



THE DIXIE NEWS

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

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

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

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President's Message

By Betty Ferguson

bettywithviolets@gmail.com



A hot, steamy down-south howdy to y'all this time!

Our episcias love it. How about you? Me? I'm thankful to have air conditioning. I remember the good ol' days when we were already sweaty and our hairdo a mess by the time we got to wherever we were going. The car seats almost blistered our bottoms, our hair blew in the wind from the car windows, and deo just didn't do a very good job back then. Neither did the funeral home fans that littered pews and meeting places.

My mom's variegated African violets lost their variegation, but we didn't know at that time that temperature affects the variegation. In the late '50s and early '60s she had a collection of episcias, too. They fared much better in our hot "back room" nursery than the violets did.

I remember my first beautiful streptocarpus plants back about 2001. They were luxurious, green and full of flowers. That is, they fit that description until I decided they'd love the fresh summer air in my breezeway and moved them out there onto

shelves, under lights. Good thing streptocarpus plants are fairly easy to come by!

There's a lot to know about African violets and their gesneriad cousins—what they like and what they don't like, and I still learn from other growers. That's one of the reasons I enjoy our Dixie conventions so much. This year's mini convention will be October 17-19, again at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens. Our theme is, "Treasures in Grandma's Attic." You probably don't want to be crawling around in your granny's attic for real this time of the year, but antique and junk stores are fun places for collecting inexpensive items from the past for our designs and African violets in unusual or decorative containers. Be sure to give your vintage violets and species extra care for the show, too. And don't forget about items for our raffle

Robbie will have our schedule approved soon and Mary Lou will be sending it out. We still need volunteers for the following chair and committee positions: publicity, raffle, educational exhibit, entries, placement, show plant sales, and staging. Please figure out where your talents, skill or just plain interest fit into these needs and let Robbie (985) 855-0439 or mcmeel@bellsouth.net or Becky (985) 688-5451 or beckymcmeel@gmail.com asap.

A feature of our 2024 convention will be the installation of our new officers. Would you be interested in presenting a workshop for us? We'll have a hospitality room this time, so be thinking about your favorite yummy treats to bring. I hope to see every one of you there!

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| President's Message – Betty Ferguson | 1 |
| Contents | 2 |
| Renew Your Membership | 2 |
| Update on Dixie Show 2024 and Show | |
| Agenda – Robbie McMeel | 2 |
| AVSA Information and Convention News | 3 |
| Become a Dixie Member | 3 |
| Georgia State Director's Report-Phillis Hinkle | 4 |
| Welcome to Dixie! – Johnnie Berry | 5 |
| Dixie Registered Varieties – Becky McMeel | 5 |
| Designer's Corner – Dish Gardens – | |
| Part 2 - Betty Ferguson | 5 |
| Arkansas State Director's Report - | |
| Betty Ferguson | 8 |
| Florida State Director's Report | 9 |
| Louisiana State Director's Report – | |
| Becky McMeel | 11 |
| Tennessee State Director's Report – | |
| Marian Zoller | 12 |
| Dixie AVS Affiliates – Robbie McMeel | 12 |
| Best in Design Dixie 2023 – Phillis Hinkle | 13 |
| Rosettes Available | 13 |
| AVSA Virtual Circle – Robbie McMeel | 14 |
| DAVS Awards – Greg Zoller | 14 |
| Fun Guy Talks About "Fungi" – | |
| Christopher Paiva | 15 |
| The Other Gesneriads: Smithiantha | 16 |
| Where to Grow African Violets | 17 |
| Upcoming Events | 17 |
| DAVS Membership Application | 18 |
| DAVS Officers | 18 |
| DAVS State Directors | 18 |
| Publication Deadlines | 19 |
| Standing Committees | 19 |
| From the Editor – Mary Lou Harden | 19 |
| Special Committees | 19 |
| Commercial Members | 19 |
| Commercial Ads | 20 |

DON'T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP! (Membership Application on p. 18)

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

"TREASURES IN GRANDMA'S ATTIC" UPDATE ON THE DIXIE SHOW FOR 2024

by Robbie McMeel
rmcmeel@bellsouth.net

TO ALL DIXIE MEMBERS:

Below is the proposed agenda for the show. As most know, this will not be a convention as we have had in the past. The show will be held at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens in Birmingham, AL. Parking is free and admission to the gardens is free also. We will be posting local hotels and eateries that are in close proximity to the gardens. We will need help from all of our members to make this show happen. We hope to see many members participate in this show, so that we can continue having Dixie shows in the future. The Show Schedule will be the same as in the past, so that you can get your plants ready accordingly. Once the show schedule has been approved by AVSA, we will send it out in an email to all and it will be posted on the website.

