	April 2007
Toronto African Violet Society (TAVS) Newsletter	Newsletter Editors, Don MacDonald, Sonia Brock

**Our next meeting is on Tuesday,
17th April at 7:30 p.m.**

At the Glebe Road United Church,
20 Glebe Rd. East, Toronto.

(3 blocks north of Davisville, east of Yonge
St.)

There will be a **Raffle Table** with plants and
other items on it.

Meeting Topics :

Getting ready for Show

- Packaging, Show final details Louise
Cheung

Roland Schwahn - LIGHTING

Our **Plant Sales Table** will be available to all who wish to
sell their extra plants. Remember the club gets 20% of the
sales. All plants must be named and labeled properly. If
you are bringing more than 6 plants we are going to ask
you to assist on the table if asked. Bring a list of your
plants that you are selling for the person in charge.

Supplies Table:

For all of our new members. The supplies table has all the
soil, pots and fertilizers available for sale. The sales table
is operated by the club and all proceeds from sales go to
the club.

LEAF EXCHANGE

President's Message

Well folks this it! Our annual show and sale of our prized African Violets is upon us. This gives you the opportunity to display your violets and the added bonus of possibly winning a ribbon for your efforts. And of course a little bragging rights. Not only that but you can sell your plants to the public to help defray your expenses. You don't have to if it is your favorite plant or if you just want to keep it in your collection. So many times in the past a member wished they had entered one of their plants. Do it this time and take the opportunity to show off or just get up the courage to take the plunge. You'll be glad you did.

Everyone is needed to help for these two days. Set-up and clean up are the two big jobs. If you can spare time for either of these duties it would be greatly appreciated.

During the time the show is open to the public we need lots and lots of members to answer questions, police the displays and just be there to assist. Everyone needs a break at some time or other so filling in can be fun as well. This is also a great time to get to know the other members. Usually at our regular meetings there isn't enough time to chat. Too many people and not enough time. If you can make it and haven't already signed up, give Louise a call, 416-445-7774 or email her at lulumac@sympatico.ca

The show room is open to the public from 11-4 on Sunday, April 22nd. The first couple of hours are very intense, this is when they line up at the door and then make a run for the plants. It really is something to see. This is when extra bodies come in handy. Believe me when I say some people will try and take the odd leaf off of a plant. That's why we need members to police the plant displays.

As an added bonus this year we are having a raffle for our volunteers. If you show up and spend some time with us over the two days, your name will go into the hat for available prizes. This is just a little thank you to

our workers.



If any member needs growing supplies at the next meeting, April 17, 2007 please contact Louise McPherson at 416-445-7774 or lulumac@sympatico.ca 2 Days notice would be appreciated. Thank you. *Louise*

Jean and Eric Hamilton have both been admitted to hospital.

Cards can be sent to either at
5th Floor, North York General Hospital, 4001 Leslie Street Toronto, Ontario, M2K 1E1

We wish them both a speedy recovery.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

SPRING SHOW & SALE April 22, 2007 TIME: 11 a.m. – 4p.m.

FALL OPEN HOUSE & SALE Sept 30, 2007 TIME: 1p.m. – 4p.m.



THERE WILL BE A LEAF EXCHANGE THIS MONTH

For new members, it is a way of increasing your collection and sharing leaves with others. Anyone can participate. Bring a leaf, packed in a plastic baggie and wrap the cut end in a small piece of wet tissue or cotton. Clearly label the name of the leaf. (please do not bring unnamed varieties) Also make sure the plant that you take the leaf from is healthy and not diseased. We do not want to spread anything onto other members collections.

Bring as many leaves as you want. For every leaf you bring you take one home.

When you enter you leaves for the exchange, you write your name on a slip of paper. If you bring 6 leaves you write your name on 6 slips. Names are drawn and as your name is called you take a leaf from the table. Bring 6 leaves - take home 6 leaves.

It's fun and everyone enjoys themselves.

Just a note: always isolate new plants and leaves from your collection. Make sure that you have not introduced pests etc. to your collection.



From the Newsgroup

Folks have different ways of communicating and, for some, Internet newsgroups is not their favourite. Our TAVS Newsgroup group has proved useful for these reasons:

1. To ask the members if someone has a particular plant variety they are looking for.
2. To ask a Question about cultivation
3. To post a notice of general interest to the AV community at large.
4. Etc.

