



THE DIXIE NEWS

Publication of Dixie African Violet Society (www.DAVS.org)

Affiliate of African Violet Society of America, Inc. (www.africanvioletsocietyofamerica.org)

Mary Lou Harden, Editor (mlhard@verizon.net)

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President's Message



By Betty Ferguson

bettywithviolets@gmail.com

As if Hurricane Helene wasn't enough, many of our Dixie members were immediately battered by Milton, even before cleanup from Helene was completed. Half a continent away, I couldn't help you protect your family, your house or your yard, and I couldn't help you clean up afterwards. But believe me, you were in my heart and in my prayers. I wonder if God, in all His knowledge, was behind the difficulties with the botanical gardens leading to the postponement of this year's show.

Michael primarily, and Robbie, too, not to be put off by trouble, have been busy hunting a place for our 2025 show and have at least one really great sounding possibility that Robbie will be telling you about.

So, keep those plants growing and keep our theme of "Treasures in Grandma's Attic" in mind over the upcoming year. It's looking like we'll have plenty of time to plan our activities around our show date.

This will be my last President's Report as it is transition time for Dixie officers. I can guarantee there will be no protests and no transition of power issues with this transition! I wish I could

thank each of you individually, but due to space limitations, I want to thank the officers; directors, Ken Barbi, Webmaster; and members who have supported me as your President and the other officers to keep Dixie thriving through the prolonged matters stemming from COVID. We've had a lot of out-of-the-ordinary decisions to make, but cooperation has been something we can all brag about. No spats, no disputes, no backstabbing! I love Dixie!

Following are the other officers who have worked so hard to keep Dixie thriving during the past term:

Vice President: Robbie McMeel

Corresponding Secretary: Greg Zoller

**Recording Secretary: Laura Walker and
Mary Lou Harden**

Treasurer: Johnnie Berry

Dixie News Editor: Mary Lou Harden

Mary Lou, I would have been up the proverbial creek without a paddle without your patient advice and encouragement.

Our new officers are:

President: Robbie McMeel

Vice President: Becky McMeel

Recording Secretary: Phillis Hinkle

Corresponding Secretary: Jo Schrimsher

Treasurer: Johnnie Berry

Dixie News Editor: Mary Lou Harden

Welcome! . . .and my applause to our new officers. I wish we could have a formal installation

[continued on p.2, column 2]

CONTENTS

President's Message – Betty Ferguson	1
Contents	2
Renew Your Membership	2
Update on Dixie Show 2025 - Robbie McMeel	2
AVSA Information and Convention News	3-4
Become a Dixie Member	4
Welcome to Dixie! – Johnnie Berry	4
Dixie Registered Varieties – Becky McMeel	4
Designer's Corner – Dish Gardens – Part 3 - Betty Ferguson	5
Alabama State Director's Report – Michael Jackson	7
Arkansas State Director's Report - Betty Ferguson	7
Florida State Director's Report	8
Georgia State Director's Report-Phillis Hinkle	9
Florida State Director's Report	9
Louisiana State Director's Report – Becky McMeel	10
Louisiana's Acadiana Report – Chris Brooks	11
Tennessee State Director's Report – Marian Zoller	11
Dixie AVS Affiliates – Robbie McMeel	11
Rosettes Available	12
AVSA Virtual Circle	12
DAVS Awards – Greg Zoller	13
The Other Gesneriads: Meet the Roots Family – Barbara Matthews	13
Upcoming Events	15
You Can Grow Beautiful African violets From Leaves – UPAVS FL	16
DAVS Membership Application	17
DAVS Officers	17
DAVS State Directors, Standing Committees	18
From the Editor – Mary Lou Harden	18
Special Committees	18
Commercial Members	19
Commercial Ads	19

DON'T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP! (Membership Application on p. 17)

Please send check payable to DAVS to
Johnnie Berry, Membership Secretary
287 Fennel Way, SW, Atlanta, GA 30331
johnniepearl@comcast.net

President's Message, continued from p.1:

for you, but I know Dixie will support you during your term, and if I can assist you at any point, please let me know.

Best wishes to each of you, Dixie members. You have been a joy to me as I have served Dixie as President and previously as Vice President.

Yours affectionately,

Betty Ferguson



Hunter's Happy New Year

“TREASURES IN GRANDMA'S ATTIC” UPDATE ON THE DIXIE SHOW FOR 2025

by Robbie McMeel

rmcmeel@bellsouth.net

TO ALL DIXIE MEMBERS:

DIXIE SHOW/CONVENTION UPDATE – 2025

PROPOSED DATES: SEPTEMBER 11-13

As most of you know, we had to cancel our show again this year due to issues with the Birmingham Botanical Gardens. For some reason they could not get us a correct contract for the weekend we were scheduled to have our show and the lack of participation from members due to many different reasons. Since the changes that have been made in personnel and the prices to be charged at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens, who wanted to increase our rental rate by \$1000.00,

it will not be feasible for Dixie to hold our show at this venue next year. We are exploring a different venue to host the show for 2025.

