



# 'VIOLET TALK'

*September\_October 2016*

*5/2016*

*The AFRICAN VIOLET SOCIETY of WA (Inc.)*

Affiliated with the Gesneriad Council of Australia and New Zealand

**Founded August 1965**

**PO Box 197, Como 6952.**



*Streptocarpus #RL4 (Reiko Lee)*



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Please contact any of the above members through the President for Society related matters using wa.inc.avs@gmail.com or mobile 0407 702 879			

## PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Dear members I would like to thank you for electing me as your President for the 2016-2017 year. With a great Executive Committee and the POR's you have elected we look forward to bringing you a very exciting and challenging year, where we see our membership grow, set up a calendar, put in place a plan for a wildflower trip and have several guest speakers. I hope to have a very active Committee which will bring friendship and fun to members both new and old.

My thanks also goes to Jeanette Wood who convened our AGM with such a short notice.

I would like to thank the growers for representing our Society and putting on a lovely display of their beautiful African Violets at the Garden Clubs and Societies Fair at South Perth. We had many complimentary comments about our arrangement. It was a very successful weekend for both sales and new membership. On that note I would like to welcome the two new members Anna Methell and Fida .aina Mukadan.

To the members who attended the presentation at our Patron Geoff Richardson's Recycling Plant in September I thank you. To the members who, due to illness or other reasons could not attend all I can say is, it was a great day thoroughly enjoyed by all followed by an afternoon tea held at the All Palms Garden Centre nearby.



We are very lucky to have such a wonderful Patron who had given up his Saturday to open up the plant for our members to attend. Thank you Geoff from all, it was really very special and an enjoyable and informative afternoon.

Both Eric and I will not be attending the October General meeting as we will be heading East to attend and help out at the African Violet Shows in

both Brisbane and Sydney and meet with our colleagues over there.

I would like to wish Norma Dougal a special hello and hope she is well on the way to recovery. Our thoughts are with you Norma; you have been sorely missed by all at the monthly meetings.

They say spring has sprung but where is the warm weather in Perth?

I wish you all good health and look forward to seeing you in the near future.

Happy Violet Growing

*Jacqui Bateman*  
*President AVS-WA 2016/2017*

## **Cyclamen Mite Treatment Summary**

This is the end of the trilogy of articles on cyclamen mite. A valued colleague of ours in the Australian African violet world has one outlook on the treatment of mite in or on an African violet and that it is; "if mite is suspected or detected, bin it!"

After going through some of the processes that we have researched and contacted people who have experienced the invasion, we can only concur that unless you want to spend a lot of time and money trying to combat and get rid of this pest and not put others in danger with their collections then indeed bin it..

However, all of the lovely persons that we have encountered around Australia are so passionate about this hobby that it is fully understood why they may not "bin" a suspect plant. It would be almost heartbreaking to see one of your treasured plants showing the signs and if you have a magnifying glass, seeing the little beasties on your 'babies' would be just that.

**What are the signs?** Tightness and discolouring or paleness of the plant centres, an accentuated hairiness at the centres, distinct dewy droplets on the hairiness and very tight blooms in the early stages of their show.

**What is it that you cannot see?** Until the other signs are apparent the enemy can be in your buds. They can also be in your soil once established.

**Where do they come from?** Outside from the many plants such as Azaleas and strawberries (check the ones you purchase); cyclamens, camellias and many other outdoor garden plants. Unfortunately, they can come from other growers who recognise the signs of the pest or indeed refuse to accept that the problem is there. If those who refuse to let a favourite, precious and/or rare variety cultivar be confiscated.

**Possible Solutions?** The following solutions have in no way any order of priority or effectiveness, although the last is possibly the best. The mite love to particularly attack buds and we would advise to isolate the plant, disbud it and de-bloom immediately. Include all of your other cultivars in the vicinity or the same room. If you find them others will have been affected.

1. When using a chemical ensure you mix it with hot water so the spray will then be warm and attach to the plant. A drop or two of detergent mixed in helps the 'sticking' process.
2. Make sure you do not leave respraying for more than 4 days after the initial spray. A few sources have suggested up to 3 weeks between sprays however, the majority certainly favours the shorter gap as the life cycle of a mite is for the eggs to hatch after about 3 days. The male cyclamen mites tend to carry off the eggs to new pastures and breed in other cultivars around the one that they have bred on. The warmer temperatures of Spring increases their reproductive capability and they will spread quickly to other cultivars. Ensure leaves are not touching when positioning cultivars on any shelf or platform. If using a spray, perhaps include the surface of the shelves to retard migration.
3. Certainly throw out those cultivars that show a grey dry centre and/or have not reacted quickly to the Kelthane because of a longer delay of 4 days after the first spray.

