

African Violets

(*Saintpaulia*)

They're a classic houseplant, capable of blooming nearly all year. Their native habitat is East Africa's tropical rainforest floor, so it's no surprise that African Violets crave heat and moisture. With a little care, you can enjoy them in your home for a long time to come.



Here's what they need to thrive:

- **Warmth!** They perform best where temperatures are consistently above mid-60s (°F).
- **Bright, indirect sunlight.** Try them in a north- or east-facing window.
- **Consistently moist soil.** African Violets have fine, shallow roots that do not tolerate drought. Water regularly enough to keep soil moist, but not soggy.
- **Lukewarm water.** Don't chill the violet's roots or splash its leaves with water that's below room-temperature. An African violet's leaves may develop unsightly 'scars' after contact with cool water droplets. To avoid this, water your plant by placing it in a tray of water for a few hours, allowing its soil to absorb water from below. Just remember not to leave the plant sitting in this reservoir for extended periods of time or its root system may begin to rot.
- **Occasional fertilizing.** Do not over-feed your African Violets, as it can damage their delicate roots. A feeding of balanced fertilizer diluted to half-strength once a month is plenty. There are also a few fertilizers on the market formulated specifically for African Violets. These are fine to use, following packaging instructions, but not a necessary purchase if you already have general purpose plant food.