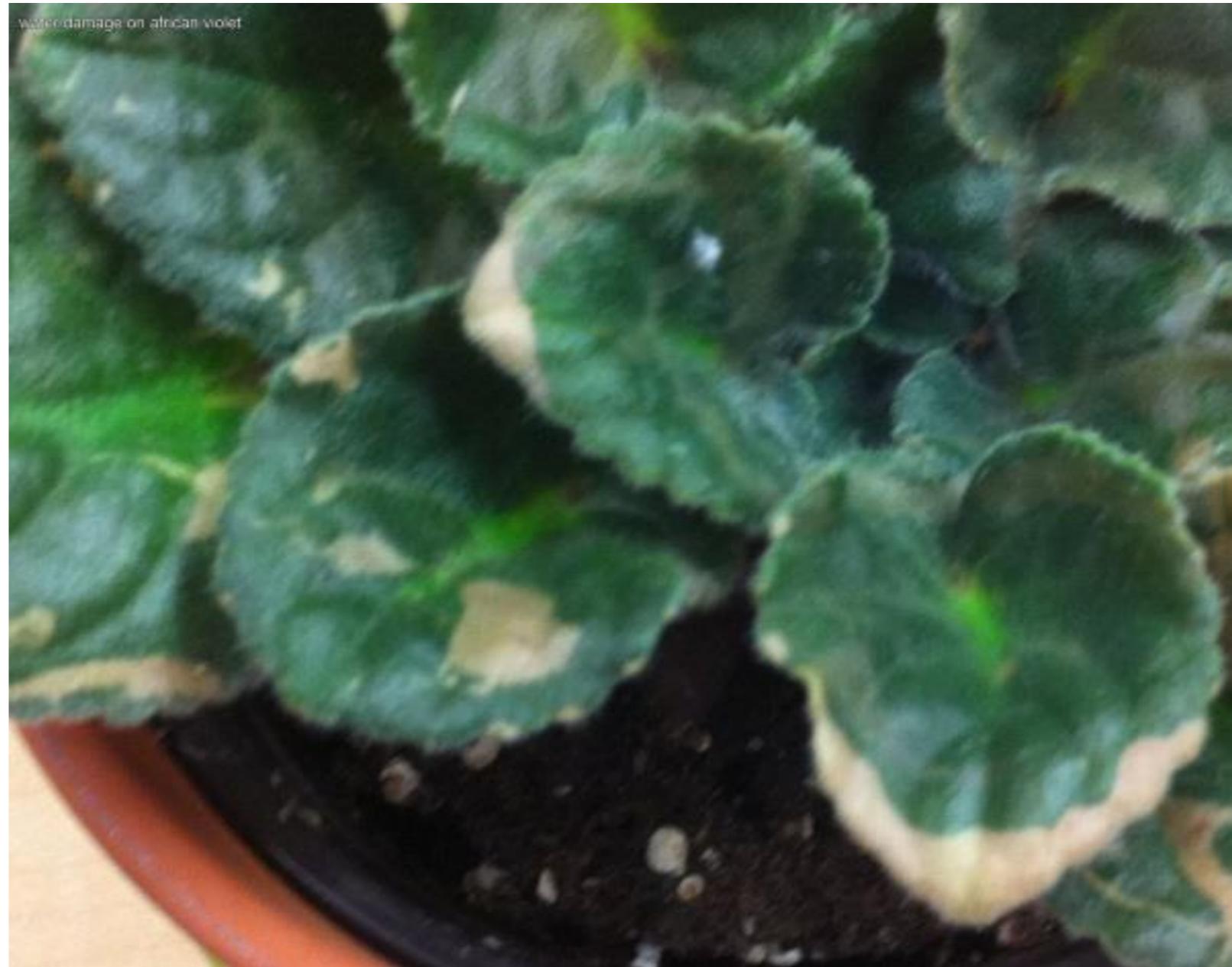
Distinguishing Symptoms

- Leaves curl down on the edge.
- Leaves are deformed or twisted.
- Leaves have brown spots on them.
- Leaves have yellow spots on them.



Water Damage

- Be careful if watering from above. Avoid getting water on leaves.



- Sunburn
- From direct sun on leaves



Crown Rot or Root Rot

One of the most serious conditions is **Crown and Root Rot**. This is first noticed when the crown of the plant becomes mushy, the older stems droop because their attachment to the crown is compromised, and new growth is stunted and eventually turns black and dies. Crown rot is caused by a fungus that takes hold when plants are allowed to remain too wet, either through over-watering or poorly draining pots or potting mix, or when African violets are planted too deep.



Crown Rot

- **Caused from over watering.**

Distinguishing Symptoms

- Crown is mushy. It may appear translucent brown with a soft, jelly-like consistency.
- Crown darkens. It appears brown or black in color.

These symptoms indicate that the crown is rotting. If your African Violet has these symptoms, it probably has Crown Rot.

Other Symptoms

- Crown has a weblike substance on it. (Note: This substance should not be confused with the web left behind by Spider Mites, which clings to the flowers and plant hairs of the leaves. Nor should it be confused with the "cotton" specks which characterize Leaf Mealy Bugs.)
- Leaves have a weblike substance on them.
- Leaves darken. They appear brown or black in color.
- Leaves wilt. They may appear translucent brown with a soft, jelly-like consistency.
- Plant growth is slow.



Where to buy African violets

- AVSA.org (*African Violet Society of America*)
- Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses
- The Violet Barn

