



Heart of Jacksonville African Violet Society

Welcome to the **Heart of Jacksonville African Violet Society!**

Our website is www.jacksonvilleviolets.org. The password to the members only page is **hjav**s

We are on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/HJAVS>. Paid club members may join our private Facebook chat group, **Jax Violet Lovers**. Please ask a board member how to get invited.

This starter kit is given to new members to get them off on the right foot. It includes items we have found to be helpful, and hope you enjoy trying them, too! To hear more instructions on how to use these items, please be sure to attend our violets 101 session offered ½ hour before the beginning of our meetings (1:30pm).

Here's what you are getting and why:

- 1) **Small, clear plastic box** - Besides holding all these goodies, it also makes a great mini-greenhouse. Higher humidity helps just-planted babies and leaf cuttings to overcome the shock and develop roots; this is so important to getting them established quickly.
- 2) **Wicking yarn** - We use this to automatically water our plants. It is of man made material, nylon, acrylic, etc. NOT wool or cotton as they will rot if kept in water for long. It is easiest if you place this yarn curled in the pot on top of half the soil with tail hanging out the bottom (to go into the reservoir of water) when you are repotting, but it can be inserted later.
- 3) **Shower cap** - If your transplanted violet is a bit larger, it still benefits from higher humidity to recover from the shock. This shower cap placed loosely over the top for a couple of weeks acts as a mini greenhouse.
- 4) **Alcohol prep pads** - Use for disinfecting tools between plants. Some form of sanitation is required between working on multiple plants. There are other options, such as isopropyl alcohol (70%+) or 10% bleach water. Isopropyl is less likely to stain.
- 5) **Clear drink cups with lids** - These act as mini-greenhouses for individual babies or small plants. Once the babies are ready to go onto the wicking system, a hole can be cut in the lid large enough to hold the pot so that the wick can hang into the water but the water cannot directly touch the bottom of the pot.
- 6) **Flat ice cream spoon** - We use these spoons when repotting. It is often hard to scoop soil into a pot and not get it all over the leaves! These spoons allow you to sneak soil in under the leaves.
- 7) **Fertilizer** - When wick watering, use a weaker dilution than recommended on any commercial containers. Reduce it to half strength, at least, because wicked plants are getting this ALL the time, not just once a week.
- 8) **Box cutter** - Produces a nice sharp clean cut on the stem when preparing leaves to "put down" (plant or propagate). This can also be used for grooming the mature plant.
- 9) **Soil** - HJAVS has selected a Foxfarm potting soil as our base club soil, Ocean Forest Blend (foxfarm.com/product/ocean-forest-potting-soil). We have added 50% super coarse perlite #2, which creates air pockets and makes the soil lighter for wick watering.
- 10) **Solo cups** - We use these for potting babies & planting leaves. Much plasticware can be recycled into pots and containers for this hobby!! We use 3 oz solo cups and burn or drill holes in them for good drainage.
- 11) **Leaf cutting insert** - Step by step instructions on how to put down (propagate) a leaf.

Other helpful supplies available to purchase from our inventory:

- A) **Sucker plucker** - This is actually a ceramics clean up tool, but the sharp edges on either side, one curved, one straight, are very helpful to groom violets. The curved one lets you get close to the bottom of the leaf stem (petiole) to cut it off cleanly, as well as get in underneath suckers (offshoots) to pop them off for replanting. The straight edge helps make a clean cut on the petiole to prepare leaves for planting.
- B) **Long tweezers** - This is actually a soldering tool (it gets hot, hence the wooden handhold). Very useful for grooming out leftover stumps of leaves or blooms, and sharp enough to actually pinch most of them off without a scissors!