The March meeting was excellent and the speaker (PAUL LEE - HANGING BASKETS) was generous with both advice and samples. I took home a gesneriad cutting and a baggie of soil suitable for seedlings. Don brought in 2 kinds of African Violet seed packets at \$3 each and I got one to go with the aforementioned seedling soil sample. I believe he has about 3 packets left and their are excellent cultivation instructions on the back of each foil packet.

Louise still needs volunteers for the Spring Show.

I did an update on our **Music for Plants to Grow By** at the March meeting. The results were as follows:

Stations listened to by plants

- 2 AM 740
- 1 Classical FM
- 1 Jazz FM
- 1 Heavy Metal (Mythbusters proof of theorem result)
- 1 No music please, we're growing.

I just read an good tip on **Texas potting**.

Take a large soda pop bottle with a 5-pointed 'crown' at the bottom. Cut the top part off. Drill holes in the bottom crown part about one half a centimeter from the bottom. Fill the bottom part to just above the drilled holes with 2 or 3 centimeters of gravel or perlite and the rest with pre-moistened soil mix. Place your containers in a plastic tub with 2 centimeters of water in the bottom. The holes drilled should be below the water line and the perlite above it. You only need to keep the water level in the tub not the plastic bottle pots and fertilizer can be added to the water added to the tub.

Our Newsgroup is located at <http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/TAVS/>

Please sign up if you haven't already. Group is open to all TAVS members but not to non members with rare exceptions (Moderated)

Managing Your Collection

One memory that comes to mind is an old Avengers show where the ordinary houseplants take over by growing into a jungle. Well, ever felt that your African Violet collection has taken over or better still become a jungle. I believe most of us can identify with this scenario and as a result become overwhelmed by it. The sad thing is that we have done it to ourselves. The least expensive of our purchases are plants or leaves and how quickly it is forgotten how one propagated leaf becomes 6 or 15 new plants . Yes, once I potted up 15 seedlings just cause they existed

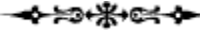
Remember your collection will always be in a state of flux. Leaves are 'put down', baby plants are born and 'the kids' are nurtured and then go out to show and/or are sold . Maybe they will find a new home, are sold or in some cases as teenagers come home to live again. Taking 3 new seedlings off the 'mother leaf' is sufficient. One for yourself, one to sell and one to give away. There is always exceptions to the rule. Propagation of fantasy bloom is one example However, the best policy is do not pot up more than 3 even if they exist. It costs less to discard the new seedling right from the clump than , spending time, effort and energy growing it to then throw it out, cause it did not sell or your friends do not want anymore plants

When an old plant goes out it can be replaced with a new one. Do not get all attached to your plants . Your kids do leave home, go to school, get married and make others happy. So will your plant. Have the fun, satisfaction and knowledge that you did a good job and give, or sell it to someone else to look after. I love breaking up clumps. There are times when I just put down leaves so that I can break-up clumps. So I have to restrain myself on occasion and not get carried away with ' the leaf' propagation part of this hobby.

Make sure you have somewhere to sell your product. It could be the club at meetings, donations to the show/sale or Sept sale. Be creative and try something new. I have been known to sell plants at the 'mall' as promotion of either the plant or the club. You can do the same. If you are interested in this kind of venue, I would be able to assist by giving information on how to get started. . Contraction, the opposite of expansion has to occur or one ends up with an out of control collection. I have donated mature plants to a retirement home and then let them sell the plants. The home gets the proceeds.

Balance is an important element of your new hobby. The quantity of plants in must equal the number of plants out. One does not have enough money to purchase more light gardens or window sills to accommodate an ever-ending supply of plants, or to pay the hydro bill.

Remember there will always be another new and different plant to challenge one's growing skills. It will take more than one individual's lifetime to try to grow 14,000 different African Violets.



Hybridizing the Violet

It took about 35 years from discovery of the saintpaulia before the American nursery of Armacost & Royston in Los Angeles began to import leaves and seed from Suttons in England and Ernst Benary in Germany. From this they produced over 1000 plants initially. They then set about reducing the numbers to about 100 plants. It took them another 5 years to further reduce the numbers. Finally 10 plants were chosen from the many possibilities.

