

# THE FLORIDA CONNECTION



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AFRICAN VIOLET COUNCIL OF FLORIDA

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## President's Letter

Dancing with the Stars is only a few weeks away. I hope you've found your dancing shoes! All of the Show and Convention Committee folks have been working all summer to ensure that we will have a brilliant show – once again! Plant sales are going to be stocked with everything you Must Have for your light shelves (you DO have room, don't you?), and our show plants and designs are sure to knock everyone's dancing socks off!

I hope you have made your hotel and meal reservations. To receive the super \$79 per night rate at the hotel, you'll need to make that reservation by September 22. And, Christel is accepting meal reservations through September 19th, so please fill out the form and mail it to her. If you can't find the form, let Christel or me know, and one of us will make sure you get it. (As a reminder, there is an error on that meal form for the Saturday night awards dinner. The dinner date is October 1st.)

Now let me grab my Awards Chair hat and plop that on in order to remind you to please consider a donation to that effort. You'll find a duplicate of the form in this edition of the newsletter. As of this writing, I have received donations from only nine affiliates and six individuals. I realize that the economy is not in the best shape these days, but any amount you could spare to reward the winners in this year's show would be appreciated. So, please raid the Piggy Bank for AVCF!

For those of you who are growing Buckeye varieties, I am happy to tell you that there will be a special rosette from Pat Hancock for the Best Buckeye in the

show. So, nurture those fabulous varieties in your collection.

And – here's a plea from those of us who help keep our records accurate. If you change your email address, PLEASE let Elvie Blakely know (eblakely001@cfl.rr.com). If your affiliate elects a new president, PLEASE let Elvie Blakely know. I emailed several people over the past few months only to have their emails returned. Elvie tries very hard to keep the AVCF membership list current – especially concerning the affiliates that she sends to Linda, our Webmaster, to upload for our member's only area. There were changes in Twelve affiliates of which we were unaware. Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

Last, a second plea from me. I hope that all AVCF Affiliate Presidents join the Council individually. To me, it only seems right that if you are the president of a Florida affiliate, you would want to individually support the efforts of the state affiliate. For those of you who have forgotten, our 2012 membership season is only a few months away, and individual dues are only \$10. Please consider it.

I'm looking forward to seeing all of our Florida violet friends in a few weeks. Keep giving love and kindness to your plants, and they will love you back. I promise!

Carolee



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## PUT ON YOUR DANCING SHOES!

**JoAnne Martinez, Show Chair**



With only six weeks remaining before show time, I hope your violets are looking good and your design ideas are coming together. We have a great Schedule, and our designers should have a lot of fun with the class titles.

Putting on a show is a lot of work and requires help from many people. I'm so pleased that all the chairmen of our show committee are doing their jobs with enthusiasm, doing whatever it takes for us to have another great show.

Although many awards have already been donated, we can always use more. It's not too late to send an award to Awards Chair, Carolee Carter. However, if you're donating something other than cash, you can always bring the award with you to the show, but please let Carolee know in advance so she can plan accordingly.

Here are some other areas where you can help. Jim Boyer says he needs a couple more Clerks to assist the Judges. We're having a Silent Auction and need items donated for that, and our Hospitality Room can use some snack/food items.

Entries will be open beginning at 3 pm on Friday, September 30, and will remain open until 9 pm. To help our Entries and Classification workers, the earlier you show up, the better!

We will need sale plants, but remember that, if you want to sell plants in the Sales Room, you must have a minimum of 5 entries (horticulture or design) in the show. Please contact Laura Perdomo, Plant Sales Chair, for a sales number.

Also, don't forget to register for the Saturday, October 1, dinner and the breakfast buffet (and annual meeting) on Sunday, October 2. Your reservations must be mailed to Christel Collier by Monday, September 19.

If you need a copy of the Show Schedule or any of the registration forms, please let me ([4jam@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:4jam@tampabay.rr.com)) or Mary Lou Harden ([mlhard@verizon.net](mailto:mlhard@verizon.net)) know.

So, get your dancing shoes out. . .and prepare to watch the stars as they arrive at the St. Petersburg/Clearwater Hilton on September 30!