4. Neem oil mixed with Eco oil is a consideration if mite is detected or suspected. It can successfully be used to engage them in the first four weeks every 3 to 4 days. The combination could also be used as a preventative measure, sprayed every three to four weeks as a prevention option. The oil treatment would also enhance leaf quality.
5. Use Natrosoap to wash the leaves of your plants in a 'shower mix'. It is a way of ensuring they are pest and disease free before showing. It is also a treatment in itself. It is not easy to obtain and we found it to be available online only in Queensland.
6. In the last issue of Violet Talk 4/2016 the article suggested that submerging the plant for a minute in warm water with a Kelthane or Neem Oil would do the trick. We are not a fan of this method as it is messy, the temperature of the water is subjective. Other sources suggest 44<sup>0</sup> Celsius and submerging the plant for up to an hour at that temperature, a big ask!
7. Others have used Vertimec, tick collars cut into pieces and spread around, mosquito coils, general insecticide spray (in a confined area); isolation of the plant in a plastic bag (ensuring its soil is dry, as a damp plant would die in a that surround because of too much condensation); Bay leaf in pots, or powdered sulphur spread across the shelves.
8. If you observe you have it, take a leaf to propagate, wash it with Natrosoap or similar and immediately bin the plant that shows signs of cyclamen mite. **Take no prisoners!**

**Protective Equipment (PE)** - As you may know, Kelthane and other chemical products used to combat insects can have a strong odour as well as neurological repercussions, so please follow the warning signs recommended on labels and see that care is taken in what PE you wear and cleaning up after use. If using any chemicals to spray, PE is to be worn and should include a category 3 mask; protective glasses; protective rubber gloves and zip up paint overalls.



**Aids to detection** - A little jeweller's glass (100x magnification at least) helps to examine the centres for problems and a paler colour change in the centre of the plant, hardening of the centre, and/or excessive hairiness or leaf curling are the best signs to take action ... and then it probably is too late for that plant. You will observe the yellowish minute jellybeans and after a little while and focusing on the area of concern, movement of the mite will occur, sometimes only one or two and in others a heap of them. Decision time!

**Prevention?** You could, depending on where the mite occurs, hang plastic sheets over that area where they were detected so that it will increase the effect of the Miticide

or preventative spray. We would also recommend spraying lightly over the tray/shelf area before putting the affected cultivar back in the same spot and no lights for about 24 hours if not more depending on temperature and time of year.

**Protecting All** - Simply do not bring in a new plant to your collection, rather wash a leaf from it and watch it grow in your safe and proven mite free environment. If you bring in a plant then isolate it from your collection for up to 3 months.

Remember having pests and showing any plant from your collection is carelessness on your part and a big a risk to your unsuspecting African violet colleagues at your Club, exposing them to the torments that you may have experienced.

Care and prevention is the only effective way.

EKB and JEB

## Our Patron's Workplace

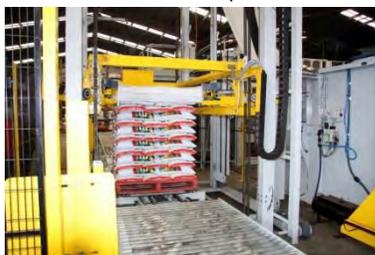
In the President's message, Jacqui mentioned the Society's special visit to Geoff Richard's Recycling Plant at the RICHGRO complex in Jandakot a southern suburb of Perth. RICHGRO is celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> year of providing the public with garden products and the Recycling Plant is a wonderful example of RICHGRO's commitment towards continual improvement, regard of the environment and development of new products and ideas based on environmental friendliness. And we got the opportunity as a group on a Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2016 with Geoff as our guide. It was a fascinating insight to the operations of an innovative Australian owned provider of plant products that are made within those facilities. The regard for cleanliness, orderliness, organisation and the environment is evident from the start of the tour and paramount at the RICHGRO plant.