Michael Jackson of the Birmingham Club visited a venue that we will be exploring for our show. Here is the email that Michael sent me in regards to his visit: "After a recent visit to '**Petals from the Past**' in Jemison, Alabama. I believe it will be a good venue for our 2025 DAVS Show. It is located approximately 1 hour south of Birmingham. "Petals from the Past" is a Nursery that specializes in Antique roses and old-fashioned perennials. There are greenhouses full of different genera of plants. There is a gift shop selling unique items. Soils and soil amendments are also available along with a complete selection of pesticides. There is a lecture hall complete with a kitchen and restrooms that could accommodate our show. There is plenty of parking and the venue is located just minutes off Interstate 65. 'Petals from the Past' was on the tour list at the 2008 Dixie convention in Birmingham. Those who attended were well pleased with their visit. It would also be an economical selection for our show, too."

From our conversation, Michael mentioned that the rental of the lecture hall would be roughly \$500.00 for the 3 days we need for our show. We will be in discussions with "Petals from the Past" to see what our options are and to see if this will be a viable option for us. **Proposed dates for the 2025 show are September 11-13.** By having the show in early September, we are hoping not to interfere with any other shows. Also, we want to stay in September in the future, so that everyone can plan on attending a Dixie Show at the same time every year.

If anyone knows of a venue that can host a Dixie Show, please let me now, so that we can explore them as a viable option in the future. We would like to continue having shows for our members as in the past.

Robbie McMeel

JOIN THE



An AVSA membership offers the following benefits:

- Six full-color issues annually of the African Violet Magazine (AVM) filled with great growing information
- Regular columns include
 - In Search of New Violets
 - A featured Gesneriad
 - Registration of new cultivars
 - Coming Events

The AVM gives members continuous information on the latest developments in the African violet world. Commercial members advertise and sell the latest and most popular violets and products. Each issue contains commercial ads as well as an Index of Advertisers. Members have access to this information on AVSA's website www.africanvioletsocietyofamerica.org.

AVSA holds annual conventions in various regions of the country. All members may participate in these exciting events which feature judged shows open to all registered AVSA members. After judging, shows are open to the public. Informative presentations are made by experts in African violet culture. Commercial members also display their newest introductions and have booths where plants and plant-related products are sold.

Individual Membership in AVSA is \$35 per year. Register online or send check with contact information to:

AVSA
P.O. Box 22417
Beaumont, TX 77720

Last, but not least, SUPPORT AVSA. AVSA needs the support of its individual members, its affiliates and commercial members. **Donations can be made online or mailed to:** AVSA Office, P.O. Box 22417, Beaumont, TX 77720. Dixie encourages all Dixie

affiliates and members to support AVSA. AVSA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. All donations are tax-deductible. Donate online or by mail to: **AVSA Office, P.O. Box 22417, Beaumont TX 77720.**

2025 AVSA 79th CONVENTION

VIOLETS ARE
"Worlds of Fun"



KANSAS CITY • 2025

May 25 - June 1, 2025

Friday, May 30 – 9 am – 5 pm

Saturday, May 31 – 9 am – 3 pm

\$5 Entrance Fee

Doubletree by Hilton Kansas City

10100 College Boulevard

Overland Park (Kansas City), KS

BECOME A DIXIE MEMBER DIXIE AVS DUES

Individual	\$15.00 Yr
Individual Life	\$175.00
Affiliate Club	\$20.00 Yr.
Commercial	\$25.00 Yr.
Dual (2 at one address)	\$20.00 Yr.

Mail application (p.18) or a copy with
check payable to Dixie AVS to:

Johnnie Berry, Membership Secretary

287 Fennel Way, SW

Atlanta, GA 30331

johnniepearl@comcast.net



WELCOME TO DIXIE!

by Johnnie Berry,
Treasurer and Membership Chair
johnniepearl@comcast.net

Renewals

Margaret Madison
Hill country AV Center
Donna Becker
Leslie Boyd
Early Bird AVC
Travis Violets

DIXIE REGISTERED VARIETIES

Becky McMeel, Plant Registration Chair
beckymcmeel@gmail.com

REGISTRATION REPORT



Date registered-
10/3/2024

#1917 Comet's
Cameron (Leslie
Boyd)

Semi-double/double pansy. Blue with white puff
fantasy. Variegated dark green and cream. Heart
shaped slightly serrated quilted red backed. Semi-
Miniature.

Streptocarpus
'Polka Dot
Purple'



Dish Gardens. . .for Show or Just for Pleasure Part 3 Playing in the Dirt

by Betty Ferguson
bettyferguson@icloud.com

Dish Gardens! Where to even start?



Start with a plan!

A plan. Considering the plants and materials I have on hand, what kind of plan can I develop? What plants or container do I need? What kind of tree will I use? What scale will be appropriate? What are the schedule requirements if I am planning to exhibit my garden?

Rather than waiting until the last minute, I've learned to develop my plan far enough in advance to collect and grow out the plants I need or to purchase materials whenever I can find them.

