

# HOME PAGE Capital Journal

## African Violets Increase in Popularity as House Plants

By MARK M. TAYLOR

African Violets seem to be among the most popular of house plants, increasingly so in the past few years. The botanical name, *Saint Paulia*, is derived from the name of the discoverer, Baron Walter von Saint Paul who first found them in East Africa in 1890. *S. ionantha* is the original species. Today the varieties are many with such attractive names as Blue Boy, Blue Girl, Orchid Beauty, Pink Beauty, White Lady, Amethyst, Sailor Boy, Viking, Norseman, Supreme, Admiral, Commodore, Neptune, Tribby, Mentor Boy, Blue Bud, Mary Wee, Dupont Pink, Plum Pink, Red Head, Curly Special and so on.

African Violets thrive in a slightly acid loamy soil such as: 2 parts good garden soil, 3 parts leaf mold or peatmoss and 1 part sand. A teaspoonful of bone meal to each quart of soil mixture is helpful. Never keep the soil soaking wet, but provide ample amounts for their needs. A wick-fed pot is especially advantageous as it provides a constant supply without excess. If the top of the soil is too wet, refrain from watering for a day or so. Another watering method is to set the pot in a shallow pan of water so the soil will take up moisture through the drainage hole. This is done every 3 or 4 days. Water should be kept off the leaves. In cold weather use lukewarm water as too cold water might check the plant growth.

When the buds appear you will have better blooms over a longer period by adding a little liquid fertilizer to the water every 10 days or two weeks. Do not overfeed as this will produce leaves only and the plant

will die. Avoid setting pot in direct sunlight, but light is essential. Remove plant a distance from the too sunny window. On very cold days or nights the plants may need protection by being placed further from windows, doors or any possible draughts. A temperature of 70 degrees is ideal for the daytime. Plants should be turned towards the light occasionally so that they grow symmetrically. For winter blooming refrain from heavy feeding or watering in the summer.

African Violets should never be permitted to become root bound. Old plants need repotting almost annually. When repotting, put soil in pot first, then make a cone shaped depression to receive the roots then fill pot carefully until soil is within about a half inch of the top. Failure to repot may be the cause of no growth or blooms.

African Violets may be propagated from seeds, divisions of old plants and single leaf cuttings, the latter is the most popular method. In starting them from leaf cuttings, use moist sand or sand and peatmoss in a half filled glass jar, tray or pot. Cut off the lower full grown leaves of the parent plant with a sharp knife. A one inch stem is the proper length. Insert the leaf in the aforementioned jar or whatever container you choose and cover with a sheet of glass to keep the atmosphere moist. If the moisture accumulation is too heavy on the glass it will run off when the glass is tilted. This is, in effect, a miniature greenhouse. Place the leaf cuttings around the outer edge of the pot (if a pot is used) with the soil sloping towards the center. All watering is done in this center depression. Before inserting the leaf stems in the soil mixture, use a pencil or stick to make holes two inches apart to receive the leaves. The holes should be about an inch from the edge of the pot. The

tiny leaves start growing towards the center of the pot. When 3 or 4 new leaves have formed, transplant into a three inch pot with a spoon or wooden paddle. The best time for starting cuttings is during the warm growing season. As long as the leaf is standing upright it is alive and safe. Several articles have been written about starting leaf cuttings in water but, generally, this has proved unsatisfactory.

African Violets are comparatively free from pests but those that do bother can be controlled with DDT. Rotenone is recommended for control of red spider. A very fine spray of lukewarm water may be sufficient to rid a plant of most pests. The water is not harmful if it is used at room temperature. Heavily chlorinated water should not be used. Nicotine sulfate will eradicate cyclamen mites. Any plant bothered with pests should be isolated to prevent spreading.

