

## AFRICAN VIOLET SOIL ADDITIVES

**Charcoal:** In the context of African Violets, refers to a horticultural-grade additive which is sometimes mixed with soil in order to help it retain the beneficial by-products of decomposing matter.

**Chelated Elements:** [Micronutrients](#) which have been treated to keep them readily available for absorption once they are introduced into the soil. If not chelated, many micronutrients would react with other elements in the soil in ways that would soon make them unavailable to the plant. Some commonly chelated elements are [copper](#), [iron](#), [magnesium](#), [manganese](#) and [zinc](#).

**Diatomaceous Earth:** A fully inert, non-volatile substance sometimes recommended as an alternative to traditional chemical treatments for controlling a number of insects and other pests, including [Soil Mealy Bugs](#). Diatomaceous Earth (DE) is made from the skeletal remains of diatoms, a microscopic form of algae. When processed into DE, these skeletal remains form razor-sharp particles which cut into the soft bodies of small insects. While controlling insects, DE does not harm African Violets.

**Lime:** A substance sometimes applied to potting soils in order to increase the [pH](#) or [alkalinity](#). The most common source of horticultural lime is calcium carbonate and dolomite. Lime is also used as a component of some [fungicides](#) such as [Bordeaux Mix](#).

**Perlite:** A volcanic mineral heated to make it expand. This reduces its density and helps increase porosity when added to potting soil.

**Superphosphate:** Type of [fertilizer](#) sometimes used as a source of [phosphorus](#). To make it more soluble, superphosphate is treated with some form of acid, i.e., sulfuric acid.

**Vermiculite:** A light, porous mineral mined from mica and heated to make it expand. Vermiculite is sometimes added to [potting soil](#) to help buffer changes in [pH](#) and increase [aeration](#).