I suggest trying to develop a pretty clear mental picture of your design. If you need to, you can change your plan when you start to work on your garden, but if you have no plan, you'll be placing and moving and placing and moving your plants until you've worn them out. It's best to put your idea on paper. Sketch what you have envisioned. Make it to scale. Do it in pencil because you will want to change it as you see flaws during the creation. Next place the real objects in the container temporarily and see if your idea takes

shape the way you envisioned it. Check that you have the three vantage points (close, middle, distant). Make needed changes to your plan as you go.

Triangles are a way to keep the viewer's eye from roaming outside the design. Use 30, 60, 90-degree triangles.

Odd numbers. Even numbers create symmetry, but odd numbers create interest. An odd number of details is more effective at capturing the viewer's gaze. Odd numbers force your eyes to move around the grouping—and by extension, the garden. That forced movement is the heart of visual interest. It's for that reason that a set of three is more appealing and memorable than a pair of twos.

Scale. Our gardens must be of a small scale, not a little segment of a life-sized forest or garden.

Container. Our containers must be shallow—two to three inches deep, per Bill Foster. Neutral colors are a must, but spray paint is cheap.

Tree or trees. Check out a book or read online about bonsai principles. Plant a forest or grow a root-over-rock style tree. Plan a transition between the tallest plant and the shorter plants. It may be a bush, a rock, or a stump. Our living material should be the tallest element in the design, not a rock or wood piece.

African violet. Your violet does not have to be the center of attention or even be placed in a prominent position in the setting. Try to find and grow micro mini violets. If you aren't expecting to have a very small mini in bloom, check with vendors in advance.

Rob's
Twinkle Blue
is a well-
behaved
small mini
often used in
miniature
gardens.



Accessories. Viewers love to find a tiny accessory hidden in a tree or a forest, but accessories are not necessary and can be distracting. If you use accessories, make sure they are in scale.

Soil. Try to keep any perlite from showing. I place root balls with perlite in the toe of a socklet or pantyhose. Peat moss, coco coir, fine leaf mold or composted bark fines keep the soil looking natural. Broken up black lava rock or charcoal can provide aeration. Western bonsai masters use Turface, the baked clay product used on baseball fields, and bark fines.

Rocks. Keep rocks consistent--the same color and smoothness. Rocks can simulate mountains in the background if they are not taller than your foreground tree(s). I enjoy a side hobby of rock collecting.

Moss. AVSA has ruled dried moss found at Michaels and Hobby Lobby to be taboo. So live moss it must be. I've found that fern moss holds up best in our indoor settings.



Fern moss can usually be found in shady, moist spots.

Muck: Muck is a wet mixture of peat and clay. It can be shaped to join rocks together, to build walls, to fix a rock planting in place, for forest plantings to keep the trees upright, and to hold bits of moss on stone. You can use potter's clay found at candle or soap making shops or a sodium bentonite product such as scoopable kitty litter with no additives. The Tractor Supply store brand does not have a scent or other additives. You can also buy food grade sodium bentonite at

health food stores or on Amazon. Look for sodium bentonite, not calcium bentonite which is a non-swelling bentonite.



A winning garden

Sodium bentonite swells to 15-18 times its dry size when wet. I've found that one part bentonite with 5 parts of "Black Kow" manure along with one part sphagnum moss cut into one-inch lengths makes a good working recipe. Worm castings can be added or substituted. When you mix a batch, do so in a sealable plastic bag and wear gloves.

Timing. In addition to beginning our planning process early, we should complete our design leaving enough time for the plants to adjust and for the garden to appear to be growing, not newly planted.

Places to purchase plants online.

Black Jungle

<https://www.blackjungleterrariumsupply.com/>

Meehan's Miniatures

<http://www.meehansminiatures.com/>

Glasshouse Works

<http://www.meehansminiatures.com/> (good website for identifying unnamed plants)

Almost Eden <https://almostedenplants.com/>

Gardino Nursery <http://gardinonursery.com/>

Weigert's Bonsai <https://wigertsbonsai.com/>

Logee's <https://www.logees.com/>

Kartuz Greenhouses <http://www.kartuz.com/>

Taylor Greenhouse

<http://taylorgreenhouses.com/>

Brussel's Bonsai <https://brusselsbonsai.com/>

(containers, rocks and a few tropical trees)

Violet Barn <https://www.violetbarn.com/>

Lyndon Lyon <http://lyndononlyon.com/>

ALABAMA STATE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

by Michael Jackson

superiorprintal@aol.com

The Early Bird Violet Club was dealt a blow last year, right after the Dixie show. The Birmingham Botanical Gardens, where our club holds its meeting, decided to close on Saturdays, our meeting day. Most of our members work and can only meet on Saturday. We had a meeting at a Starbucks, but decided that it wasn't appropriate for what we do. Finally, we started meeting at a local library.

Our club's October meeting program was on blossom stalk propagation. Each member was given blossom stalks dipped in Clonex, small pots, perlite, soil and a clear parfait cup with lid to make a miniature greenhouse. We had a great time learning this technique, following recommendations from an article on the subject in the AV magazine by Kit Love. We will follow up with each member to see the results.

