

VioletsFun

The Violet Barn newsletter

August 2019 - No. 66

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Our calendar:

September 3, 2019

International orders must be placed by this date for shipment week of September 9.

Sorry, we are unable to attend any fall shows this year! See our message at right.

Free stuff and how to get it!

Write a review.

Write a review before ordering, good or bad, we'd like to know. Get a free plant added to order.

Contact us:

email. comments@violetbarn.com

mail. POB 9, Naples, NY 14512

phone. 585-374-8592
Mon. thru Sat., 12-5 pm ET

Our shop and glasshouse at:
7209 County Road 12
Naples, New York 14512

Open to public Wed-Fri, 12-5 pm
Saturdays by appointment.

Are you a member?

What's New (or returning):



Bristol's Plastic Fantastic. Our newest streptocarpus hybrid. Very long-lasting blooms of single to sdbl. white with brick-red centers flowing onto lower lobes. Good, flat, medium green, well-shaping foliage. Excellent bloomer and easy grower.

Many more! This is just one of the new varieties that have been listed in the past month.

What's news:

Major renovations will be underway soon here at the Violet Barn. We will be taking down our glasshouse in mid-September, and replacing it with another growing area. It likely will take 2-3 months for this process to be completed. We will continue growing and shipping during this time, but it will create a number of inconveniences, including for visitors to our shop. When complete, all of our growing areas will be under artificial light. This will allow us to better control lighting and environment. The plants will be happier and it will mean less work for us.

Because of the construction, we will be unable to attend the Ohio State AVS Convention Show at the Kingwood Center in Mansfield at the end of September. This will be the first time in over 25 years we have been unable to attend this year's show. Our apologies. We do plan on returning for the 2020 show.

Inventory updates:

"Seller's choice" specials have been moved to a different page on the online shopping cart, called "[special offers](#)". Our past listings led to some confusion, as not all of the offers could be listed all of the time.

[Kohlerias](#) have returned to our online listing, after a long absence. A small selection appear at this time, and many more will be added within the next few weeks. Standard size [dandy pots](#) are also again in inventory for those looking for a decorative, self-watering system for their plants.

The weird, unusual, or charming:

We grow lots of plants, many of them simply because we like them. Many for their beauty, but some because they are just different. Of course, "beauty" and "different" is in the eye of the beholder. To introduce our readers to some of these, we're adding this subject to the newsletter. Most wouldn't call our first plant "beautiful", but would agree that it is weird or unusual--which we find charming.



Consider joining the African Violet Society of America. Sign up through [our](#) website and get a free plant! For more information on AVSA, visit www.avsa.org



Hedera helix 'Willie'. This odd little plant is a miniature ivy suitable for small containers or terrariums. Very, tiny, gnarled, twisted, thin, finger-like leaves. Easy grower tolerant of neglect. A love it or hate it kind of plant.

Has your collection grown far beyond violets? Consider joining the Gesneriad Society. For more info: www.gesneriadsociety.org

Can be propagated by tip cuttings. Grow in bright, indirect, light, though it will easily tolerate less, making it a good choice for those not able to provide it more. Keep soil evenly moist (water when dry to touch) but, because of its thick leaves it can tolerate periods of dryness if you forget to water. Sometimes you will see it produce a "normal" leaf. When this happens, remove the leaf to encourage it to keep its "weird" appearance. Occasional pruning will encourage a fuller look. Can be with longer stems cascading from a pot, but we find it more attractive grown smaller.

This month's question:

I use self-watering pots and am having issues with fungus gnats because of the wet soil. Can I use a straight vermiculite and perlite mix to grow my plants?

Yes. Fungus gnats can be a problem when the soil mix is constantly wet. Letting it dry will control them, but the purpose of constant-watering systems is to keep the soil wet. Worse, gnats like organic matter--the richer, the better. Peat-based mixes are far better than the mixes that actually contain (top) soil (or ingredients like manure), for this reason. Removing the peat entirely from the mix, as you propose, will make your potting mix even less desirable for fungus gnats. You'll likely see far less of them.

Many growers propagate cuttings in a vermiculite and perlite mix. Growing full size plants is just taking this one step further. What your plants need is water, and some way to support itself--something to hold its roots. In effect, you'll be growing your plant hydroponically.

Growers who travel internationally to shows will do this to avoid the complications of bringing "soil" into the country--(inorganic and sterile) vermiculite and perlite is the "packing material" for the plant. We've seen many beautiful plants grown and brought to shows in the US this way--and have done it ourselves.