DAVS 2024 SHOW AGENDA FOR MEMBERS

Thursday, October 17, 2024

8 a.m. – 4 p.m. – Entries/Classification Opens

(Note: Due to our time constraints registration will close promptly at 4 p.m. Anyone who has 10 or more plants to register needs to be in the registration area no later than 2 p.m.)

8 a.m. – 4 p.m. - Commercial Sales Set-Up

8:30 a.m. – 9 p.m. - Design Exhibitors work on designs until 9 p.m.

Time to be Determined - DAVS Board Meeting

Friday, October 18, 2024

7 a.m. – 8 a.m. - Exhibitors complete designs

8 a.m. – 9 a.m. - Instructions to Judges/Clerks

9 a.m. – 12 Noon - Show Judging

1 p.m. - Show opens to members and public

9 a.m. – 12 Noon - Raffle Open (If applicable)

8 a.m. – 5 p.m. - Plant Sales Open

1 p.m. – 3 pm – Hospitality Room Open

Saturday, October 19, 2024

8 a.m. – 3 p.m. - Show opens to members and public

9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Raffle Open (If applicable)
 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. **DAVS ANNUAL MEETING**
 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. - Plant Sales Open
 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. - Hospitality Room Open

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.**

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.africanvioletsofamerica.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:

2025 AVSA 79th CONVENTION



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

GEORGIA STATE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

by Phillis Hinkle
pchinkle@bellsouth.net



Greetings from the Peach State

I hope everyone has enjoyed your summer so far. Ours has been hot with no rain and then continuous rain. The peaches have been delicious this year. A mid-March freeze last year devastated the crop. This year they made up for it. The AVCGA is thriving. Several new members have stepped up and shaken the dust off this 50-year-old club. One member has redone and expanded our Facebook page exponentially. Others have pitched in to expand the focus of our meetings and bring in many new and exciting ideas.



One suggestion was to have a plant sale only as our May meeting. We had never tried it before. Previously we only had plant sales with shows.



The pictures included were from that day. Everyone jumped in and it was a rousing success.



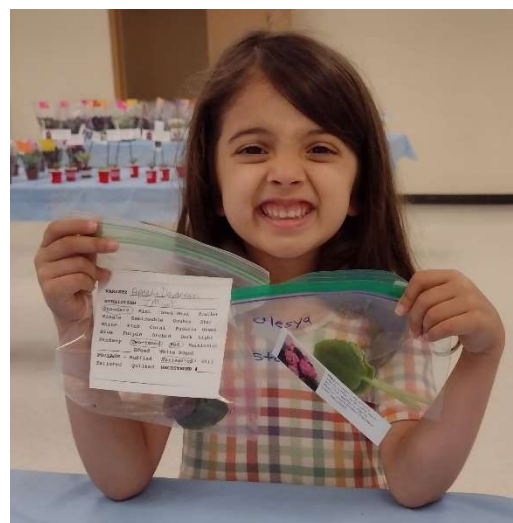
Plant Sale



Cutest customer!

Future grower!

A smiling future AV grower



September we will have our 50th Anniversary Celebration. Due to the uncertainty of other

events, we were not able to pull off a Standard AVSA show. There just wasn't enough time. We will celebrate with a modified show, in house judging, and plant sale.

Last, but not least I would like to recognize Johnnie Berry who received the Mabel and Glenn Hudson award for Outstanding Affiliate Leadership. This was presented at the AVSA Convention in Phoenix. Several Dixie members were there to celebrate with Johnnie. This award was much deserved! We love our Johnnie Berry.

Happy Growing,

Phillis Hinkle



Hunter's Racy
Lacy

DIXIE REGISTERED VARIETIES

Becky McMeel, Plant Registration Chair
beckymcmeel@gmail.com

1916 SHARON GARTNER

(Sacco/Gartner)

Single white stickite
frilled pansy/fuchsia
thumb prints, white
puff fantasy, variable
fuchsia on upper
petals. Medium green
heart-shaped,
quilted, wavy,
serrated. Small
Standard.