Meanwhile, I have been working on securing a new venue for our Dixie Show. I sent information to Robbie McMeel about a nursery known as "Petals From the Past," which is located about an hour south of Birmingham. This nursery specializes in



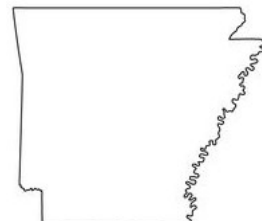
antique roses and perennials but I feel it would be a good venue for a Dixie show.

Please take a look at Robbie's article on pages 2-3 of this issue for more information about this venue.

ARKANSAS STATE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

by Betty Ferguson

bettywithviolets@gmail.com



Central Arkansas African Violet Society enjoyed a casual chat about our plant passion this month in lieu of a formal program. It's what we've been wanting to do for a good long while, but business meetings and programs seemed to always get in the way of our fun. Believe me, any chance we got we snuck in some extraneous chatter in the middle of what's supposed to be formal business and program time anyhow. And it so happened that three of us thought we were to bring snacks to this meeting. The snack table was absolutely covered with goodies. The vote was unanimous to get snacks first thing and settle into our "program" of chatting about our plants and showing off phone photos instead of starting with the business meeting, which we eventually crammed in along with still more food.

Business consisted of voting to continue our Christmas tradition of partying at our favorite bar-be-que place. We got more serious about deciding whether to have a spring show, since our fall show was postponed, or whether to just have a sale in the park, or to take a field trip to the Hot Spring County Master Gardeners' sale at the fairgrounds. It's a big to-do with lots of people, speakers, and PLANTS GALORE. Our club has been invited to sell plants there with no charge to us, not even for booth and table space.

Our club members have had a lot of life changes and family illnesses and deaths leading to fewer active members. Our surviving plants are not looking hopeful for show. Six months will give us time to produce a host of sale plants, however. The facilities where we've held shows in the past have raised their prices significantly, and even the pavilion in the park takes much of our sale proceeds. So, a field trip to the fairgrounds it will be.

FLORIDA STATE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

African Violet Council of Florida

by Jim Boyer, a/k/a King
James, AVCF President



2 HURRICANES & WE'RE STILL HERE

It's been a rough few weeks here, but we made it through. Some damage to our members. So far, I haven't heard of anything major or injuries. The real hurt came from Hurricane Helene. She came ashore near where our show was to be presented. Obviously, we had to postpone. After checking, it was determined that we had to cancel – couldn't get a venue. However, we're still kicking. We're already planning for our Spring meeting & Fall show.

Central Florida African Violet Society (Orlando)

President Jim King reports that Our members survived Hurricane Milton and all now have power and water restored and most of the removal of tree and other debris from their property. However; our violets may be a different story, after a week without power and water, some did not fare as well.

On a positive note our 2025 show has been approved and scheduled for February 28th and March 1st, in Orlando Florida. This year's theme is "Violets in Fairy Land." Our members are also looking forward to having Mary Lou Harden, from the Tampa AVS, as our guest speaker in November. Her Topic is Gesneriads and their family.



First Lakeland African Violet Society

President Mary Jane DiLorenzo reports that,

Our club (as many others) was very excited to host the African Violet Council of Florida's annual show. Unfortunately, hurricane Helena canceled those efforts. But, then we were preparing for the USF Botanical Gardens fall plant sale. That was also canceled because of Hurricane Milton. We are now preparing for the rescheduled USF sale and hoping for the best.

African Violet Council of Florida show to be held September 27-28 in Lakeland.

Heart of Jacksonville AVS

'Tis the season for violet events to resume! Heart of Jacksonville AVS meetings start in September and run through May. In preparation for the demand, we mix soil at the beginning of the season.

Thanks to Joann Freeman for making space in



her schedule and her garage to undertake this messy project. The recipe is basically half Fox Farm Ocean Forest Blend and half super coarse perlite. You have to be careful buying the perlite, as there is a big disparity in the sizing and labeling. This perlite is anywhere from 1/4 to 1/2 inch in diameter.

We mix it in a composter with the air holes taped up (it spins!). This actually works pretty good, but you must have somebody strong to pick it up and dump it. In this case, we had members Shipra Panda and Julie Rider for that! Several others helped bag and label gallon Ziplocks (Always use the name brand. The knock off brand's 'zip' does not always 'lock' very well!) We used 8 bags of Foxfarm and 2 bags perlite (4 cu ft each) and made 160 gallon bags and a few buckets (for repotting programs). Plus, everyone helping received one gallon bag for their effort! It was a win-win!





Tampa African Violet Society (TAVS)

Vice President Mary Lou Harden reports that the club has had some excellent programs during September and October. Dr. Jeff Smith, a botanist at Ball State University and regular columnist in the AV Magazine, discussed plant nutrients and Stephen Covolo-Hudson, AVSA Membership Chair and 2nd Best in Show Winner at AVSA's 2024 convention, discussed what it takes to grow and groom show plants.