If your plants have not bloomed in a long time, try giving them a scant teaspoonful of aluminum sulfate to a quart of water about once a week. Tuffa of soil around pink violet plants will deepen the shade of the bloom. Don't get the belief that all African Violets are the same color. Hybridists have produced some excellent whites, pinks, blues, purples, lavender and orchid colors.

## Easy Way to Care for Lawn

Now that Summer is with us and the season where upkeep of our yards and gardens is a necessity, even though laborious, let us pause to consider how we may simplify the routine work of caring for such a home yard. Of course, if we were all wealthy enough we could hire a full time gardener (if we could find one) to look after the numerous chores. But, unfortunately, that is something limited to a few.

A few years ago while visiting in Oakland, Calif., I came across a scheme that some enterprising person might operate here as well. Various districts of the city had set up district associations. Within the limits of the district one crew of men maintained all yards, taking care of mowing, watering, cultivating, trimming hedges and so on for the payment or "dues" to the association. Of course it was "mass production" — power mowers and so on — but every yard was maintained at its best all of the time — even when the owner was on vacation! It was interesting to see one of these crews work. A pick-up truck stopped in front of a house and two men jumped out and unloaded a power mower. One mowed the lawn and the second man started trimming hedges with a power hedge trimmer. When that was done all flower beds were neatly weeded and cultivated, the sprinklers set in place and they moved on to the house next door!

We can't all afford, or perhaps need, full time gardeners but many would subscribe to such a service where the cost would be materially less. With experienced workers you would probably achieve better results than if you tried to do all of the maintenance yourself. I have since learned that this same plan is in use in many cities and is very successful.

## Bishoprick May Be Candidate Again

Woodburn — A petition was being circulated this week to place the name of Dean Bishoprick on the ballot for re-election as a member of the board of directors of the Woodburn school district. Bishoprick is currently chairman of the school board completing his second term.

Nominating petitions must be filed with Frank Proctor, district clerk, prior to June 8 and acceptance by candidates prior to June 10. The election will be held June 15.

## Lebanon Marble Experts in Tourney

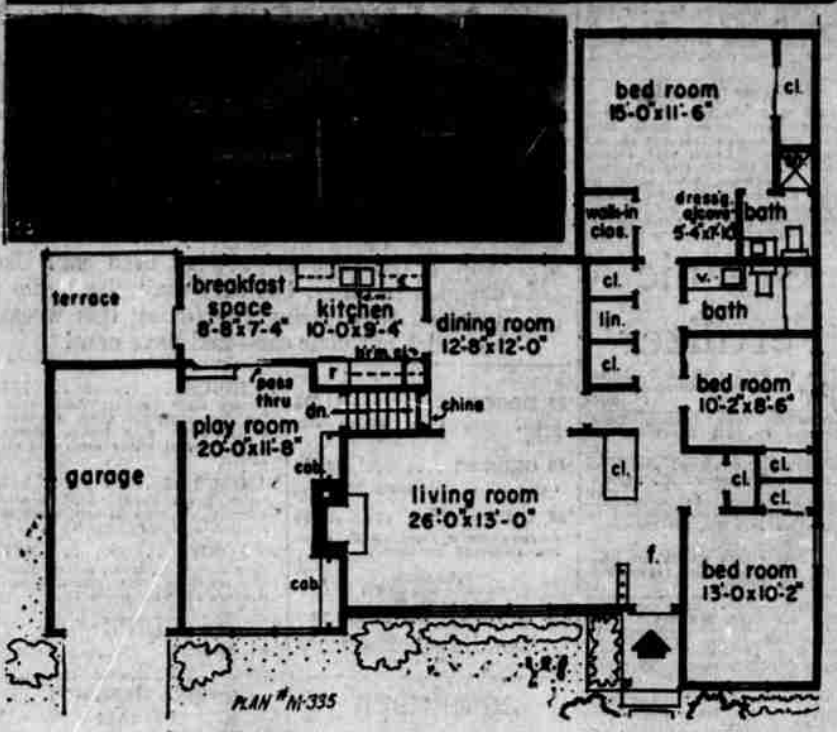
Lebanon — Four winners of local contests will represent Lebanon in the state marble tournament in Portland, May 23.