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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

Jillian Cain
Tede Fleming
Jean M. Ross
Nasa Area AVS
Keitha Graves
Tampa Bay Gesneriad Society

DESIGNER'S CORNER

DISH GARDENS FOR SHOW. . . OR JUST FOR PLEASURE

PART 2, THE ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES

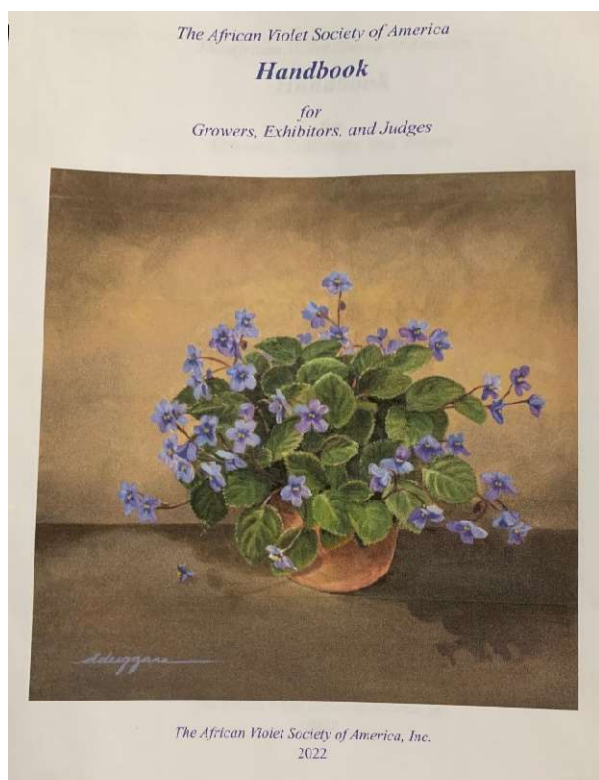
by Betty Ferguson
bettyferguson@icloud.com

Every design is made of basic elements that are then combined and built into a structure to ultimately communicate a message. (Envato Tuts)

After reading Part 1 of this series, you know that our AVSA rules and expectations for dish gardens vary from those of bonsai, penjing, and saikei. If we African violet designers were to employ a large rock in our dish garden that is

taller than any of our greenery, as in many penjing landscapes, the judges might develop a belly ache. Yet the study of the Asian landscape gardens can inspire us and lend concepts of design we can apply within our AVSA rules.

Continuing the history of our own dish gardens and closer to home, the first garden club of America was begun in 1891 by The Ladies Garden Club of Athens, Georgia. The society, Garden Club of American (GCA), was officially founded in 1913. In 1935 members of the Garden Club of America were invited to Japan by Prince Iyesata Tokugawa. One stop on their tour was to the Shinjuku Imperial Gardens, where they may have viewed landscape gardens. I was unable to find when dish gardens were introduced into GSA shows, but they are currently a part of their shows.



AVSA was organized in 1946, also in Georgia. When I asked Bill Foster about the history of dish gardens in our shows, he replied:

Dish Gardens have been a part of AVSA for as long as I have. I have been in AVSA since the early '70s. At that time, we had dish gardens described as a planting in any open type container planted in soil. It could be planted in clear

glass, dishes or any other type of container, but could not have a cover. Sometime in the early '80s it changed to a shallow container. I have misplaced, stored or loaned and never gotten some of my handbooks back. But I do know it was changed to "shallow" in the early 80's.

RULES:

Before we get to the point of playing in the dirt (Part 3) and hopefully learning new fun stuff, let's get the boring, confining, often arbitrary judges' manual rules out of the way.

Page 69 of our AVSA handbook for growers, exhibitors says, "Container gardens are miniature scenes in which one or more blooming African violet plants, along with other plants, are actually planted and growing in the container.

"Dish gardens are plantings in shallow, dish-like containers.

"Shallow" is defined as that type of dish in which the preponderance of the foliage extends above the rim of the dish... Thus, a bonsai dish and a long-stemmed compote would both qualify as dish garden containers. The dish shall not have multiple or divided planting areas." Nor be covered. Nor is cut material permitted.

Preponderance: I needed to look up this big word to describe it accurately. It is the quality of being greater in weight, force, influence, greater part, mass, bulk, weight, lion's share, greater numbers, extensiveness. A superiority in numbers or amount.

Along with other plants. At least three varieties are required in garden shows, and their rule seems to be accepted for AVSA gardens.

Multiple or divided planting areas. The dish itself must not be divided into sections.

Shallow: Per Bill Foster, "Most are planted in plant saucers, bonsai dishes, etc. Most of mine have been bought from stores like Marshall's or Burlington. I have a whole assortment of baking dishes I have found at places like that. You can always spray paint a dish that is not the right

color. I would say “shallow” is in the range of 2 to 3 inches deep. They really should be miniature.”



How could this designer have improved his/her design?

Scale of points

INTERPRETIVE FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS and INTERPRETIVE PLANT ARRANGEMENTS

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Design..... | 40 points |
| Interpretation of schedule..... | 15 points |
| Distinction and originality..... | 15 points |
| Suitability of materials..... | 10 points |
| Relationship of materials..... | 10 points |
| Condition of materials..... | 10 points |

I'll leave the review of the elements and principles of design, which also apply to gardens, to you, but I would like to comment on a few that are especially important for garden designs.