We will, along with the Tampa Bay Gesneriad Society, participate in the Fall Plant Festival at the University of South Florida's Botanical Gardens November 9-10.

Tampa Bay Gesneriad Society (TBGS)

by Carol Ann Burrell (caburrell2@gmail.com)

The Tampa Bay Gesneriad Society members obviously don't understand the concept of "a lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer." Instead of taking time off after a busy spring season which included a major plant sale and a field trip to Selby Botanical Gardens for a behind the scenes private tour, preparations for the fall have started.

Two of the chapter members who were attending the Gesneriad Society Convention were tasked with the job of bringing back plant material for us to grow out for the University of Florida Botanical Gardens Fall Plant Sale. This was distributed to willing volunteers at the July meeting. The program for this meeting was on propagation and quite a few members' plants were given severe haircuts at the meeting. Everyone went home with baggies full of cuttings, leaves or rhizomes.

The hybrid format of both Zoom and in person meetings has been a big hit with members. It allows our out of state member and those who are not feeling well to stay involved and enjoy the virtual and live programs. The disadvantage is that they didn't get to take home any cuttings from this month's meeting!



My Dream
Holtkamp

GEORGIA STATE DIRECTOR'S REPORT by Phillis Hinkle pchinkle@bellsouth.net

Greetings from the Peach State,



We have been enjoying beautiful Fall weather. Helene did bring the rain we didn't get in August and September. I hope everyone is safe and doing well.

September 7, we celebrated 50 years of the African Violet Club of Greater Atlanta. Barbara McGrath and I have been members since 1974.



The first meetings were held in her home. Over these 50 years we have met in 6-7 different locations. There were the bountiful years of 60 + members and shows that could almost equal those of the AVSA. Then there were the very lean years with 8-10 members and not being able to support a show. We NEVER took a break, but continued the best we could.



Fifty years is quite an accomplishment -- not many clubs have this distinction. Today our club is strong, supporting new members, have well attended sales, and AVSA judged shows. We are fortunate to have members who have great tech skills which enhance every aspect of our club. I've attached several pictures of our celebration, show and sale. We wish a long healthy life to all the Dixie clubs.

LOUISIANA DIRECTOR'S REPORT November 2024

by Becky McMeel
beckymcmeel@gmail.com



Louisiana Lagniappe AVS

Happy Fall, Y'all! Here's hoping that storm season is over and DONE! Enough already, Mother Nature! Are y'all enjoying the cooler temperatures? We, way down south, surely are! The August meeting of LLAWS was cancelled due to various reasons. There was travelling, illness and surgeries, so members decided it wasn't worth it to meet with 3 people.

Louisiana Lagniappe met in September and began finalizing details for their November show. Members are busy growing and grooming to show and sell, gathering items for the judge's ditty bags, and planning the meal for the luncheon after the show is judged.



RS Zimnyi Tvesok (Winter Flower)
by Becky McMeel

Members met in October for one last time before the show, which will be November 16th, 2024, at the Baton Rouge Garden Center on Independence Boulevard, from 1 to 5 pm. They discussed how many plants they would have for the show, and it looks like 90 to 100 plants plus

designs. The theme is: LLA VS Presents "Thankful for Violets". If you are in the area, stop by!



That is it for now!

Take time to enjoy the gift of violets by growing and sharing!

Acadiana African Violet Society (AAVS)

by Chris Brooks

brookscj@hotmail.com

Acadiana African Violet Society had an enjoyable summer and early fall season. We have been preparing for a display this fall by going through the calendar to grow a plant for show. We started the series in June by having a refresher on the basics of African violet care. In July we took a birds-eye view of the entire "Growing to Show" calendar and how to determine the dates for each item on the calendar.

August covered the first month of the show calendar and what would need to be done before the next monthly meeting. The first month of the show calendar is a busy one, so we took the full meeting to cover all that needed to be done and did not have a gardening topic.

In September we covered the next month of the show calendar and talked about garden weed identification with a "weed show and tell."

October covered the last month of the show calendar, planning for the November display, and we looked at and discussed a slide show of fall annuals.

We are looking forward to our little display at our November meeting. We have lots of members who are new to growing African violets and this will be their first low stress foray into growing for show. Fingers crossed for a fun and educational display!

TENNESSEE STATE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

by Marian Zoller

marigregz@gmail.com



On behalf of **The Memphis African Violet Society**, member Geneva Stagg reports that "we did have a show in April this year. The Theme was 'Let the Good Times Roll.' It has been more difficult since we don't have that many growers now.

However, we are still meeting. We had a fall sale in September and added a new member this month. We are looking forward to our annual Christmas lunch/dirty Santa.

I am excited to report that I am now a master judge!"

DIXIE AVS AFFILIATES REPORT 4th Quarter 2024

by Robbie McMeel

rmcmeel@bellsouth.net

I hope that all is going well with all members and clubs. I hope and pray that all of our members in Florida have been safe and did not have any damages from the 2 hurricanes that hit their state. Mother Nature has not been kind to them this year.

