

African Violet Care

African violets or Saintpaulia spp. are one of the most popular flowering houseplants due to the fact that they are relatively easy to grow, tolerate average indoor conditions, and can flower throughout the year. There are thousands of different varieties, miniatures included, but they all require the following care:

Flowering and foliage- *Colors vary from classic purple-violet, blue, to every shade of pink and rose, white, bicolor, speckled petals, and some that have contrasting colors on the petal edges. Also, their leaf margins can be ruffled. Their blooms average about an inch wide with single petal types and doubled varieties. Foliage can be light to dark green, even variegated, with a generous coating of fuzzy hairs which helps absorb humidity.*

Light- *Violets require bright, indirect lighting. An Eastern, or northern exposure window are ideal. Place them a few feet away from a western or southern window that can be too hot and too much direct sunlight. They also perform extremely well in fluorescent lighting all year.*

Temperature- *African violets prefer warm temperatures year round, usually 70+ degrees F during the day and 60-65 degrees F at night*

Watering- *Bottom watering is recommended for violets because their foliage tends to form white, "burn" spots if cold water droplets sit on their leaves when watered over head. Using tepid water is beneficial and will also prevent the foliage from burning. Keep soil evenly moist; check it daily for moisture. Supply extra humidity by setting the violet pot on a shallow tray of moistened pebbles.*

Fertilizer- *Feed violets with an African violet food once a month, or try adding a ¼ strength multipurpose fertilizer every time you water. Maintain fertilizer all year, they do not have a winter dormancy period like most tropical houseplants.*

Other maintenance needs- *Repot in spring or fall using an African violet soil and a shallow, squat pot when roots have completely filled the pot. In order to propagate take a mature leaf with 1" of stem and place it in rooting hormone and then in moist sand, perlite or fast draining potting soil. African violets may get thrips or mites which can be controlled with most houseplant insecticides or systemic granules (Di-syston). Please read the label carefully before use.*

**Streptocarpus, Streptocarpella will benefit from the same growing conditions listed above.*