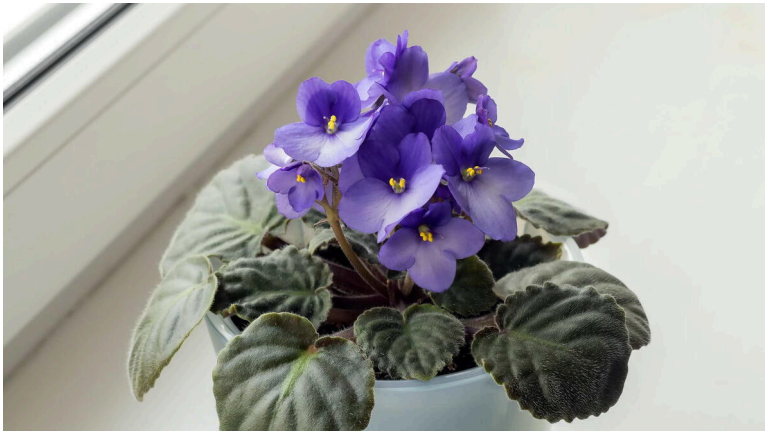




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# How to Care for African Violets



African Violets are delightful houseplants and will brighten up any room with their purple, pink, or white colors.

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# Growing African Violet Plants: Watering, Light, Repotting, and Pests

By Catherine Roehm

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African violets are small houseplants that grow well in average house temperatures, flowering almost continuously in clusters of white, blue, or purple blossoms over fuzzy leaves. Here's how to care for African violets in your home while they fill your house (and heart) with joy.

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## About African Violets

Despite their common name, African

flowers. They are now categorized in the genus *Streptocarpus*. However, as their name suggests, African violets are native to East Africa, stemming from the tropical rainforests of Tanzania and Kenya. In 1892, German colonial officer Walter von Saint Paul-Illaire identified these plants and sent seeds back to Germany.

African violets do best and produce the most blooms in bright, indirect light with regular house temperatures (no lower than 55°F at night nor above 75°F during the day). Though they are generally easy to care for, they can go through fussy spells. Don't be discouraged!

#### Read Next

- [African Violet Care: Grow African Violets](#)
- [February Birth Flowers: Violets and Primroses](#)
- [Winter Care for Houseplants](#)

# PLANTING

## How to Plant African Violets

- You can use an actual African violet potting mix or an all-purpose potting soil, as long as it is well-draining. [Here's how to create your own mix.](#)
- Keep African violets planted in small pots and repot every few years to mix in fresh soil. Being a bit pot-bound encourages African violets to bloom more, so don't be too quick to give them more space.
- The soil should be loose and well-draining; high organic matter content is a plus. [Learn about organic soil amendments.](#)
- When repotting African violets, don't plant them any deeper than they were already planted, and be careful not to bury the crown.  
African violets' stems can be sus-



## GROWING

# How to Care for African Violets

## Watering

- Keep the soil lightly moist, but be careful not to overwater, as African violets' soft stems are very susceptible to rot. Learn more about [proper watering and care](#).
- Use room-temperature water, as chilled water can leave marks on the leaves.
- Leaves are susceptible to rot and fungal spots if kept in high humid-

the bottom to avoid getting excess water on the foliage.

## Lighting

- African violets prefer bright, indirect light. Avoid direct sunlight and keep them at least a few feet away from bright south- or west-facing windows. An east- or north-facing window gives them the best lighting without the risk of burning their sensitive foliage.
- Artificial lighting works well, too. Use fluorescent or LED bulbs to supplement natural lighting.
- Thin, dark green leaves and leggy stems tell you the plant is getting too little light; light green or bleached leaves indicate too much light.

## Fertilizing

- During the active growing season (spring and summer), fertilize every 2 weeks with a high-phosphorus

extra boost (slow, thin growth; pale or yellowing leaves).

- Over-fertilizing is a more common problem than under-fertilizing since most soil mixes come infused with plenty of nutrients.

## General African Violet Care

- According to Julie Weisenhorn, an Extension educator at the [University of Minnesota](#), “If you are comfortable, your African violet is comfortable. Optimal room temperature for growing African violets is between 60°F and 80°F and ideally 70°F.” However, some are more tolerant of cooler conditions. In any case, keep them away from drafty windows in winter.
- Plants should be shifted to larger pots as they grow, but keeping African violets slightly root-bound can encourage them to bloom. One sign that your violet needs repotting is wilted leaves



off gently with a small, soft-bristled paintbrush.

For more information on African violets, visit the website of the [African Violet Society of America](#).



## Types

Hundreds of varieties and hybrids exist, from miniature violets to trailing varieties! They differ mainly in the colors of their flowers, which range from white to purple, though some varieties also have variegation in their foliage and flowers.