As we are now finally starting to cool down a bit, fall shows will soon begin. Our show here in Louisiana will be in November and we are looking forward to seeing everyone again. I would like to wish everyone a Very Happy and Safe Holiday season and look forward to seeing a lot of you in upcoming shows and events.

I have not been getting too many requests for the Dixie Class ribbons, which is available to all Dixie affiliates. Please let your show chairs that these are available for the nominal cost of \$10.00 for the set. This cost is to cover shipping of the ribbons to get them to you. **As a reminder, clubs no longer need to mail in their show schedule to me.** Now that most clubs have capability of

email, that would be fine, This eliminates additional cost and time.

I hope that we will have a great showing of Dixie Registered Plants in the collections. If you don't have the Dixie Ribbons, please contact me, so that a set can be sent to your show chairs. Dixie has rosettes for Best and 2nd Best Standard Collection and Best and 2nd Best Collection in the Semi/Miniature Collection. In the future, please try to grow Dixie Collections for both. There are a lot of great Dixie registered plants to choose from. To find out what they are, go to Dixie's website and there is a PDF file with all of the Dixie registered plants. If you are unable to get this list on the website, please let me know and I will be more than happy to get you a list in the mail. If there is any plant that you would like to show in a Dixie class and it has not been registered with Dixie, please contact me and we will see what can be done with getting the plant registered.

If any affiliate has any questions or suggestions regarding anything, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Let's keep Dixie in all of our shows.

Respectfully and keep up the good growing,

Robbie McMeel
DAVS Affiliates Chair

ROSETTES AVAILABLE

BALTIMORE AFRICAN VIOLET CLUB BEST FANTASY ROSETTE. The Baltimore African Violet Club is offering a rosette for the Best Fantasy in any MAAVS or AVSA affiliate show. Send request and a check for \$5 payable to

Baltimore African Violet Club
Carolyn Epstein
14317 Yosemite Court
Rockville, MD 20853

OPTIMARA BEST OF SHOW ROSETTE FOR OPTIMARA & RHAPSODIE. To order this rosette and a sample kit of Optimara products, send your request to:

Optimara
Attn: Best of Show Rosette
P.O. Box 78565
Nashville, TN 37207
sales@optimara.com

Include your name, name of the AVSA-affiliated club holding the show, dates of the show, your complete address (NO P.O. Boxes), and daytime phone number.



NEXT VIRTUAL CIRCLE
November 24, 2024
3 to 4 pm Central
(Note: You must be an AVSA Member to participate.)

**“From a Leaf to a Show Plant:
The How-To’s of Growing Your
Own Winner”**
By Kurt Jablonski



Kurt Jablonski

AVSA has written the following about Kurt:

"Kurt has proven himself to be one of the most formidable growers in the nation, especially of large standards, like his 'Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler' which won 2nd Best in Show at the 2017 AVSA Convention in Orlando. But it was his trailer 'Rob's Boolaroo' which won Best in Show and gave Kurt his first ever win at the AVSA national show.

Kurt's advice to beginner and experienced growers alike is the same: "Grow what excites and intrigues you. You'll pay more attention to your plants, and grow better ones as a result!"

Kurt is known for growing large African violets, and ALL of his Best in Show winners were plants he grew from a leaf.

Please put the November Virtual Circle on your calendar, and join other AVSA members as Kurt presents "From a Leaf to a Show Plant" and answers your questions about growing!

DAVS AWARDS COMMITTEE

Marian & Greg Zoller
(marigregz@gmail.com)

We're now accepting donations for our 2025 show. Please send your donation to:

DAVS Awards
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Sinningia 'White Sprite'

the other Gesneriads:

by Barbara Matthews
(Reprinted from a program given to the
Tampa Bay Gesneriad Society)

MEET THE ROOTS FAMILY: TOMMY TUBER RHONDA RHIZOME FELICITY FIBROUS-ROOTED

I'd like to tell you about my family, **The Tubers**. You may be more familiar with our distant cousins, The Bulbs, a shapely bunch with slender necks that plants grow out of in the Spring. We are nicely rounded and flat on top. That's where we grow out our green shoots that become flowering plants. Bulbs often divide themselves into small bunches – we tubers store up our food and get fatter and fatter. You could call us a jolly bunch. We can grow in pots, indoors or outside, and some of us will grow right in your garden. The more space you give us, the bigger we will grow.

The Tuber Clan relatives are Sinningias and Chrysothemis.

Sinningias are the busiest. They have many aunts, uncles and cousins in different sizes (miniature and large), and who have different shapes and colors of



blossoms. Chrysothemis doesn't have as much fun as Sinningia. He is more stately, growing tall and full with beautiful blooms. He considers himself the peacock of the family, but people don't always recognize him.

The black sheep in the family are the Nautilocalyx. They can be very beautiful, but some of them cannot make up their minds about whether or not they want to be tubers. Some of them even want their own steamy living quarters

and never stick their noses outside. Talk about fussy! Oh well, we love them anyway.