## FROM YOUR CONVENTION CHAIR

Hello everyone! The convention is almost here and I am looking forward to getting this show on the road. It looks like everything is coming together really well. Jo Anne and I visited the (newly renovated) Holiday Inn this week and have gone over the layout of the show and sales rooms with the staff.



If anyone has a question, please call and I will help you in any way I can. Remember to send Christel your meal reservations for the Saturday night dinner and the Sunday morning breakfast.

One more thing!! How are your plants measuring up?? We need all the plants we can get! We will accept all blue ribbon violets and Gesneriads. We also want those designs! If you need help choosing the right one for you, Bob will be happy to help you decide which one to do. It's time to get on the stick and get ourselves moving in the right direction!

We have very few AVCF reservations right now, but I am sure that everyone will get their reservations in during this coming week. You will love this hotel! And we may be all on the same floor! I think that will be a lot of fun. There is a nice gathering place near the elevator on the fifth floor (where the Hospitality Room is) so we can enjoy each other's company.



I'm looking forward to seeing everybody...and if you think about it, we can always use some good food for the Hospitality Room. Be sure to bring your donations for the silent auction too!

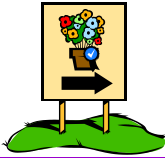
See you soon!

**Phyllis King**

727-398-7450

[rphyllis@verizon.net](mailto:rphyllis@verizon.net)





## PLANT SALES

Laura Perdomo, Plant Sales Chair

Want to make some extra cash while making extra room on your stands at home? Bring your healthy, labeled plants to sell at our show this fall in St. Petersburg-Clearwater.

All sales plants should be properly labeled with 4-inch plastic tags which you must provide. The price should be clearly marked at the top of the tag, and your sales number marked near the end of the tag which goes into the soil. Please call me to get your sales number: (352) 625-6467.

I wish to emphasize the following from the Sales Table Procedure. You must:

- Be a Council member in order to sell plants.
- Have at least five entries in the show (either Horticulture or Design or a combination).
- Work a minimum of four hours at the sales table. You may choose to work two hours Saturday and two hours Sunday. If you are unable to work one of your shifts, you must arrange for another member to substitute for you.
- Call me to obtain your sales number which you will use on all of your

plant tags. Phone: (352) 625-6467; email: [pretyinsde@netzero.net](mailto:pretyinsde@netzero.net)

- All plants for sale must have been in your possession for at least three months prior to the sale.

Here are a few reminders:

If you bring plants that are not blooming, you should provide a picture and plant description with each variety, or bring a big blooming plant marked NOT FOR SALE along with babies of the plant.

Plants should be appropriately potted. They should not be freshly potted/repotted, and they should not need to be repotted immediately. They should be ready for people to take home and enjoy for several weeks before needing to be repotted.

No plants without roots, only well established plants.

Please make a conscious effort to make sure your plants are free of pests and disease before bringing them to be sold.

The Plant Sales Chair will designate all space in the sales room. There are no exceptions to this rule. Please wait until I direct you before unloading any sales plants.



**Once** again we are asking you to search through your African violet and gesneriad related treasures to find a worthy donation for the Silent Auction at the 2011 African Violet Council of Florida convention. This event has been a good fund raiser and we would like to continue the tradition.

Donations should be in good condition and attractive enough to encourage bids. Of course, all proceeds go to the Council but you would be contributing to the fun and excitement

of the auction! So look through your items and ask the members of your club if they have anything they would like to donate. All items donated should be brought to the convention.

Please drop a note or email me with a description of your donation to: Martha Spyridon; 3548 Ensign Circle, Delray Beach, FL 33483; email: [spvfam@questie.com](mailto:spvfam@questie.com). Thank you.