African violets are typically classified

- . - . - . - . - .

- **Miniature:** less than 8 inches across
- **Standard:** 8-16 inches across
- **Large:** more than 16 inches across

## GARDENING PRODUCTS



## PESTS/DISEASES

- **Cyclamen mites** can affect African violets. They are nearly impossible to remove completely, so disposal of the infected plant and isolation of nearby plants is recommended.

- **Powdery Mildew** appears as fuzzy white blotches on stems and leaves.
- Various forms of **rot** and **blight** are also common.

## WIT AND WISDOM

- Violets (*Viola*)—though unrelated to African violets—are one of the February birth flowers, so a potted African violet can make a bright gift for a February birthday.
- The violet symbolizes loyalty, devotion, and faithfulness. Find out more [flower symbolism here](#).

**HOUSEPLANT GUIDES**

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Catherine Boeckmann**



Catherine Boeckmann loves nature, stargazing, and gardening

digital content for the Almanac website, and is also a certified master gardener in the state of Indiana. [Read More from Catherine Boeckmann](#)

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## COMMENTS

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**Carol (not verified)** 3 weeks 3 days ago

I heard that african violets wouldn't bloom unless there were 2 plants, is this correct?

[REPLY](#)

**Linda (not verified)** 10 months ago

My African violets are in self-watering pots. Should I put liquid fertilizer into the water reservoir? Will it be passed through to the plant? If not, how should I give them fertilizers without overwatering?

[REPLY](#)

**The Editors** 10 months ago

Hi Linda,

Thanks for the question. You can put a liquid fertilizer in your water chamber, but there are a few things you will want to take into consideration. Since your African violet will be continuously pulling from the fertilizer/water mixture, you only want to use a very small

plant's roots. You want to add the fertilizer to fresh water.

During the growing season, you can add a small amount with each water change, but you just want to be careful at first because you do not want to overfertilize. It would be best to see how it responds by adding it every other change in the beginning.

Hope this helps!

**REPLY**

---

**Velma Radloff (not verified)** 1 year ago

My African Violet has split into two sections. One section is hanging over the edge of the pot. Should I uproot it and repot it in another pot?

**REPLY**

**The Editors** 1 year ago

Hi Velma,

It sounds like your African violet has produced an offset, which emerges from the base of the plant. If that is the case, you can certainly divide your plant and plant the offset in its own pot.

Spring or summer is the best time to divide an African violet because it is actively growing and gives the plant the best chance at recovering before it goes into the semi-dormant season.

Depending on when you last repotted your African violet, this would also be a good time to give your main plant a refresher. Just remember that African violets prefer to be slightly root bound so pick a container that matches the



Here are a few references for dividing and repotting your African violet.

<https://africanvioletresourcecenter.com/how-to-divide-an-african-violet-crown-splitting-african-violet-babies/>

<https://africanvioletsocietyofamerica.org/learn/violets-101/repotting-a-violet-with-a-neck/>

Hope this helps!

**REPLY**

---

**Dianne (not verified)** 1 year 6 months ago

Are African Violets harmful to cats if they try to eat them?

**REPLY**

**Lorraine De boer (not**

**verified)** 1 year 3 months ago

Are African violets harmful if dogs eat the plant.

**REPLY**

**Jennifer Keating** 1 year 6

months ago

African Violets are safe to have around cats! Learn more about [Safe Houseplants for Cats.](#)

**REPLY**

---

**Sue E (not verified)** 1 year 6 months ago

I've grown African violets for years and have found that mine have done best when located in a sunny kitchen window over the sink. If the window is too sunny you can put a sheer curtain behind them in summer or a heavier one to keep out drafts in winter.

[REPLY](#)

**Rhonda (not verified)** 1 year 8 months ago

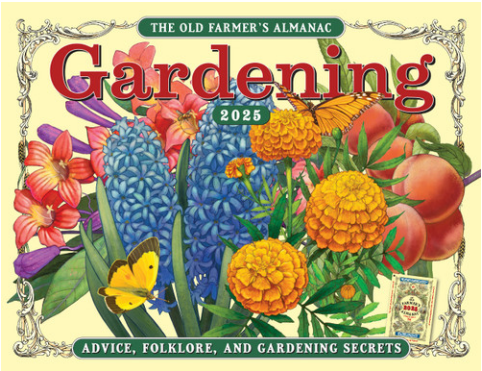
I had recently re potted my african violets due to the neck. I'm not sure what happened, but they started getting droopy and limp and just pittiful looking.

I re potted them again, but the same thing is happening again. I feel I overwatered the first time. Now, I'm watering less, but there is barely any life.

Is it possible to remove all leaves and just plant the stem in new soil and hope for good results?

[REPLY](#)[MORE COMMENTS](#)

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