Line is the visual path the eye follows in viewing a design. One rule an artist learns is to keep the viewer's eye within the picture or design. Keep the eye moving from one element to another and another rather than allowing it to wander outside the frame. For example, a photographer will bring the stream into the frame from a corner and will allow it to wind and to gently exit a corner rather than making a straight line from center point to center point. Yet, as our manual states, “lines

have achieved status as symbols with the capacity to arouse emotional responses in the viewer. Vertical lines suggest stateliness and strength. Horizontal lines suggest rest, calm. Circles or crescents represent softness and femininity.”



Space involves total space, occupied space (by the design elements) and unoccupied space or void. Unoccupied space is as important as occupied space because it allows a place for the eye to rest or for the birds to fly through.

Proportion and Scale. When you plan your garden, determine the size of a human in the picture in proportion to the trees, to the pond, to the African violet. Always use the smallest violet you can find. You may have heard Pat Hancock criticize a garden because in the scale depicted the African violet would be the size of a house. Since tree leaves come in so many different sizes, from the 1/4" individual leaves on some legume family trees to huge fig leaves, we're allowed a bit more variance there, but we should keep our tree leaf size in consideration, too. If we use accessories, they should also be in scale to avoid having a house-sized cow or duck.

Depth of view. The planting is done to scale as much as possible. Then increased depth of view is created with optical illusions such as those

used in a stage setting. Three vantage points—close, middle, and distant are used to create interest and personal involvement. When we view distant mountains or look across the lake, we find that objects in the distance tend to be more pastel blue and to appear smaller than the same objects nearby.



The judges thought this design should have had intermediary plant material next to the tree. I thought the low branches were sufficient. How would you have judged it?

Interest. An unpredictable element in an otherwise dull landscape can make it interesting. Sometimes this is even viewed as a flaw or an imperfection. It is the imperfection that grabs the eye and draws one into the scene, but it is what raises the “whole” from a nice landscape to something of particular interest--the gnarled oak tree with its battle scars versus the youthful tree, a decaying fallen log, or a windblown effect.

As you mentally design your next dish garden, whether for show or just to enjoy at home, first decide what message you want to create and then consider how you can use the principles and elements of design to create that effect.



The smooth, weathered rocks in this garden along with the rounded edges of the pot and the flowers on the tree lend a feminine softness and an air of peace and tranquility to the design

ARKANSAS STATE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

by Betty Ferguson
bettywithviolets@gmail.com



Central Arkansas African Violet Society (CAAVS) continues to meet on the second Saturday of the month at 1:00 p.m. One of the best parts of our meetings are the snacks, but we have some great, informative presentations, too. In May, Danny Tidwell spoke to the club about streptocarpus care and project plants were distributed. In June Diane Riley and Mariella Major provided the program on pruning trailing African violets. Our July meeting included a question-and-answer program with the focus turning out to be on cyclamen mites and their control.

Discussion in the business portion of the July meeting involved consideration of whether members will attend our scheduled October 18-

19 show, contribute show and sale plants and designs, and be responsible for chairperson responsibilities. Two of our regular members won't be able to attend. (I'll be attending our Dixie convention, which is also scheduled for that weekend.) Other members in attendance reported being very low on showable plants or having sick plants. Our Vice President posted a survey on our CAAVS Facebook page asking for all members' feedback.



CAAVS members attending our July meeting gather around our raffle table.



Hunter's
Chicadee
Chirps

FLORIDA STATE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

African Violet Council of Florida

Newly elected President of The African Violet Council of Florida (AVCF), Jim Boyer, aka "King James," says

LOOK OUT – WE'RE BAAACCCKKK!!!!!!!

AVCF is having their 1st show since the pandemic and it promises to be a great one – thanks to all

the work that Bobbi Johannsen and Cathy Carter (Show Co-chairpersons) and Mary Jane DeLorenzo (Convention Chairperson) have ALREADY put in. All individual members are eligible to enter. Additionally, non-members who are members of an affiliated club may also enter. However, to sell sale plants you must be an individual member.

The Show will be held at:

Christ Lutheran Church
2715 Lakeland Hills Blvd
Lakeland, FL 33805

In addition to the show, we will be holding our Fall meeting. This is a great chance to visit with friends from around the state – AND, hopefully, make some new ones. We are looking forward to seeing you there. If you have questions, please email me at Jasb39@gmail.com

Jim Boyer, President
African Violet Council of Florida

Central Florida African Violet Society (Orlando)

President Jim King reports that CFAVS elected the following new officers: President, Jim King; Vice-President, Linda Price; Secretary, Dennis Brooks; and Treasurer, Tammy Cambre. Our officers, who will serve a two-year term also constitute the CFAVSs Executive Board.