The "Original Ten" all were blue or shades of blue and all single blossoms. They were: Admiral, Amethyst, Blue Boy, Commodore, Mermaid, Neptune, Norseman, Sailor Boy, Viking and No. 32. All of these are still available and grown today. "Blue Boy" became the most used in hybridizing; it held the recessive red gene.

In 1939 they produced a double blue flower and a year later a single pink bloom which they named, "Pink Beauty".

In 1941 "Blue Boy" mutated and the new plant was named "Blue Girl". This is when the term girl foliage began. The plant had a white-coloured area stretching into the leaf blade from the petiole. The original "Blue Boy" was different so it became boy foliage. There was some confusion then thinking that you could only hybridize with one boy and one girl plant. Of course we now know this as untrue.

In 1942 the first white blooms appeared. "White Lady" came from a cross between pink and blue flowering plants.

The following years with further hybridizing a 'geneva' type of flower was produced. These were flowers with a thin white edge to the lobes. Produced by the Geneva Nursery. And then star shaped flowers with five lobes of equal size.

The first double pink blossom was produced by Lyndon Lyon in 1954.

Variegated foliage first appeared in 1957, a leaf from the green-leaved "White Pride" produced a plantlet having a narrow white edge on its leaves. It was named "Tommie Lou" for Mrs. Tommie Lou Oden.

Another type of variegation came from Ethel Champion also in the late 1950's. The centre of the leaves was white but turned green with maturity. Then in 1961 the plant named "Lilian Jarrett" produced a mosaic type of variegation.

Miniature and Semi-miniature plants began to appear in the 1960's after hybridizers began using some of the smaller miniature species, *S. pusilla* and *S. shumensis* with some of the smaller growing hybrids at the time. Trailers were also produced by hybridizing with *S. grotei* a natural growing trailer. In the 1970's mini's and semi's along with trailers were being marketed.



STREPTOCARPUS AND VARIEGATION

Background information: I was the one who hybridized the "Ice" and "Iced" variegated streps. Margaret Gurr's variegated Strep 'Canterbury Surprise', from x-ray mutation of Strep rexii is the mother to my hybrids and Michael Kartuz's variegated 'Winter Dreams' is the father.

I am often asked why some plants turn solid green. I just responded to a letter on a streptocarpus Yahoo list

about variegated foliage on streps. The person's Strep 'Ice Pink Flamingo' had mostly solid green leaves. The person wanted to know if they took a variegated leaf from the plant, would they get back decent variegation. The simple answer is yes it's very possible.

People are used to growing variegated AVs which appear to turn green mostly due to environmental factors like too much heat or too much nitrogen in the fertilizer. I grow the variegated streps under 2 tubes and 4 tubes, and now am positive light is not a factor in variegated streps producing green leaves. At first I thought temperature may be a factor, but over the years growing in Texas and now in Illinois, I'm sure it's not a factor.

In order to get show plants, I often fertilize with high nitrogen fertilizer as the only fertilizer for 8 weeks at a time. That has not produced solid green leaves...just big ones with wide leaves! (see attached photo showing about 15 inches on the ruler)

I really don't think the environment in one's growing conditions (fertilizer, heat, light) causes a variegated strep to produce solid green leaves. When one propagates a variegated AV from a leaf, usually all the plantlets are variegated. Not so with variegated streps. To get nicely variegated plantlets, you must take a variegated leaf and propagate it making sure a mix of white and green touch the soil. If all green touches the soil, you'll get all green leaves. If an all white area touches the soil you will create all white plants that eventually die.

Ok, here's the theory: Rather than environmental causes, a variegated strep plant mostly makes new solid green leaves because the area where the new leaf was created didn't have enough variegated cells to make a variegated leaf.

My variegated Kohleria 'Texas Rainbow' is another that'll make solid colored side shoots. If a rhizome is broken into scales...oh my!! What a wonderful variety of variegation: cream, beige, burgundy, etc.

I'd love input from the scientific community! - Dale in Illinois



SHOW SCHEDULE http://www.soniabrock.com/TAVS/PDF/2007_TAVS_Show_Schedule_Final-3.pdf
Please note the following change to the Show Shedule
Class 67 -- size of niche should be 18x18x12 not 8 inches

Show Entry Form <http://www.soniabrock.com/TAVS/PDF/Entry-Form-2.pdf>



Toronto African Violet Society March Minutes

Meeting was called to order by President Don MacDonald at 7:35pm with 26 people in attendance.

