

Schedule for Producing African Violets to Show for Kansas City AVSA Convention May 24-31, 2014

October 6 (33 weeks from convention week)

- Select varieties of violets which might be good to work on for show.
- Repot (where appropriate) and, if you wish, begin disbudding/grooming (non-stop until January) to achieve large plants. At the very least, set aside selected plants in a “show growing location” (probably under fluorescent lights) and maintain good care and handling.
- Verify that the variety is blooming true to its description

November 10 (28 weeks from convention week)

- Look again for possible show varieties on your shelf. Ideally you would be growing three for every one that you hope to exhibit. Set all show plants on one shelf or light unit so that you always care for them first, even in busy weeks when others might be neglected.
- Continue good maintenance of potential show plants. Maintain space between plants as they grow. Watch for suckering and remove suckers promptly. Rotate plants one-quarter turn, once a week.
- Wash foliage so plants can absorb all the available light. Use tepid water from a gently running tap, allowing water to run off the end of the leaf and not into the center. Blot dry afterward with a soft sponge or cloth that does not leave lint on leaves. If very dirty, you may mist the plant with a sprayer filled with warm water and a drop of gentle liquid dish detergent such as Ivory or Palmolive.
- Replace one light tube (particularly if you haven't during the last year) in each light fixture.
- Disbud weekly, checking for buds above and below the leaves, removing all promptly.
- Groom off baby leaves and any leaves showing nicks or damage.
- Evaluate pot size of standard African violets which should be approximately 1/3 the diameter of the plant. Goal is for show plant to be at least 9” in diameter for show, so plant should now be in at least a 3” pot. If you wish for the plant to grow larger than 9”, the pot size should ultimately be 4-6” in diameter.
- Check closely for any evidence of insects or disease.
- Control growing room temperatures at 72-75° F if possible. Keep fan running 24 hours a day to prevent outbreaks of powdery mildew.

December 8 (24 weeks from convention week)

- Don't let the holidays ruin your efforts.
- Continue good maintenance of potential show plants. Maintain space between plants as they grow. Watch for suckering and remove suckers promptly.
 - Make it a habit to rotate your show plants by a one-quarter turn every week.
 - Groom off another row of leaves.
 - Continue to add varieties to the show plant shelf that are growing well. If some potential show plants (chosen previously) are not thriving, move them back into the regular growing location.
 - Disbud weekly, checking for buds and removing them as soon as possible.
 - Continue watching closely for evidence of insects or disease.
 - Continue maintenance of growing room temperatures at 72-75° F. If growing variegated hybrids, note the temperature on the shelf. If it is colder than the ideal, move it up to a higher shelf so that variegation pattern remains constant. Keep fan running in growing area.

January 5 (20 weeks from convention week)

Do a “hard break” repotting of all mature mini and semi miniature show plants, removing all but the 6 leaves in the center. Cut away from the bottom of the root ball and set the plant deeper into the pot, adding potting mix to the top to bury the exposed neck.

- Continue good maintenance of potential show plants and continue rotating plants by one-quarter turn every week. If leaves seem to be reaching toward light, consider placement more directly under the center of the tube. Maintain space between plants as they grow. Watch for suckering and remove them promptly.
 - Groom off another row of leaves on each show plant.
 - Evaluate potential show plants again, adding and subtracting as needed.
 - Verify names and descriptions in AVSA’s master list (First Class).
 - Disbud weekly, checking for buds above and under the leaves, and remove them as soon as possible.
 - Be vigilant for outbreaks of powdery mildew. Also watch for evidence of insects or disease. If treatment is necessary, avoid products that will leave spray residue.
 - Continue maintenance of growing room temperatures at 72-75° F. Keep fan running on-low in growing area twenty-four hours per day.

February 9 (15 weeks from convention week)

- Pot large standards (which are already show size) up to larger pots, but do not disturb roots.
- Continue good maintenance of potential show plants and continue rotating plants by one-quarter turn every week. Maintain space between plants as they grow. Watch for suckering and remove suckers promptly.
- Groom off one row of leaves on each potential show plant.
- Disbud weekly, checking for buds above and under the leaves and remove them as soon as possible.
- Continue vigilant watch for insects or powdery mildew.
- Continue maintenance of growing room temperatures at 72-75° F. Keep fan running in growing area
- *Varieties with mostly green blossoms should be disbudded for the last time.*

March 2 (12 weeks from convention week)

- Continue good maintenance of potential show plants and continue rotating plants by one-quarter turn every week. Maintain space between plants as they grow. Watch for suckering and remove suckers promptly.
- Disbud weekly, checking for buds under and above the leaves and remove them as soon as possible.
- Groom off a few leaves from each plant
- *Repot standard show plants*; pot down any plant with a neck (removing roots from the bottom and filling in with soil at the top without disturbing the roots.) Pot standard violet up to larger pot if it is already three times the size of the pot.
- Do a “soft break” repotting of mini and semi miniature plants, removing smaller and/or older leaves only.
- Lights should be set to run twelve hours a day if using T12s.
- If you wish, foliar feed show plants once in addition to regular fertilizing.
- Continue vigilant watch for insects or powdery mildew.
- Continue maintenance of growing room temperatures at 72-75° F. Keep fan running in growing area. As temperatures outside rise, pay attention to the temperature on the shelf on any variegated varieties. Consider moving them to a lower shelf if the high temperature for the day is above the ideal.
- Do not keep windows or doors open to outside in the growing area to prevent thrips from entering on warm spring days.