We tubers occasionally need to take naps. We shed our leaves before we go to sleep, but after a while, we wake up again and put on a better show than before. Of course, every family has a few insomniacs who just carry on all year long.

Well, I just tell you that my neighbors, The Tubers, are very nice, but they are rather plain folks until they are green and growing. Now just take a look at my family, **The Rhizomes**. We tend to be long and skinny, of course, even though we also store up food. Some people call us scaly rhizomes. Yeech! I prefer the description “looks like a miniature pinecone.” MUCH better, don’t you think? The best part is that we are often nicely colored, similar to the blooms that we produce. We are also very generous. We let you break us into pieces and will give you a new plant from every piece, even the tiniest scale! There’s that word again. . .but I assure you that we cannot swim!



Rhizomes

I have a lot of relatives of all sizes, shapes and colors. Some of us sleep all winter, then get busy in the Spring. The early birds are Achimenes. There are so many of them that I can’t begin to count them all. They like to live outside in hanging pots. They are a mischievous bunch that will go visiting in their neighbor’s pot or even jump into your garden if you give them the chance. Definitely the friendly type.

The Gloxinias usually wake up next, but they tend to dilly-dally for a while before they get to work. They’d rather be in pots in your garden or on your patio. When they do decide to bloom, you will see that it was worth the wait. Don’t even THINK

about buying one at the grocery store. Those plants that are called “gloxinias” are actually a part of The Tuber family, not mine. Not that they aren’t nice and all that, but – you know – we rhizomes have to stick together.

The lazy bones are the Eucodonias who don’t get up until mid-summer. They’ll move outside in hanging baskets and then put on a great show until late fall after the Achimenes have gone back to bed. We rhizomes take great pride in ourselves, and we are sooooo easy to live with. All that fresh air makes us sleepy again. Then, while we are storing up food, our foliage turns brown. Just cut it off and put us away in our pots until spring, and we stay snug and cozy.

The other side of the family hardly ever sleeps. The Kohlerias and Smithianthas are fancy dressers who like to show off their striking foliage and unusually handsome blooms. Well, now I have hurt the other ones’ feelings. Everyone in my family has beautiful blooms. Achimenes has many different colors, too. There, does everybody feel better now?

And of course we have some shy ones who like to live quietly. Phinea is very tiny and lives in a little glass house. I don’t know Diastema, Koellikeria, Niphea or Percea very well, but they don’t really mind because, after all, “Everybody Loves Rhizomes!”

My, my, my! That Rhonda should look over here at us and she’d find out what a big family REALLY is! Why, I have so many relatives that we haven’t even found them all yet. And, honey, we’re so modest that you’ve seen us around and haven’t recognized us. You want to talk about loveable? Some of US have pet names! Goldfish plant, lipstick plant, chocolate soldier, for instance. Does that sound familiar? And just like our cousins, the African violets, we sometimes hang out in nurseries and garden stores. Some of our ancestors came from the tropics and some from the cold mountain regions of China. Now we’ve become your friendly neighborhood houseplants.

Take Alsobia or Nematanthus, for example. They like to be outside and don’t mind cold weather as long as their toes don’t freeze. Chirita and Streptocarpus are happiest when they’re a little cool. Aeschynanthus and Columnea like it

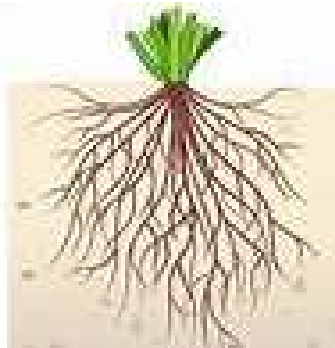
outside when the weather is a bit warmer. Episcias want to be toasty warm with lots of moist air to breathe. There are some others that are more particular about how they live.

Alsobia
dianthiflora



Generally they'd rather be with folks who have greenhouses and are willing to cater to their whims.

The Fibrous-Rooted Family comes in all shapes and sizes, even within their own branches. Alsobias can have either tiny or medium-sized leaves, but they all agree on frilly white blooms.



Nematanthus think 'variety is the spice of life.' Some have light green leaves, a few are two-tone and the rest proudly display shiny, bright green foliage. Unusual blooms in pink, red, orange, or even stripes, complete the picture.

I think Chiritas and Streptocarpus are interesting. Chiritas can have plain or fancy leaves that grow out from a main stalk and form a round plant.

Streptocarpus grow long, flat leaves without a main stalk. Both have showy blossoms that stand up high about the leaves on slender stems. The curious thing about Streps (their nickname) is that their



bloom stems grow from the center of each leaf, down close to the plant. Isn't that odd!?

Aeschynanthus and Columnea concentrate on spectacular blossoms. Aeschynanthus puts its blooms in red or multicolored bunches at the end of long branches. Columnea goes all out! The long, trailing ranches burst into large, upright blossoms down the entire length, in shades of red, yellow and orange that are sometimes mixed together on one bloom.