Pam King was appointed by Past President Linda Price as our Show Chairperson for 2025 and Elvie Blakely will serve as her assistant chairperson. The first order of business for the new Show Chairperson was setting and confirming the dates for our 2025 show. Beardall Senior Center will host our show on Friday February 28th and March 1st.

First Lakeland African Violet Society

President Mary Jane DiLorenzo reports that, since we had many members leaving for the summer, we decided not to meet in June and July. August we will begin final preparation for the African Violet Council of Florida show to be held September 27-28 in Lakeland.

Heart of Jacksonville AVS

Sandi Mynatt reports that Heart of Jacksonville African Violet Society wrapped up the season

with some great programs. We had a program on Petrocosmeas in April. Bobbi Johannsen and Beverly Stormoen felt that the Petrocosmea genus is underappreciated, especially at shows. The two of them grew enough Petrocosmea babies (particularly Pet. Momo) to hand out at the April meeting and wanted ALL the members to have a chance to grow them. Everyone got at least one, and more likely two or three! Let's hope we get some Petrocosmea aficionados from this!



Pet babies ready to go

We had a wonderful end-of-season party -- a patriotic themed potluck event featuring a fantastic meal and great conversations. Notice the violet decorated cupcakes brought to the event! This was the end of a fantastic year of activities and programs enjoyed by all.



The food was good!

We are looking forward to the coming season of projects and educational programs, currently in the planning stages. Sneak preview:

presentations will be given on "Violets Down Under" which will focus on what is happening below the soil level of our plants. ALSO, we will be having a hands-on event creating "Heavenly Dish Gardens" which, hopefully, will be showcased in our Spring event. Another program will feature tips on lighting; the how-to basics that we all need to know.

Several events will be held at remote locations where members will set up a booth and talk to people about our club, as well as sell many beautiful plants we've grown. It promises to be an exciting year as our membership grows and thrives. We are so proud of our active members and their enthusiasm to make our club the very best.



Bobbi hugs the baker of these cupcakes!

Tampa African Violet Society (TAVS)

Vice President Mary Lou Harden reports that the club has had some excellent programs during July and August. Our night meetings are by Zoom and in July we learned all about "The Magic of Moss" by Mark Romansky of Henderson, Nevada. In August we enjoyed "Adventures in Hybridizing" by Ken Muzalewski of Hunter's Violets in Carrollton, Texas. In September we will be attending and participating in the African Violet

Council of Florida's annual convention and show in Lakeland, Florida.

We also plan to participate in the Fall Plant Festival at the University of South Florida in mid-October. This event has more than fifty vendors from all over the State, selling many different varieties of plants and draws large crowds of plant lovers, many of whom love African violets and the other Gesneriads.

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!

LOUISIANA DIRECTOR'S REPORT August 2024

by Becky McMeel
beckymcmeel@gmail.com



Louisiana Lagniappe AVS

Happy Summer everybody! It has been a hot and wet one so far here in Louisiana! We sure do

hope Mother Nature behaves herself till November!

LLAVS took the months of May and June off so members could re-boot and relax! Sometimes you just need a little break, ya' know?

July saw the club meeting in Morgan City, where members caught up on all things violets and streps! The show schedule has been sent off for approval, and designs were revealed to the club. This year's theme is "Thankful for Violets" and the show will take place on Saturday, November 16th, from 1 pm to 5 pm at the Baton Rouge Garden Center on Independence Boulevard. If you're in the neighborhood, stop by and say HI! Our program was "How I got into Violets" presented by our host, DJ Blanco. Now there is a topic to be discussed at your next meeting!

Here's a question for you all. Where do you grow your violets? Is it in a designated space or all over the house? Is it a sunroom, patio, spare bedroom, living room, etc.? I grow my violets in/on a west-facing bay window, with sheers that can be drawn or opened depending on the season. My streps are grown in what we call the "violet room," a converted pool cabana that is enclosed, and are grown under red and blue LED lights, and they LOVE it! Are yours on light stands, single LED lamps, in windows, on windowsills, bakers racks in a brightly lit room, or where ever? The location of your plants and/or lighting could be another great topic for discussion at your next meeting. Why not give it a try?

Some sad news to report is LLAVS is losing two of its members. One is moving to be near her grandbabies, and one is retiring from the violet world. We will miss you Mary Jo and Belinda! Good luck in your next chapters.

That is all from LLAVS!

Till next time!

Becky McMeel
Louisiana Director

P.S. See you at DIXIE!