*Martha Spyridon and Lynn DiMaio*

## SILENT AUCTION



## GROWING AFRICAN VIOLETS THAT WIN

By Pat Hancock

*(The Violet Connection, Official Publication of the Ohio State African Violet Society; June 2011: vol. 59, Issue 3)*



All African violets do not make winning plants! Choose plants that grow flat and symmetrical. Choose plants with leaves large enough that each row covers the space between the rows so that you cannot see soil between the rows when you look down at the plant. Choose plants whose leaves behave well and do not bend or twist away from their allotted space. Select plants that have five or more blooms on each pedicel — the more, the better. Choose plants that hold their blooms up well. Blooms that hide under the foliage do not show well. Select plants that hold their blooms fresh for two weeks or longer.

Growing for show begins eight to twelve months before the show date and requires grooming the plant at least once each month and repotting every three or four months. Leaves grow from the crown of the plant in sets of THREE. As the plant matures, each set of leaves becomes larger and larger. It is imperative that as the leaves become larger; the smaller underlying leaves be removed. You cannot wait until the month before the show and then begin taking off small leaves. It must be done each month or at the most, every six weeks. All bloom stems, even the tiniest ones should be removed completely each time you groom the plant.

Foliage should be kept as clean as possible and any water spots, soil, etc. should be cleaned off at once. You may use one part vinegar to ten parts water

or just plain water with a drop or two of dish liquid, then rinse. Spots that remain on the foliage for a time are much harder to remove. Any suckers or side shoots should be removed as soon as they appear as they will distort the shape of the plant if allowed to remain even for a short period.

Wick watering is the most common method of watering plants grown for show. With wick watering, plants are constantly fed, and there is a lesser chance of getting a row of leaves that is out of proportion to the rest of the leaves. With the constant feed, the plant will grow more consistently. Fertilizer during the growing period should be even numbers such as 20/20/20 or 15/16/17, etc. If you wish to use a bloom booster 2½ to 3 months before the show, that is fine, but do not overdo fertilizers with a high middle number or you will lose the center of the plant eventually.

Top watering is fine as long as you never let the plant get totally dry to the point where the foliage falls down around the pot. It is very hard to get foliage to lay flat after it has been allowed to droop. With this method, you must fertilize each week.

Bottom watering is also fine, but you must be careful to NEVER let the plant remain sitting in the water for more than 30 minutes. You must also never let the plant get too dry for the same reason as mentioned in the previous paragraph.

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Show plants are judged by the Merit system, which means that each plant is judged on its own merits. Plants in the collection classes must be point scored and any plant that is in the running for Best In Show must be point scored. Each plant begins with 100 points and points are deducted. Plants not in the collection classes are mentally scored in much the same way, but an actual number is not written down. To receive a blue ribbon, a plant must score a minimum of 90 points, 80 for a red ribbon and 70 for a white ribbon.

Gaps or spaces between leaves or rows of leaves, breaks in the symmetry of the leaf pattern, uneven distribution of foliage, over or under potting (the pot should be  $\frac{1}{3}$  the size of the plant), long neck, and plant not centered in the pot can count off up to 3 points for each instance.

Points on plants may be deducted for many things. Smaller leaves under larger leaves is probably the way most people lose points on their plants. We see this problem at every show and it is so easily fixed. Hair, dust particles, water spots all count off up to 1 point. Marred leaves, broken leaves, dead leaves, yellowed leaves, suckers not completely removed, traces of spray, all of these may count off up to 1 point each. A variegated plant that is mostly green will have several points taken off, but a plant that shows no variegation will have 10 points deducted for that one thing.

Plants with a sucker (four leaves and no bud showing) will be eliminated from consideration, so it is very important to remove suckers completely as soon as they are seen. This does not apply to trailers and Species plants that are to be grown as in the wild.

The foliage of the plant accounts for 50 of the 100 points possible. Monthly grooming is an absolute must if you want a perfect plant. Leaves grow in sets of three and begin with a perfect triangle. The plant will remain a triangle until at least three rows are in and perhaps you will need four rows before the plant is round and symmetrical. Each month or so (depending on your temperature and fertilizer) you will need to remove the three outer leaves from the plant. They will be in a triangle and they will be the three that are lowest on the stem of the plant. If you look closely, they will be slightly smaller than the next row above them. If they are not removed, they will take strength away from the next set of three that are trying to grow larger. You must do this each month as long as the outer row is slightly smaller than the row above it. All blossoms should be removed so that the strength of the plant goes toward growing leaves. This should be done each time you groom the plant.