The Geoff Express



Inside the Packaging Shed



Sophisticated packing machine



Part of the "clean mounds" of different soils and mulches



The Anaerobic Digester in the Gas Converter (GC) shed



Soft Drink Cans crushed in the GC Shed at RICHGRO



Storage tanks outside GC Shed at RICHGRO



Gas power at RICHGRO generates all the power for the system



Water recycling



Inside one of the Blueberry Tunnels



Our President thanks Audrey for assuming Trader Duties during 2014 to 2016



Thank you Geoff, you provide joy for us too!

It was clear that a lot of research and development goes into garden products and was very reassuring and revealing to our group. We were able to see the Blueberry tunnels that were a direct result of products produced and had a difficult time extracting some of our members who were having a close look at the quality fruit

growing within. The recycling of materials from food and organic waste was astonishing. The Anaerobic Digester is an operation that will no doubt lead similar future developments in Australia, if not the world.

The pride in Geoff Richards' voice and the hard work associated with developing it and making it happen was so evident. One of his many products available for pest intervention with African violets is RICHGRO's Beat-a-Bug and Geoff says we should give it a try. Geoff was presented with a thankyou gift by our President Jacqui Bateman (bet you can't guess what!) for his time and this wonderful opportunity to view RICHGRO's facility for our Society group. Thanks so much Geoff!

If you want to see more visit RICHRO's website at:

*<http://www.richgro.com.au/news/this-year-richgro-is-100-years-old/>*

## **Propagating African Violets from Leaves**

When first setting violet leaves, one would diagonally cut the stem (petiole) and placed it straight down in a pot. This was not wrong, but a there is another way. Some have had great success with many new plants per leaf (8 or 9 in some pots) and, more importantly, lost very few leaves. The following is a technique for "preparing a leaf " and these suggestions on caring for them.

### **Preparing a Leaf**

Select a healthy leaf with as long a stem as possible. Fill a small punnet or a similar container (with drainage holes) almost to the top with wet soil. Place your leaf on the top of the pot and cut the stem, on the diagonal, to cover most of the pot. Very gently scrape the top of the stem, with your thumb. If you look closely at the stem it will look a little shiny or moist. Place the stem on the top of the soil, scraped side up, and lightly add a little soil to the top (approximately 3mm) to anchor the leaf in place. Water the leaf (adding a little bit of chemical to treat for bugs will never hurt) and set aside so excess water will drain from pot (half hour or so), at this point the leaf bonds with soil. Label each pot with; the name of the cultivar, variety and the date potted.

When will you know if a leaf has actually set? Check your leaves after about a week by gently touching the leaf to see if there is resistance. If the leaf doesn't move, the leaf has set. If there is slight movement, add a little more soil.



Plumberry Glow variegated with what appears to be white leaf (but isn't) in an ice cream container



Leaf Group Growing



Leaf Group Growing



Ensure they are moist

### Creating a Miniature Greenhouse

Set leaves like to be moist at all times, but never wet, and in the early stages keeping them warm is as important as moisture.

There are two methods that you can try to creating your own small greenhouse.

**Method One;** which has been used for years with success, is to cover the leaf and pot with a sandwich bag (zip lock bags can tip over) and secure it in a bow at the bottom of the pot with a small elastic band. Check occasionally to make sure leaf is still moist. When heavy condensation appears, remove the sandwich bag and turn it inside out. Water the leaf and place the bag over the leaf again. Use this method when receiving a leaf that is a little "suspect."

**Method Two;** which works if you are setting many leaves is to place pots in a covered tray with matting without a sandwich bag. Commercial trays are available, but any plastic container with a clear cover will work well (plastic wrap can serve as a cover). Check periodically to make sure leaves are moist. You may prefer to water each plant, but, if time is short, just wet the matting. If sides or top of container appear very wet, wipe sides and top dry with a paper towel. This is critical because too much moisture will rot leaves.

### How long does it take before new plants appear?

This is a difficult question. It depends on the variety that you are propagating and whether you are setting under lights or near a window. Some leaves take

6 months before you see anything and then perhaps only one or two new plants. Others seem to take off immediately, and the pot is filled with plantlets. As long as a leaf appears healthy, one must have patience. After plants appear you might want to cut down the mother leaf, or remove it entirely, to create more space on your trays.



