

Solution for an African violet with a long neck

By Vilma Barone

If one of your African violets has developed a neck, a bare place where the leaves have been taken off, you should repot it as soon as possible so the neck is covered with soil and can grow new roots.

Take off the bottom row of leaves and GENTLY scrape the neck with your fingernails or a knife like you would a carrot. Then, if the neck is too long, you can either cut some of the root ball or measure 3 inches from the bottom row of leaves and cut straight across the stem removing part of the neck and the entire root ball. This sounds drastic, but it is the best way to get rid of a long neck that won't fit in the pot. Plant the scraped neck (or the plant with a smaller rootball if you selected this option) in damp African violet soil and put it in a plastic bag or a plastic container for about a month (we don't use rooting solution). You may want to check the soil in two weeks and water slightly IF NEEDED. Remember, your plant does not have a root system. However, during that time, the plant will grow a completely new root system. After the month is up, gradually wean the plant from the bag over a two-day period.

You may want to put down a couple of leaves in case you lose your plant.