Blossoms, like foliage account for 50 of the 100 points possible. Quantity of bloom is 25 points if enough bloom is present. A standard plant should have an average of 20-25 blossoms. A small standard (8 to 10 inches) should have an average of 10-15 blossoms. Large standards should have more so as to be in proportion with the foliage. If a plant has half the desired number of blossoms (50%), a judge would deduct half of the allotted points or  $12\frac{1}{2}$  points. If a plant has only  $\frac{1}{4}$  the number of blooms for the size of the plant, a judge would deduct  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the 25 points, or  $18\frac{3}{4}$ , etc. Blossoms not large enough for the particular variety may have up to 5 points deducted. Blossoms of the wrong type according to the description (single, semidouble, double) will have up to  $\frac{1}{2}$  point each deducted.

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Spent blossoms or blossoms of the wrong color for the variety will count off ½ point each or 10 points if all of the blossoms are the wrong color.

When should you stop disbudding? Doubles normally take a bit longer to come into bloom than do singles or semi-doubles. Ruffled or frilled doubles may take a week or two longer. There is no real guarantee as there are so many variables such as temperature, humidity, nature of the plant, etc. Growers who are very serious will often grow two or more of the same plant prior to growing for show, disbudding each one a week apart so that they can keep a record of which one worked best for show. In some environments, the accepted rule of thumb is to stop disbudding doubles at eight weeks, semi-doubles at seven weeks, and singles at six weeks. I disbud about one week longer for each as my growing conditions are pretty warm and humid.

After following good grooming rules for six to eight months, what do I need to do the week before the show? Several days prior to the show you will need to give the foliage a good bath. You may use warm water with a few drops of dish soap. Distilled water is best, but not necessary. Rinse well and let dry well before putting back under lights. If there are any spots on leaves that didn't come off with this, you may try the vinegar and water to see if they will come off. Always rinse well. Check the plant very carefully to be sure there are no suckers, stubs from bloom stems or leaves, or any small leaves that you have failed to remove. If there are small leaves, check to see if removing them would leave a gap or space. A space would cost up to 3 points and the baby leaf will only cost up to 1 point. It is best to leave it if it will make a gap in the symmetry.

Prepare a list of your entries with the classes that they belong in. (You will need the Master Variety List description in order to so so as plants are classified by the hybridizer's de-

scription and not by the way they look.) Plants entered in the collection classes will also need their registration numbers listed on the entry sheet. If you are entering miniatures or semiminiatures in a collection class, be sure they are all either miniature or semi-miniatures as they cannot be mixed. Check miniatures and semi-miniatures to be sure they are within the size requirements. (6" for miniatures; 8" for semi-miniatures)

Going to the show! Be sure your boxes are big enough for the plants to be carried without touching the sides. Carrying plants to the show can ruin everything you have worked so hard for up to now. Pack your plants with something that will not shed on them. Crushed paper is NOT a good thing. I like to cushion the plants with store plastic bags rolled together in a ring for the plant to sit in and then fill in around the box with more plastic bags so the plant cannot move in transit. Some people cut a hole in a smaller box for the plant and then wedge that box into the larger box so that the plant can't move. Whatever you do, the idea is to secure the plant so that it can't turn over and to protect it from any dusty particles that might reach it.

Complexion brushes work really well for giving the plant its last minute touch up before entering. Always brush from the middle outward so that anything that might fall from the brush onto a leaf will be taken care of on the next row. Check again and remove any blossoms that look old or spent, or any that might not be true to the color. They can count off up to ½ point each.

After all of this, you should be entering a plant that you can be very proud of; perhaps it will be a Best in Show winner!