Ronald Willard, Santiam school, and Maurice Foreman, Green Acres, will represent this city in the 8 to 12-year-old division. Upper grade contestant will be Jack Ryan of Green Acres school, and David Looney, Santiam.

The grammar school tourney, sponsored by the Lions club, was held last Wednesday at Green Acres under the supervision of William Baldwin, principal of the school.

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# HOMES FOR AMERICANS



A main floor play room with window wall and pass-through kitchen features this three-bedroom, two-bath house. Designed with a basement, the plan could be converted to basementless construction with heater room in place of stairway. This is plan M-335 by Rudolph A. Matam, architect, 90-04 161st St., Jamaica 2, N.Y. The house covers 1,723 square feet without garage. Built on a quarter-acre plot at Sycost, N.Y. by Sidney Roth. It was sold for \$21,400 including hot-water baseboard heating. It won an award as the "Most Livable House of the Year."

## Questions Answered

BY MARK M. TAYLOR

**Question**—I have a peony that I transplanted. The first year buds formed but failed to develop although the foliage was good. I understood that they might fail to bloom the first year after moving but now again this year good healthy foliage is growing but there are no buds. Is there anything I can do now to make it bloom and what is the cause of this condition? It was an especially beautiful plant before it was moved and bloomed freely.—C.G.

**Answer**—Peonies are very touchy about transplanting and it is seldom successful even when a good ball of dirt is moved with it. It is best to divide when you want to transplant. Divide in fall and have from 3 to 5 eyes with each division. There is nothing you can do now but let the foliage mature naturally, then, in September lift the plant and divide and replant the divisions. Even so it may be two years before you will have flowers but that is about the only way of saving a choice plant. Peonies do best if left undisturbed for several years. If they are planted too deeply or too shallow they will not bloom. Plant them exactly two inches beneath the soil surface. Improper depth is most common cause of peony failure. Replant in fall only.

**Question**—Please recommend an all purpose rose spray.—Mrs. C.S.

**Answer**—Sorry, it is not our policy to recommend any particular brands or dealers. I suggest, though, that you consult your dealer who will be glad to recommend a spray or dust that will take care of insects and diseases of roses, in one spraying or application (provided, of course, that you maintain a continued spray program throughout the season).

**Question**—Is it too late to plant roses now?—I.G.

**Answer**—No. However, at this late date you will be far ahead to purchase roses that are grown in paper pots as all roses have a lot of new Spring growth on them. In fact, I have picked four or five buds from one bush.

**Question**—Is there any preparation that I can use to make iris last longer as cut flowers?—Mrs. E. H. R.

**Answer**—Yes, there are several preparations available at seed stores. You might try 3 drops of oil of peppermint to 1 quart of water.

**Question**—Is the period of most flowering trees now past?—Mrs. C. D.

**Answer**—No, some varieties are through, however. Look locally for dogwoods, tamarax, hawthornes, catalpas, Paulownia and alibizia to be in their glory this month. Some late magnolias will bloom this month and next month, too.

**Question**—Please suggest a fast growing tall hedge for screening purposes.—Mrs. F.T.S.

**Answer**—Chinese Elm, which is really a tree but which, with pruning can be kept at any desired height. It is a very rapid grower and will furnish a screen quickly if planted 18 inches apart. Prune to induce dense branching. If let go naturally it will become a large round-headed tree. A hedge of Chinese Elm looks much like privet. It colors somewhat in the fall and will not rot nearby plants of needed moisture and food. It will grow with little water but will, of course, make a quicker, more rank growth if given a reasonable amount of moisture.