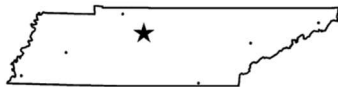


Hunter's Chipmunk Cheeks

**TENNESSEE
STATE
DIRECTOR'S
REPORT**

by Marian Zoller

marigregz@gmail.com



Hello fellow African Violet lovers,

It is August 1 and it is hot, hot, hot and humid (typical Southern weather). West Tennessee was blessed with about 2 weeks of below normal temperatures and humidity and that made it hard to stay inside and work with the violets. But now that is history and I'll get back to paying more attention to my plants.

The Memphis African Violet Society continues to have our monthly meetings (on the 3rd Saturday of each month). We begin with delicious food which various people bring. After a business meeting, we have a program.

In May we reviewed the show which we had in April. The critique was used to point us to ways we can improve the next show. June was a lively game of leaf bingo. Everyone was excited to go home with new leaves to propagate. In July Brenda Brasfield gave an interesting program on "Grooming Your Plants."

Now that summer has really hit may each of you find time to spend with your violets. I know I intend to try.

**DIXIE AVS AFFILIATES REPORT
3rd Quarter 2024**

by Robbie McMeel

rmcmeel@bellsouth.net

I hope that all is going well with all members and clubs. As we are now in the dog days of summer, I know that we are all doing our best to keep our plants comfortable in this heat.

We will be soon coming into our fall shows, please keep in mind the Dixie Classes. 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. 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 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 regards anything or suggestions, 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

BEST IN DESIGN

DIXIE CONVENTION 2023

Phillis Hinkle's Dish Garden

By Phillis

(Note by Betty: I asked Phillis to tell us about her beautiful winner and about how she does it. Here's what she had to say.)

I have been growing African violets for almost 50 years, but only doing designs for the past 9 years. I have entered terrariums, dish gardens, and flower arrangement design classes. My favorite is terrariums.

The first design class I entered was a dish garden. It was in a small ceramic dish. Some of the elements were too large. I've learned a lot since that first time. Pat Hancock always emphasized "Perspective". Your violet should not be as large as the other plants in your container. Remember how it looks in nature.

In creating a garden landscape, I will think about the elements I'd like to incorporate. I will create a base and let it flow from there. That is part of the enjoyment for me. I will take pictures as I work. I will often change my mind, then decide to go back to my original idea. A picture helps me remember what I had done.



For terrariums and dish gardens I use a base of charcoal and perlite, using my own potting mix as the planting layer. I do grow mini and micro-mini plants to use in my designs. I also search garden shops and centers for other plant material needed. I always look for texture, color, and plant size. I like to include wood features, stones and bark. Fortunately, I have moss growing in several places in my yard, and this I use as a ground cover. I have several small turtles and frogs that I love to hide or tuck in special places.

My designs are complete when I take them to a show. I use boxes that secure the container so there is as little movement as possible. Regarding flower designs, I will complete the design at home just like I want them to look. I disassemble them and reassemble them at the show making any adjustments needed.

Entering design classes helps me be creative. I'm not a creative person and have to pick and choose from the show schedule what I think I can do. Sometimes I just can't think of anything. When I get an idea, I'm excited to get started. I always try to remember "Less is More." I have fun playing in the dirt.

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:

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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.



by Robbie McMeel
rmmcmeel@bellsouth.net

What's the AVSA VIRTUAL CIRCLE?

The Virtual Circle is a series of Zoom presentations offered as a benefit of AVSA membership

How do I sign up?

Registration is available on the front page of AVSA's Website.

Is There A Cost?

There is no charge for AVSA Members, but donations are always welcome

To all members of Dixie, I would like to introduce you to the new program that AVSA has launched for its members and non-members. It is the "AVSA Virtual Circle." You may have received an email about it, or heard some members speak of it, but if you don't really know what it is, read on and I will tell you all about it.

The AVSA Virtual Circle consists of presentations by members, growers, vendors, designers, on subjects like fertilizer, different soil compositions, lighting, and different methods of growing, to mention just a few. Presentations are similar to those that are normally presented to members who attend the convention. A lot of AVSA members are unable to attend the conventions due to travel constrictions, health, or affordability. These virtual presentations will give these members the ability to attend the same types of presentations they would be able to hear

if they were attending the convention. These are free to all AVSA members and a nominal cost for non-members.

To sign up for the presentation you will need to log into the AVSA website, www.avsa.org, click on the AVSA Virtual Circle icon and it will bring you to the area to register and follow the instructions for registration. After registering, all you need to do is to wait for an email with the Zoom link to the presentation. AVSA will post on its website, when the presentation will be so that you can make plans accordingly.

