

Golden Rules of Grooming
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1. Choose varieties that are show-worthy

- a. 5 or more blooms per stem
- b. Strong petioles
- c. Grow in a triangular pattern (sets of 3)
- d. Tolerate disbudding
- e. Plants with large, broad leaves that overlap and cover soil
- f. Blooms that last 2 weeks or more

2. Consistent Care

- a. Most important part of growing plants
- b. Work with them everyday
 - b.i. Remove any marred, small or distorted leaves **all the time**
 - b.ii. Prop leaves on other leaves to move them where you want them
 - b.iii. Remove developing buds and suckers
 - b.iv. Check for pests
 - b.v. Wash and brush foliage

3. Groom your plants from the very start

- a. From the time a plant is in a solo cup it should be groomed for the triangular pattern.
 - a.i. Cannot do it right before the show
- b. Leaf Perfection is **PARAMOUNT**
 - b.i. Leaves must overlap to cover all soil and be **FLAT**
 - b.ii. Leaves must be clean of debris
 - b.iii. All the plants energy must go into developing foliage

4. Symmetry: Rule of 3

- a. African Violet leaves grow in sets of 3
- b. This pattern of 3 must be groomed for from the beginning



- c. These two pictures show a starter plant. On the left it has 3 baby leaves that are unnecessary (they take energy away from developing crown)
- d. On the right, the leaves are removed. Now you can see the triangular leaf pattern. These overlapping triangles will eventually form a round plant.
- e. If you start with a triangle, you will end up with a circle.

5. Shingles on a Roof

- a. AV leaves shingle just like on a roof

- b. A leaf in one row should fall between two leaves in the row beneath it



Leaves get progressively larger with the largest leaves in the outside row

- c. Culture breaks and inconsistent care leads to alternating rows of off-size leaves
 - c.i. This is one of the **most undesirable** things you can have happen to your plants
 - c.ii. It is often because of inconsistent culture and not Mold Potting.

6. Repotting

- a. Repotting every 2-3 months is **Key** when growing showplants
- b. It is at this time when you should remove the bottom 3 leaves on your plant
 - b.i. These leaves will be the oldest and serve no purpose any longer
- c. Repotting this often is what constantly stimulates the plant's crown and produces larger leaves.
- d. Mold Potting is ideal for showplants
 - d.i. This is the process where a pot the same size as the plant is currently growing in is placed inside the next size larger pot and the space between is filled in with soil. After the inner pot is removed the plant is able to slip into the hole and soil can be filled in.
 - d.ii. It is the little disturbance to the root system that makes this process advantageous.
 - d.ii.1. Not disturbing the root balls allows for an easier transition for the plant.
 - d.ii.2. The new soil will encourage the crown to continue growing at the accelerated rate and the leaves will continue to grow larger.
 - d.ii.3. It is the fresh, revitalized soil that allows the plant to grow.
- e. Sometimes it is necessary to repot a plant into the same size pot. When this happens, remove the layer of perlite in the bottom and using a steak knife you can shave away a bottom portion of the rootball and some off the sides. The plant will then sink back into the pot and soil can be filled in. While this is not too stressful on the plant it is not the same as Mold Potting.

7. Disbudding

- a. Removing all developing flowers as they grow to encourage energy to go toward developing foliage.
- b. Must disbud all year after making sure the plant is blooming true.
- c. Not seeing flowers all year will reward you at show time with an amazing head of bloom.

8. Flowers

- a. When it is time to let the plant bloom, you need to groom the flowers.
 - a.i. This means evenly distributing the bloom stems around the plant and pulling the bloom stems up!
 - a.i.1. As each bloom stem develops it can be moved to either side of the leaf so that you have bloom covering the entire plant.
 - a.ii. You can also remove the first bloom on the stem, which will encourage all the other buds on the stem to open simultaneously.
 - a.iii. The flowers should be arranged so that they are in the halo position.
 - a.iii.1. Blooms that stand right up in the middle block the crown from receiving light.

a.iii.2. They also do not cover enough foliage.

a.iii.2.a. Remember bloom count must be in proportion to the size of the plant. This is one reason why **bigger isn't better**. More bloom would be needed.

9. How Your Plants are Judged

- a. 25 points for Symmetry
- b. 25 points for Condition
 - b.i. This means that 50 points of the total have to do with the leaves.
 - b.ii. The condition of the plant is in the exhibitors control so as exhibitors we must do our best to have perfect foliage.
 - b.iii. Understanding what judges look for in plants allows you to grow them to their utmost potential.

10. Areas That Judges Deduct Points

- a. One of the things that most judges take points off for are unnecessary leaves.
 - a.i. Several Examples include:
 - a.i.1. Up to 1 point deduction off for each instance:
 - a.i.1.a. Marred, dead, broken, yellow or bleached leaves
 - a.i.1.b. Suckers not totally removed
 - a.i.1.c. Small leaves under large leaves
 - a.i.1.d. Leaves directly overtop of the leaf beneath it

11. Final Grooming Before Show

- a. Remove all spent and fading blooms.
 - a.i. Do not leave 1 or 2 blooms on a stem. If the bloom stem is narly and almost dead it needs to be removed.
- b. You should have been grooming your plant all year so at show time there should be 0 leaves that need to be removed.
 - b.i. One thing that makes me cringe is seeing someone with pieces of toilet paper or index cards covering up leaves on the plant trying to decide which leaves should stay and which should go. This is a practice that is UNNECESSARY if the plant was grown correctly.
- c. Prop leaves on leaves if needed after traveling to show.
- d. Make sure no dirt, debris or animal hair is on any part of the plant.

12. Have Fun at the Show

- a. Enjoy the fruits of your labor. If you do all these things consistently you will be proud of your plants and blue ribbons and more will come your way.
- b. Exhibiting plants that win is always fun but the **true purpose** of the show is to educate visitors and attract new members to our hobby. They want to learn how to grow plants just like the ones they see in the show.

13. Teach Others

- a. Once you master the art of growing award-winning, top quality plants it is your obligation to **TEACH** other members of your club how to grow as well.
- b. The object of our craft is not about winning all the time but helping our organization grow. More beautiful shows attract more new blood to our society. Members are the life of our organization.
- c. Club shows are deteriorating year in and year out. Without teaching in our clubs we put our whole society in jeopardy. I urge everyone to mentor and foster your fellow club members in the art of growing gorgeous violets.
 - c.i. It will be most rewarding seeing them do well and knowing you had a part in helping them.