

AFRICAN VIOLETS: PROBLEMS AND REMEDIES

SYMPTOMS	DIAGNOSIS	REMEDIES
Long “neck” (looks like a tree trunk) between the leaves and soil	Plant needs repotting to encourage new leaves and blossoms, as well as to improve the general appearance	REPOT: Begin by removing the lower leaves so that only 3 rows are left. Cut the bottom layer of soil off the root ball, roots and all. Scrape off the bark to expose green tissue on the stem. Repot so the leaves are level with the rim of the pot. New roots will quickly develop along the old stem.
Suckers on the mother plant, distorting the symmetry and draining energy. Plant does not bloom.	A sucker is a baby violet that grows on the stem of the mother plant.	REMOVE THE SUCKER: Using a sharp knife (or a sucker plucker) “pop” the sucker off the mother plant by applying pressure and digging into the stem a little bit. Make sure to get all of it. (The sucker can be planted in potting mix.)
Tight centers, coarse brittle leaves with orange-brown crust on the hairs of center leaves	Over fertilizing	REPOT or LEACH SOIL. Flush soil by running warm water through the potting mix and out the drain holes to leach out the excess fertilizer. Go easy on the fertilizer.
Leaves are turning yellow.	Underfertilizing	Fertilizer provides the essential food to grow strong and healthy plants. Most fertilizers show numbers referring to: N= Nitrogen for foliage P= Phosphorus for blooms K=Potassium for growth
Blotches or ring spots on leaves	Contact with cold water	NO REMEDY. Cold water damages the cell wall resulting in the loss of chlorophyll. Damage is permanent for the life of the leaf involved. Be more careful in watering and washing leaves.
Plant collapse	Over watering or root shock after repotting	Remove bottom leaves. Allow soil to dry out or repot. Avoid using chlorinated water or water that has been through a water softening system (contains salt).
Spindly or “leggy” stems	Not enough light	Violets need bright light but not direct sunlight. “Leggy” stems are characteristic of most “window sill” violets. If using a light stand, move the plant closer to the light source.