**Question**—What is the difference in fertilizer value of the different manures?—W.A.

**Answer**—Cow manure is best if it is well rotted as it serves to improve the texture

of the soil as well as to add fertility. Horse manure is apt to burn plants unless well rotted and it often contains seed of weeds. Chicken or poultry manure is usually very strong and should be allowed to rot well before using. It is excellent if chickens or poultry have run on peatmoss or straw. Dried manure or guano (usually sheep) is excellent but quite strong also so use it with care. An excellent liquid fertilizer can be made with it by suspending a cloth sack of it in a barrel of water for 24 hours, then, when using the water on plants dilute it until it is about the color of weak tea to prevent any burning. Plants respond quickly to this treatment. The components of various manures figure thusly:

Cow manure, 4 per cent nitrogen; 2 per cent phosphorus; 1 per cent potash.

Horse manure, 55 per cent nitrogen; 3 per cent phosphorus; 4 per cent potash.

Poultry manure, 1.6 per cent nitrogen; 1.75 per cent phosphorus; .9 per cent potash.

Sheep manure 2.25 per cent nitrogen; 1 per cent phosphorus; 2 per cent potash.

**Question**—I have read that lilac suckers should be removed. Is this necessary? Why? Won't they, if left, provide more flowers?—Mrs. E.S.

**Answer**—Remove suckers to send all root energy to the main plant and to prevent misshapen growth. Suckers can be cut off or separated and used to start new bushes if you are looking for more flowers.

Some time ago one of our readers, Mrs. F.E.T. asked for the receipt for an old fashioned rose jar. We did not have that information at that time but we are now able to print the following which has been contributed by Mrs. E. A. of Salem. Many thanks, Mrs. E.

## Coming Farm Events

- May 25—Marion county sheep tour. Meet at Henry Adams farm, 1 P.M.
- June 1-4—Johnson Strawberry Festival
- June 5—Salem Business Men's Fair at Fairgrounds
- June 6—Marion county Fair Lamb show and State Sheep Dog Trial, Turner
- June 7—Oregon Milling Shortbread picnic, R. O. Stearns farm, Lebanon
- June 8-11—Oregon State Grange convention, Madras
- June 12—Annual Farm Cross Field day, Oregon State college
- June 13—Willamette valley Grange picnic, Clatsop
- June 14—Annual Silverton Middle Club trail ride
- June 14—Linn County Livestock Association picnic, Roberts brothers, Rainier
- June 15-16—Annual 4-H Summer school, Oregon State college
- June 15—Oregon Fruit Raisers' association annual meeting, Willamette hall, Oregon State college
- June 15—Oregon Fruit Raisers' association annual meeting, Willamette hall, Oregon State college
- June 21-25—All-Orion State Show, State Fairgrounds pavilion

## Exercises June 3 At Silverton High

Silverton — Official announcement has been made of the date for the graduating class commencement program of this school to be Wednesday evening, June 3, at the high school auditorium following the Sunday, May 31, baccalaureate service, also at the high school auditorium.

The Rev. Joseph A. Luthro will deliver the baccalaureate sermon and the commencement speaker will be Dr. Arthur C. Hearn, associate professor of education of the University of Oregon faculty.

The completed list of the graduates cannot be completed until the coming week, Howard W. George, high school principal, announced.

A., we are sure this will be of interest to other readers. For Mrs. F.E.T.:

## Old Fashioned Rose Jar

Gather roses on warm dry day. Spread petals in an airy place away from the hot sun. Allow to dry until reduced to half bulk. When dry pack firmly in one inch layers, spread thickly with table salt, but do not cover. Tamp down firmly, adding another layer as additional petals are dried. Lavender, Rose Geranium and sweet Verbena may be added if desired. When thoroughly dry in desired quantity add the following mixture:

- 1 oz. cinnamon
- 1 oz. nutmeg
- 1 oz. sliced ginger root
- 1 oz. cloves
- 2 oz. Orris root
- 1/2 oz. Anise seed

Dried orange peel if desired. Mix all and put in covered jar, and when odor is desired remove lid.

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