Notice the little plantlets. The leaf on right yet to show any young

### **When should new plants be potted up?**

Every grower has their own opinion, and it is much a trial and error process at first. If in doubt, it's always best to give the plants extra time.

When one of the new plants looks large enough to pot up with many small plants around it, carefully remove the large plant and reposition the smaller plants in the same propagation pot to plant up at another time. The large plant can actually inhibit the growth of smaller plants in the same pot. At times, after removing plants, you will find that the mother leaf looks healthy. If this is a "special" leaf and not easily obtained, cut at the diagonal again and place it back in the propagation pot with new soil.

Potting up is a good time to add a wick and you can treat with a chemical spray or oil such as Neem or Eco Oil. Plantlets go back to trays where they stay until they are ready to be potted up once again to a larger pot, or in the case of minis and semi-miniatures, moved to a clean pot and new soil. Separate plants you want to keep in your collection from those that you will sell. Do yourself a favour and toss plants you don't like.

### **Acknowledge the Girls!**

In early days of African violet cultivation, the cultivars grown all had plain or slightly quilted foliage. At that time there were few different types, in comparison to the plethora available to us now, mutations often produced the first of a whole line of new varieties.

In 1941, amongst a large number of plants of 'Blue Boy', an early variety which is described as a "Single dark violet blue with pointed ovate leaves" there appeared a mutation with similar flowers to its sisters, but with leaves that had a whitish spot at the base where the petiole attached. The leaves also had scalloped edges. To differentiate this from 'Blue Boy', it was named 'Blue Girl'. It was reproduced and became popular, and there followed, via hybridising, a good many other plants with these leaves.

This kind of leaf became called "girl", as distinct from the plain or quilted foliages, which are sometimes called "boy".

Because of a certain "tightness" in the leaf caused by the white spot, and because of the scalloped (sometimes, even ruffled) edges, the leaves of these plants don't usually lie flat in neatly overlapping rows. Sometimes the petioles are rather shortened and this gives a smaller plant with greater height.

Girl leaf types have never been seen much amongst those for sale in general nurseries and Trade stores. They used to be popular amongst hobby growers such as we are, but now we seem to have become fonder of flat growing types which have more potential for show. However, there are well over one hundred and seventy registered in software program "First Class" (African Violet Society of America) with the word "girl" in the names. Most of these would be girl varieties, as would many others, so why don't we grow them?

## **The Magnificent Ten**

Ever wondered what the original set of Saintpaulia looked like? I have and of course obtaining photographs even more difficult. However, here is a description of the originals, but no images, so use your visual imagination dear visitors.

**Blue Boy** easy of propagation, generous flowering quality, quantity of bloom, depth of colour, flexibility for shipping – and this fine plant still holds that enviable position.

**Sailor Boy** particularly free-flowering with a bright sea blue blossom held well above a glossy green foliage is a very splendid African violet. The English seed produced eight African violets that still hold their place among collections as among the best.

**Admiral** This plant has a tendency to grow flat. The leaves are a deep dull green, slightly quilted and cupped downward, ovate with slightly cordate base and an almost smooth margin. Flowers are dark blue, slightly tinged with violet in clusters of from three to five produced very freely above the foliage.

**Amethyst** The plant has an upright habit of growth. The leaves are medium

green tinged with purple on back of leaf. The leaves are ovate, glossy, slightly quilted with toothed or dentate edge. The petioles are tinged with rose and extend to the length of 75 to 90mm. Flowers are large and bloom profusely in clusters of 6 to 8 standing well above the foliage. The top petals have a tendency to have a deeper shade.

**Viking** The plant has a compact, flat habit of growth. Leaves are dark green with a light streak up the centre. The underside of the leaf is a reddish purple, giving the leaf a deep rich colour. As leaves mature, they take on a glossy quilted appearance. Petioles are green flushed with purple and short forming a compact rosette. Flowers are a deep purple which many times show a slight marking around the lobes. These flowers are small but produced many flowers in clusters of from five to seven on many flower stems.

**Mermaid** The plant is a compact rosette. The leaves are small round and a glossy medium green, quilted on 3 to 3 ½ petioles. Flowers are a light blue, a very good bloomer. Doubt about this plant belonging to the Armacost and Royston collection has now been cleared up and though it did not appear in previous articles it was introduced by the aforesaid firm.