At the Zoom presentation on January 13, 2024, the show chair explained different aspects of the convention, including the tours, that was to be held in April in Arizona. For anyone going to the convention for the first time, this was a great help to them and let them know what to expect.

As this is in its infancy, the committee members are working diligently to provide interesting topics for the members. They do ask attendants what they would like to see presentations on for the future. So, you can email members of the committee on your ideas, so that they can be considered for the future.

Just remember that during the presentation, there are no questions allowed, so that the presenter can give their presentation with no interruptions. Questions are allowed at the end for anyone that may have one.

If anyone has any questions about Virtual Circle, please let me know and I will do my best to answer or to get you the correct answer.

DAVS AWARDS COMMITTEE

Marian & Greg Zoller (marigregz@gmail.com)

Well folks -- I'll make this short and sweet. It is August which leaves only 2½ months to go before the 2024 convention. If anyone is thinking about making a donation to the Awards fund, now is the time. Donations can be sent to:

DAVS Awards
c/o Marian & Greg Zoller
4815 Oak Lane Cove
Arlington, Tn. 38002

And many thanks to our donor this quarter, Ms. Genelle Armstrong!

Marian and Greg Zoller



Rhapsodie Cora

There are about 10,000 species of known fungi just in North America. One of the most fascinating group of fungi — and most important to plant growers are the root fungi, also known as mycorrhizae (**my-co-RISE-ee**, a term derived from the Greek words for fungus and root). Many species never show themselves above the soil surface, yet they are incredibly important to the soil ecosystem and the plant life it supports.

About 95% of the plants scientists have examined exhibit some form of relationship with mycorrhizal fungi. That includes many crop plants, trees and houseplants. Mycorrhizal fungi attach to and penetrate plant roots, where they have access to the sugars of plants who make these sugars through photosynthesis — sugars that the fungi need to fuel their metabolic activities. The mycorrhizal fungi then form a web of fine, tubular filaments called *hyphae* that reach far into the surrounding soil — much farther than the plants' roots. The hyphae act like extensions of the roots, greatly increasing the surface area available for the absorption of nutrients and water. Have you ever raked up mulch and leaf debris in early Spring and found white, hairy structures beneath? Those are not roots you are seeing, but the mycorrhizal fungi!

Mycorrhizal fungi also:

- Secrete enzymes that help break complex molecules into simpler forms, releasing nutrients that would otherwise be unavailable for uptake by plants.
- The fungi increase a plant's tolerance to environmental stresses, such as drought and temperature extremes. It reduces transplant shock when potting up.
- They appear to aid in plants' resistance to diseases, especially those caused by soilborne pathogens.

I have been using a product called Dynomyco and it is packaged cleverly to look like a dynamite stick and the price was \$18.00. Directions state to add 1 tsp into a gallon of soil for transplanting. You can also scratch the product into the soil of existing potted plants. It has been about a month since I have been using the product and have not seen any difference in the growth of my plants.

FUN GUY TALKS ABOUT “FUNGI”



By Christopher Paiva*

Just recently, there has been a popular trend to add mycorrhizal fungi to soil mixes for indoor plants. Many houseplant mixes like Pro-Mix BX, Fox Farms Happy Frog and others contain these specific fungi in

their soils. These fungi form a symbiotic and mutually beneficial relationship with plant roots. They help plants take up water and absorb more nutrients and, in turn, the fungi get access to the sugars of the plants that are made through photosynthesis. Fungi cannot make their own sugars and thus depend on plants to produce it for them. In essence, you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours!

However, it may take time for the fungi to get established into the plants' root system. Some growers add dried molasses to the mix to speed up the growth of the fungi in the soil. Instructions does indicate that the mycorrhizal product can be added directly to ball of the of the roots and hole prior to planting but directions are unclear as to how much to add.

You can use fertilizers with mycorrhizal fungi. However, it is best to use organic fertilizers at this time. Synthetic fertilizer could hinder or kill the fungi. Fish fertilizers enhance the growth of the mycorrhizae fungi. I am hopeful that soon I will see the results. As always, only experiment on a few of your plants until you are assured that your plants will benefit from this soil additive.

Published with permission from Bay State African Violet Society, Massachusetts. The author is a Director of Bay State AVS.



Hunter's Fire and Ice

the other Gesneriads: Smithiantha

by Carol Schreck*



Smithiantha 'Maggie's Endorra'

Would you like to grow a genus in the gesneriad family named for a woman? Then, Smithiantha is for you! This branch of the family is native to Mexico and Guatemala and is named for a botanical artist, Miss Matilda Smith. These plants have especially velvety-textured, colorful foliage and tall spikes of blossoms that usually produce many flowers. They are rhizomatous plants with a brief period of dormancy. Most of them bloom seasonally, in late fall. While the plant is in active growth, their rhizomes are multiplying in the soil, so do not discard the pot when the foliage dies back. If you wish, the rhizomes can be separated and stored in clear plastic bags with a slightly moist mixture of New Zealand sphagnum moss, perlite and vermiculite. You will want to check them frequently to know when they are sprouting so you can again place them in soil, covered by one inch of soil and begin feeding and watering.