## AVSA REPORT

By Lynne Wilson

Please note we have a new AVSA Affiliates Chairman: Rich Follett. Rich is seeking your club information as well as your success stories and fresh growth and development ideas. Please add Rich to your contacts list at <avsa.affiliatechair@gmail.com>

I suggest everyone try to attend the next convention in Detroit, Michigan. Steve Turner, the Detroit Convention Chair, has been hard at work. Our hotel is the Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center. The hotel is 73 stories tall and is part of the famous River Walk. The hotel is in itself a city with many restaurants and shops to visit. Across the river is Windsor Canada and there is the connecting Windsor Tunnel and Ambassador Bridge which connects Detroit with Windsor Canada, so bring your passports.

The city of Detroit is also known as "The D" and features plenty of activities for our entertainment, including many museums, theaters, casinos, sports centers, exciting nightlife, and lots of dining opportunities. The last convention held in Detroit was in 1959 and our convention team is hard at work to make this the best attended record holder.

Our African Violet Magazine cover for July - August features the AVSA 2011 "Best in Show" and Best Trailer winner "Cirelda" a stunning semi - miniature trailer hybridized by P. Tracey and exhibited by Sandy Skalski. This latest issue of the AVM is full of information for the beginner to expert grower. Of particular interest to me is the article by Georgene Albrecht "Thrips Life Cycle". I have been plagued with thrips for some time now and seek a cure to end this cycle once and for all. Unfortunately, I have had limited success and hope to hear from someone who has conquered them. Let me know how you managed this.

## HAVE YOU JOINED THE DESIGN PARTY YET?

**Only a little time left to reserve your designs for the dancing contest featuring your favorite African violets plants and blossoms. Ballet, the waltz, western line dancing and other favorites are among your choices in the Interpretive Plant and Flower designs that will add to the beauty of our 2011 show.**

**Email Bob with the number of the classes (50 through 56 in the schedule) which you wish to enter.**

**You can also enter the container garden classes, nos. 57 through 59.**

**Phone: 321-631-1106**

**Email: GJaBob@aol.com**

**Please respond by September 28th.**



## Can You Donate to the Hospitality Room?

Dottie Cesario is looking for food items to make our Hospitality Room its usual haven for relaxation, conversation, and good eats in the midst of our busy show and plant sale. Please email her:

[momoney@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:momoney@tampabay.rr.com)

Or phone: 813-989-2934

if you can bring some goodies.



**WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBER**

**Ann O'Malie**  
**4707 Golfview Rd**  
**Sebring, FL 33875**



**New Email**

**Carol Schreck**

**carolschreck1@verizon.net**

**AVCF 2010/2011 Officers  
and Standing Committee Chairs**

President—Carolee Carter  
1st Vice President—Thad Scaggs  
2d Vice President—Elvie Blakely  
Corresponding Secretary—Martha Spyridon  
Recording Secretary—Therese Lynam  
Treasurer—Christel Collier  
AVSA Representative—Lynne Wilson  
DAVS Representative—Phyllis King  
Affiliate Awards Chair—Christel Collier  
Bylaws and Policies Chair— Mary Lou Harden  
Parliamentarian—Bob Green  
Newsletter Editor—Peggy Madison  
Judges Chair—Jo Anne Martinez  
Historian—Mary Jane DiLorenzo  
Convention Handbook Chair—Carolee Carter

We are sad to announce the death of one of our Honorary Council Members, Alyce D. Droege who passed away on August 22d. Alyce had many friends in the Council, and, besides being active in our group, at one time raised African violets commercially.

She will be missed.

**DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER**

**NOVEMBER 20**

**Mark Your Calendar!**

**The Tampa Bay Gesneriad Society presents**

**“A Gesneriad Celebration”**

**USF Botanical Garden**

**12210 USF Pine Drive, Tampa, Florida 33612**

**813-910-3274**

**Free Admission & Free Parking!!**

**Saturday, September 10**

**9:00 AM – 4:00 PM**

**We'll have African Violets (Saintpaulias),  
Flame Violets (Episcias),  
Lipstick Plants (Aeschynanthus), and  
many other beautiful gesneriads!**

**Come See the Miracle Houseplants and How Easy They  
Are to Grow!**

**Do you need help repotting your Gesneriads? Bring  
your plants and pots-we'll show you how!**

For more information, contact [4jam@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:4jam@tampabay.rr.com)

Or call: 813-963-7424 or 352-588-3272