

Taken from Rob's Violet Barn Lessons -

http://www.violetbarn.com/lessons/grooming_episcias.htm

Grooming episcias

Episcias are very fast, vigorous growers. This makes them very easy to grow but also means that they can quickly become overgrown and "weedy" looking if neglected and not regularly groomed. By grooming, we mean removing unnecessary leaves and stolons and repotting, if necessary. For more detailed instructions on [repotting episcias](#), see our lesson on this subject.

Should you have a desire to grow an episcia for exhibition (a "showplant"), this is something you'll have to do. Even if not grown for show, however, proper grooming is still desirable simply because it makes your plant more attractive.



The episcia before grooming.

Shown at left is *Episcia 'Blue Nile'*, a very easy to grow variety that will produce blue flowers. This one is shown in a 6" pan-pot and has been neglected for quite some time. Other than providing it with light and water, we haven't groomed it in about three months.

Notice the number of long stolons, and stolons off of stolons. This is one reason it's not blooming. Episcias (and most plants) bloom better when their foliage growth is controlled--this plant has spent its energies on producing leaves and stolons, not blooms.

Step 1: Remove unnecessary stolons.

This is the plant viewed from above. It has a tremendous number of stolons, most of which aren't necessary. We'll keep only the most well-developed stolons, and eliminate those tiny, secondary ones. Those to be removed are marked in pink.

We would rather have fewer, but better developed, stolons than many, tiny, undeveloped ones. Also, this will encourage the plant to bloom since you're not allowing it to reproduce itself vegetatively (by stolons). Growers who find episcias to be stubborn bloomers often make this mistake.



Step 2: Remove unnecessary leaves.



This is the same plant after having many of its stolons removed. Our next step is to remove all of the unnecessary leaves. Those to be removed are marked in orange.

Notice that leaves being removed are paler, and not as healthy looking those being kept. Notice also that the leaves we are removing are the oldest, growing lower on the plant stem and often are hidden beneath younger growth above them.

We have a saying, "if you want the new to grow, you need to eliminate the old". By removing old, more of the plant's energies will go into producing new growth.

Step 3: The "pruned" plant.

This is the same plant after we have removed all of the unnecessary stolons and foliage! All that remains is the newest growth of the main crown, and the primary, most developed, stolons.

Admittedly, this plant seems to look much worse than when we began. Don't worry, "ugly now means pretty later". Of course, it still needs to be repotted. We'll put it up into a 8" pan (shallow) pot, bury the main stem, and arrange and pin the stolons.

Again, for instructions on how to bury the stem, see our [repotting lesson](#).



Step 4: The repotted plant.

Here's our plant after repotting. We've used an 8" pot and arranged the stolons to fill in the empty spaces. Using "U-pins" (seen below pot), we've pinned the stolons into the soil surface. Soon these will root and begin to produce stolons of their own.

Once the plant gets comfortable in its new pot, and begins to produce new roots and foliage, it will have an even healthier, fuller look. Also, by limiting the production of stolons, it will bloom sooner and more heavily than it would have. Within a couple of months, we'll have a specimen worthy of showing.