**Norseman** produced large then average blooms. Plant has a droopy compact method of growth. Leaves are ovate with almost smooth edges, acute tip and rounded bases. Leaves have a velvet appearance, glossy with quilted, overlaid with hairiness. The plant has a tendency to colour on the underside. Flowers are round clustered in 6-7 on average petioles. The flowers are the nearest true blue in a medium shade of any African violet. This plant is a very heavy bloomer and a prize in any collection.

**Neptune** This plant has a flat growing habit. Leaves are egg shaped, quilted and shiny; cupping upward and often very spooned. The flushing on the underside of the leaves and petioles is very deep making interesting contrast to the rich green colouring on the surface of the leaf. Flowers are medium purple. Neptune is a very distinct variety and a heavy bloomer as well.

**Commodore** Mature plant is very large with a drooping affect. The leaves are 90mm to 95mm long and 70mm wide cupped downward. Leaves are dark green and purple beneath, quilted with darker valleys. Flowers are a rich reddish purple appearing above the foliage on short petioles in clusters of from 6 to 8. This plant is not a prolific bloomer but the richness of foliage and deep velvet blossoms makes it stand out in every collection.

**No 32** A plain name for in some observer's opinions it exceeds the others in qualities of perfection. The plant is perfect in form, mature leaves growing flat with new leaves having a tendency to stand erect. The young leaves are quite cupped and very red on the underside making a very attractive contrast to the

deep rich olive green. The leaves are ovate, slightly dentate (serrated edge), always cupped with veining very definite. Flowers are orchid violet with the same round blossom appearing just above the foliage on short flower stems in clusters of 6 to 7.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

*Subject to change*

- **Monthly Meeting – Saturday, October 15<sup>th</sup>** - at the Manning Activity Centre 3 Downey Drive Manning 12.30 pm to 2.30 pm. Members see the website for details.
- **Monthly Meeting – Saturday, November 19<sup>th</sup>** at the Manning Activity Centre 3 Downey Drive Manning 12.30 pm to 2.30 pm. Members see the website for details.
- **Christmas function** – location to be confirmed at the October Meeting.
- **Violet Talk 6/2016** issued at the Christmas function.

## AVS-WA Inc. Competition Table Progress Points Scores August 2016

### Open Class

1	AV-Single Colour	2 <sup>nd</sup> Royal Smile	J Bateman
		2 <sup>nd</sup> Sir Roderick	P Humphreys
2	AV- Multi Colour	2 <sup>nd</sup> Opera's Paolo	R Lee
		2 <sup>nd</sup> Star Turn	J Bateman
3	AV- Variegated	1 <sup>st</sup> Coral White	R Lee
		2 <sup>nd</sup> Carolina Elegant Affair	J Bateman
4	AV-Miniature	1 <sup>st</sup> Orchard's Bumble Magnet	R Lee
		2 <sup>nd</sup> RD's True Blue	A LaRosa
5	AV- Semi-Mini	1 <sup>st</sup> Little Pro	A LaRosa
		2 <sup>nd</sup> Opt. Little Maya	A LaRosa
10	Gesneriad-F/rooted	2 <sup>nd</sup> Streps. Unnamed	P Fry

### Intermediate Class

18	AV-Multi Colour	2 <sup>nd</sup> Rainbow's Quiet Riot	P Fry
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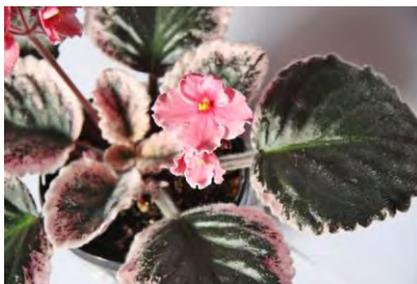
### Novice Class

No Entries this month

## Members' Choice –

1<sup>st</sup> Streps. Unnamed P Fry2<sup>nd</sup> Rainbow's Quiet Riot P Fry**Progress Point Tally February to August 2016**

Open		Intermediate		Novice	
A. LaRosa	57	G. Currie	30	J Meadowcroft	22
R Lee	53	P. Fry	24	J Bulloch	4
J Bateman	12			E Laidlaw	2
P Humphreys	7			C Fry	3



Coral white



Optimara Little Maya



Rainbow's Quiet Riot

# AFRICAN VIOLET SOCIETY OF W.A. INC. SUPPORTERS



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***African Violet Society WA***