A motion to accept the February minutes as printed in the March newsletter was made by Sonia Brock, seconded by Albert Wan all in favour

A motion was made by Roland Schwann to accept the treasurer's report, seconded by Marilyn Crompton, carried. There was no old business to discuss.

An interest was expressed by some members that they would be interested in trying to grow violets from seed. The club purchased 8 seed packets and members were invited to by tickets at a chance to win one. They varied from hybrid varieties to trailers.

Anne Barber proposed the idea of a refreshment sign up sheet to keep track of volunteers for the tea break at each meeting in order to know who will be volunteering and taking care of the sweets each month. This idea was implemented at the March meeting.

The Gesnariad show will be taking place at Sherway Gardens March 30th and April 1st for anyone interested in attending.

A motion to close the meeting was made by Pat Londry, seconded by Anne Barber.
Meeting closed at 7:45pm

Respectfully Submitted by:

Deanna Belli, co-secretary  Deanna Belli.

A big thank you to all who participated by bringing sweets to our last meeting. Such an array of goodies.

It appears that we have many fine bakers within the club.

2007 Event Calendar

April 17, 2006 Getting ready for Show - Packaging, Show final details Louise Cheung
Roland Schwahn - LIGHTING
Leaf Exchange

April 21, 2006 TAVS Show Entry and Judging
April 22, 2006 TAVS Show opened to the public

May 15, 2006 Carolyn Conlin-Lane - Companion Plants - Small/Medium Sinningas

June 19, 2006 Awards Dinner
Silent Auction

1893-1993 100 years African Violets

In 1993, Holtkamp celebrated the 100th anniversary of the African Violet. In 1893, Master Gardener Hermann Wendland from Hannover-Herrenhausen, Germany first reported the discovery of African Violets (botanical name: *Saintpaulia ionantha*).

The following is an excerpt from the Deutsche Gartner Zeitung, a German trade magazine for the commercial grower, discussing an exhibit of the recently-discovered African Violet.

Among the novelties shown to the experts of the European Community at the International Growers' Show in Gent, the *Saintpaulia ionantha* received notable admiration from the experts and flower enthusiasts. The plant was recently brought over from German East Africa and displayed at the Show by Master Gardener H. Wendland-herrenhausen. It is a petite member of the Gesneriad family, and therein grouped under the order Cyrtandroideae. The *Saintpaulia ionantha* is a small plant, reaching a diameter of approximately 20-2 cm (8-10 inches) with spear to heartshaped, soft and hairy, slightly indented, pulpous bright green leaves on stems that surround the flowers like rosette. The leaves greatly resemble those of a Gloxinia, except that all parts are somewhat smaller. In the center of the plant, numerous flower stems, about 10-15 cm (4-6 inches) long, emerge with several peduncles, each decorated with purplish-blue, round, four-part flowers. The bright yellow anthers at the center of the flowers contrast nicely against the purplish-blue colour of the petals. Looking at the whole plant, one cannot help but say that is a very unique and beautiful species.

From a distance, the blossoms bear some resemblance to the *Ramondia pyrenaica*, except that the *Saintpaulia* is much more abundant in blooms. According to observations, the *Saintpaulia* can vary its

colour, and there are already different shades available, ranging from light to dark purplish-blue. With artificial insemination, perhaps even with other plant species, it might not be impossible to obtain numerous seedlings with different characteristics and colours from future hybrids.

It is likely that the *Saintpaulia* can be successfully cultivated in a greenhouse and will respond favorably in a bright location. The results of experiments, which have already begun, should soon provide information about the best and most appropriate treatment. There is even the chance that they can be grown in the home.

It has not been determined yet if the *Saintpaulia* also grows a bulb as the *Gloxinia* does. Propagation will, for the time being, most likely be from seeds, but considering the structure and the appearance of the leaves, it may well be possible to propagate by leaves. The tests that are presently being done will soon yield the best propagation method.

The introduction of the *Saintpaulia* will be a welcome addition to the limited number of small greenhouse bloomers. Even though it does not have the ostentatious appearance of some other plants in the Gesneriad family, people who have a sense for such a charming and delicate plant as the *Saintpaulia ionantha*, will certainly appreciate it.

