

African Violets

In general, African Violets will thrive wherever you do. This is probably one of the reasons they are America's most popular blooming houseplant.

LIGHT

- Adequate light is most important for abundant bloom.
- Any window that has strong, bright light is good. *Mild* direct sunshine is beneficial.
- Shield plants from hot sun with sheer curtains.
- Turn pots 1/ turn each day.
- If you do not have good natural light, use fluorescent lights 10 to 14 hours per day. Cool white, daylight or tubes designed specifically for growing plants may be used alone or in combination. Distance from lights depends upon intensity and type of tube as well as variety of plant. A general rule is 10 to 16 inches from top of pot to bottom of light tube.



WATERING

- Always use tepid water that has not been through a water softener. If water is chlorinated, allow it to sit 24 hours before use.
- Never allow plants to become completely dry because it is extremely difficult to remoisten the root ball evenly and the plant will become crooked.
- Watering may be from top, bottom, by wicking or in reservoir pots. Never allow plants to stand in water after soil has taken up what it can hold. More violets are killed by overwatering than any other means.
- Plants need to get air not only through their foliage, but also through roots, so do not overwater.

FEEDING

- Use a well-balanced fertilizer such as 15-30-15 at a rate of 1/8 to 1/4 teaspoon per gallon of water every time you water.
- Do not make the mistake of thinking "if a little is good, more must be better". Excess fertilizer will burn roots and/or cause hard, brittle or marked foliage.

SOIL

- Most indoor plants do best in a light, porous medium which provides good drainage.
- It should always be sterilized.
- When available, it is best to buy one of the soil mixes especially prepared for African Violets.
- Heavy or poor-draining mixes can be improved by adding conditioners such as vermiculite and/or perlite.

TEMPERATURE

- The ideal temperature is 65 to 70 degrees at night with a 5 to 10 degree rise during the day.
- Temperatures below 60 degrees or above 85 to 90 degrees for any extended period will slow the growth.
- Better a bit cool than too hot, especially if humidity is low.
- Avoid Drafts and sudden temperature changes.



African Violets (cont'd)

HUMIDITY

- Recommended humidity is 40% to 70%.
- If air is too dry, buds may drop unopened.
- Humidifiers are great if you have an unusually dry house.
- Placing your plants in trays of moist pebbles or matting is helpful. You can also mist your plants, but do not place in direct sunlight.
- To prevent mildew in winter, provide good air circulation.

GROOMING

- Maintain a good shape in your plants.
- Remove all leaves that are past their prime and smaller leaves which are under larger leaves.
- Remove any suckers (tiny plantlets that appear on the main stalk next to the established leaves), otherwise these will challenge the main crown and destroy the shape of your plant. These suckers may be rooted to create a new plant just as leaves are propagated.