You gotta love Episcias! They don't try very hard to bloom because they are so busy growing beautiful leaves in eye-catching colors. In hanging baskets with bright light and warm, moist air, they stretch out to become raving beauties. The very delicate pink ones want to be pampered in glass-enclosed luxury. The silver-leaves miniatures are just precious!

My friends and I are off to Ecuador to try to find some more of my relatives. It's very exciting!

Love.Felicity

** Chirita had an identity crisis and is now called Primulina.

Upcoming Events

February 21-22, 2025 - Tampa AVS Annual Show, "Violets Take a European Holiday," Temple Terrace United Methodist Church, 5030 E. Busch Blvd., Tampa, FL 33617.

May 30-31, 2025 - AVSA 79th Annual Convention & Show, "Violets are Worlds of Fun," Double Tree by Hilton, Kansas City-Overland Park.

June 29-July 5, 2025 - "Gesneriads Gather in the Garden State" The Gesneriad Society's 68th Annual Convention Sheraton Parsippany Hotel 199 Smith Road, Parsippany, NJ

YOU CAN GROW BEAUTIFUL AFRICAN VIOLETS FROM LEAVES*

African violets can be propagated easily from leaf cuttings. It often takes 6 to 9 months to get flowering plants. Roots normally appear at the petiole base in 3 to 4 weeks under good conditions and leaves of the new plants appear at the medium surface 3 to 4 weeks after root formation. Keeping them evenly moist, not too wet and not dry, is important to prevent rotting the leaf. Once rooted (a gentle tug will tell), keep the medium damp. Just be patient, as time may vary depending on conditions.

Rooting African Violet Leaf Cuttings.

1. Choose a leaf that is fresh and fairly young but full size. Healthy, vigorous leaves will root quickly. If leaves are limp from being in a plastic bag, submerging them in warm water for several hours is very beneficial and usually perks them right up. Then cutting at a fresh angle and planting in an enclosed container really makes a difference. Keeping them evenly moist is important to prevent rotting.
2. Cut the stem at an angle, leaving a stem below the leaves that is about 1-inch long.
3. Fill a small pot (with drainage holes) with a very light potting mix. Half vermiculite and half perlite works well.
4. Set the leaf into the prepared pot at an angle, and not too deep. Water and allow the excess moisture to drain away. Do not fertilize yet or you may burn the tender roots that develop.
5. Place the potted leaf in a clear plastic bag (zip-loc bags work well) and seal it tightly closed. You may wish to blow into the bag as it is sealed to puff it up with air.
6. Set the leaf in a bright location out of direct sunlight. It normally takes about one month for the leaf to root and another month for the plantlets to appear. The clump of plants that develop will need to be divided when the leaves are about the size of a dime. Keep the growing medium damp until the leaves of the new plantlets push up above the soil. Once plantlets appear, water them just like your mature plants. After each plantlet has 4 or 5 leaves, remove the leaf and all the attached plantlets. Then plant each of the

separated plantlets in its own small pot. Do not separate variegated varieties from the mother leaf while they are still all white. They need the green chlorophyll to sustain them.

Dividing a Leaf Clump

1. Remove the leaf clump from the pot.
2. Gently work the soil away from the roots until the small plants can be separated. Usually they will fall away from one another as the soil is removed. Look for each plant to have a small rosette of leaves, often attached to a main stem, with some roots at the bottom. Leaves often produce 5 or more plantlets.
3. Prepare a small pot (2" diameter, such as a Solo plastic bathroom cup with a hole poked in the bottom) for each small plant. Fill the pot with very light potting mix that has been pre-moistened. If you mix your own (recommended), use one part peat moss, one part vermiculite and one part perlite. Do not pack down the soil.
4. Make a small indentation in the surface of the potting mix using a pencil or a finger. Set the plant into the indentation and gently move the potting mix to stabilize the plant.
5. Water and allow the excess to drain away. Set the young plants inside a clear plastic bag or plastic container and seal tightly closed once again. Set in a bright location away from direct sunlight.
6. In about a month, the plants will be well rooted and beginning to show mature growth. Open the container gradually over a period of 2 days to allow the plant to adapt to lower humidity. After this transitional period, your violet may be set in any bright location and watered on a regular schedule.

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From the Editor. . .Mary Lou Harden
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Hello, Dixie Members and Friends,

Here is your 4th Quarter issue of *The Dixie News*. Thanks to everyone who has sent club news, articles and photos. YOU are what make Dixie's newsletter outstanding!

As you know, Dixie is planning another fall show and we're looking forward to meeting again. Be sure to read Robbie McMeel's article about the convention/show, as well as the daily schedule on page 2.

Please continue to promote Dixie to your violet and gesneriad friends and together, let's work toward getting new members for Dixie. Many of our members grow not only African violets, but lots of the other Gesneriads. So, there's something for everyone in Dixie!

I send to each one of you God's blessings and wish you and your families and friends a blessed Thanksgiving and a beautiful and joyous Christmas and a Happy New Year!

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