The plants and seeds were initially entrusted to the expert care of the Master Gardener Wendland in Herrenhausen, Germany who then arranged for the ownership and breeding rights to be turned over to E. Benary-Erfurt. Since significant propagation levels have already been achieved in Herrenhausen, it is likely that this novelty will very soon be made accessible to flower enthusiasts.

Part II

The *Saintpaulia ionantha* was discovered in 1892 during the time when plantation owner Walter von Saint-Paul-Illaire was living in German East Africa, today known as Tanzania. He found the *Saintpaulia ionantha* in the wooded Usambara mountains located south east of Lake Victoria near the border of Kenya. The German name "Usambara Violet" was derived from the place where the plant was originally found.

Walter Von Saint-Paul-Illaire probably sent seeds of the African Violet to his father in Germany during the summer of 1892. His father, Marshal of the Court Baron Ulrich von Saint-Paul-Illaire was an eager amateur grower. He sowed the tiny seeds in his greenhouse at his hometown of Fischbach. After they had germinated, he cultivated the plants until they bloomed. At that time he could not have anticipated the enormous popularity his little "protégés" would know one day.

The Master Gardener of the Herrenhaus Greenhouse, Herman Wendland, received seeds and plant samples from Baron von Saint-Paul-Illaire in fall or winter of 1892. Mr Wendland described the African Violet for the first time in the journal *Gartenflora*, Berlin in 1893 and in *Mollers Deutsche Gartner-Zeitung*, Erfurt on May 20, 1893 (edition 16 volume 8).

In honor of the flower's discoverer, Saint-Paul-Illaire, Hermann Wendland named the new plant species "*Saintpaulia ionantha*". The word *ionantha* is derived from the two Greek roots *ion* (meaning "blue violet") and *anthos* ("flower"). Technically, though the flower has come to be known as an African Violet, it is not really a violet. Whereas the genus *Viola* derives from the *Violaceae* family, the *Saintpaulia* belongs to the Gesneriad Family.

The Herrenhausener Botanical Garden exhibited the *Saintpaulia* for the first time at the Fifth Gnetter Floral Show, April 16-25, 1893. Immediately, it caught the attention of experts and visitors, and was designated the most interesting new plant of this prestigious European horticultural show.

In addition to the *Saintpaulia ionantha*, 23 other wild *Saintpaulia* species are known. Their discoveries were recorded by the botanists B.L. Burt, Engler and E.P. Roberts from 1900 to 1964.

Our own Toronto African Violet Society site has been redesigned at this new address
<http://www.bluejasper.com/tavs/>

THE Links at the top of the page are

Home History Meetings Events Growing Tips Photos Contact Join Links

Running our mouse pointer down the INDEX, The first entry "**History**" gives us a short history of our Society.

The "**Meetings**" takes us to a page giving directions and even providing a map! That's how I first found the Toronto African Violet Society.

"**Events**" gives use the dates for the
 ANNUAL FLOWER SHOW and SALE - April 22, 2007 - 11am to 4pm
 Toronto Botanical Gardens, 777 Lawrence Ave. (at Leslie & Lawrence)
 Your donation of plants or leaves for our club salestable will be greatly appreciated.

OPEN HOUSE and PLANT SALE - September 30, 2007 - 1pm to 4pm
 Toronto Botanical Gardens, 777 Lawrence Ave. (at Leslie & Lawrence).

"**Growing Tips**" leads to a page the with link on "The Basics of Growing African Violets". That must be very welcome to beginners. I found it helpful when I first started.

The "**Photos**" page contains some lovely show shots. Seen as tiny thumbnails when clicked upon each photo expands to show a larger view.

"**Contact Us**" gives a full listing of the Executive with contact information.

The "**Join**" click takes us to a printable Membership Form which is very clearly written and contains the address the Application should be sent to.

Last, but by no means least, The "**Links**" clickable in the left-hand column takes us to a well-selected list of other web sites of value to TAVS members and others.

TAVS Officers

2006-2007

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Treasurer	416-445-7774	Louise McPherson	lulumac@sympatico.ca

The Adobe PDF file for this Newsletter is located here
<http://www.soniabrock.com/TAVS/PDF/2007-TAVS-04.pdf>