Dale Martens says she is quite consistent with planting her rhizomes by Valentine's Day (February 14) while I wait to plant rhizomes until I have returned home from the annual convention of the Dixie African Violet Society in March so my plant sitter has fewer plants and pots to take care of until I am home again.

A soil mixture that works well for growing Smithiantha plants is half and half Pro Mix BX and perlite with two tablespoons of dolomite lime to the quart of soil mixture. They grow best with temperatures more than 65 degrees and humidity more than 50 percent. They are less light demanding than many other gesneriads, but will tend to be "leggy" and "weak" if they are not given enough light, but may be stunted with an excess of light. The plants are heavy feeders and require regular doses of a balanced fertilizer. Because many varieties do have a tendency to grow tall, you can shorten them by making a cutting of the stem, rooting it, and letting it continue to grow to blooming stage. Propagation can be done by breaking up rhizomes into smaller pieces, or putting down a leaf in the same method used for propagating Saintpaulia plants. That leaf will then manufacture a rhizome.

If you plan to enter Smithiantha plants in a show, they can be entered in a class for rhizomatous gesneriads in flower or, because of their strikingly-colored foliage, they can be classified as "gesneriads grown primarily for foliage." Some varieties grow quite tall and staking is permissible. However, you should use a thin stake that blends in with the stem of the plant and it must NOT be taller than the plant.

If your plants are being shown in bloom, they will meet these standards:

- 35 points for cultural perfection
- 30 points for condition
- 35 points for quantity of bloom

If being exhibited as gesneriads grown for foliage, the points are

- 35 points for cultural perfection
- 35 points for ornamental value
- 30 points for condition

Some of the prettiest and newest hybrids are from Japan and the results of work by Masaki Yamagata and I am the satisfied owner of several

of those. One closer to home who has hybridized some beautiful Smithiantha varieties in my collection is Dale Martens. If you can attend a Gesneriad Society convention, you'll be sure to see some you just have to add to your collection.

Adapted from Carol's article which originally appeared in **The Florida Connection.*

WHERE TO GROW AFRICAN VIOLETS.

African violets can be grown successfully in a number of locations as long as the plant's requirements are met.

Natural light: African violets can be grown in any window with a strong, bright light. Northern and eastern windows may not provide enough light; southern and western windows may provide too much. Since light intensity varies at different times of the year, it may be necessary to try growing plants in different locations. Since window light is one-sided, plants should be turned on a regular basis. Many people give their window-grown plants a quarter turn every three days.

AVSA Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors & Judges, p.21

Upcoming Events

September 7, 2024 - African Violet Club of Greater Atlanta Show and Sale, "Celebrating 50 Years: 1974-2024. First Baptist Church of Decatur, 308 Clairmont Avenue, Decatur, GA 30030. Hours: 11 am-3 pm. Contact: Kathy Spissman, mrsstrepstreps@comcast.net.

September 27-28, 2024, African Violet Council of Florida Annual Show & Plant Sale, "Violet Treasures," Christ Lutheran Church, 2715 Lakeland Hills Blvd., Lakeland, FL 33805. Contact: Mary Jane DiLorenzo, 863,647-1517, or AVCF President, Jim Boyer, at jasb39@gmail.com.

October 12-13, 2024, Tampa AVS at the Fall Plant Festival, University of South Florida

Botanical Gardens, 4202 E. Fowler Ave.,
Tampa, FL 33620.

DAVS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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| Individual | \$15.00 year |
| Individual Life | \$175.00 |
| Affiliate Club | \$20.00 year |
| Commercial | \$25.00 year |
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February Issue – January 15
May Issue – April 15
August – July 15
November – October 15

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From the Editor. . . Mary Lou Harden
mlhard@verizon.net

Hello, Dixie Members and Friends,

Here is your 3rd 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 hope to see you in Birmingham in October!

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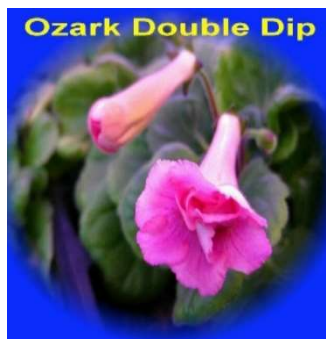
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Hunter's
Happy
New Year

