


EUROMODA



Letto Dorci' designer ENRICO TONUCCI

WE RAB DO

3 1/2 Blocks North of Woodward

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GARDEN SPOT

African Violets easy to grow



MARTY FIGLEY

African Violets of today are a far cry from the large, often gangly plants that our grandmas grew. Now, because we can control heat, light and humidity more readily than in the past, these favorites are once again blooming happily in our homes.

New cultivars are being introduced and the miniatures seem to fit a niche that wasn't there before. The blooms of purple, blue, pink, white, bi-colored and mottled shades as well as different leaf hues assure that they can complement any decor and add beauty for a long time.

Soils, too, have improved. Several companies have specially formulated growing medium for African Violets in which the soil is blended with wetting agents and trace elements and fortified with time-released fertilizers. Vermiculite and/or perlite lighten the mixture, and peat moss is often used. These all assure good drainage that is essential to the plants.

These beauties are very easy to grow and propagate. I have found that an east window with a sheer curtain is ideal, although for several years they grew in a west window covered with mini blinds.

midly high at this time and water regularly with liquid plant food to get the plant established. It will take about eight months from the first cutting to become an adult plant. African Violets can be started from seed, but the process is long and rather difficult.

African Violets originated in the hills of Tanzania in east Africa by Herr Von Saint Paulliare, from whom it got its botanical name, *Saintpaulia*. The leaves are evergreen and the plants can flower for many months of the year. They do take "time out" to rest and build up strength for the next flowering.

When shopping for these plants you will be happily surprised to find the array of colors, single and double blooms with either smooth or fringed petals. After you have chosen one (or more), make sure there are no brown patches and that there are many buds.

Care

These plants are basically healthy but they do need regular care. If you notice scorched leaves, it could be the result of too much sun, or cold water on them. Make sure the water is room temperature, especially in the winter. If the leaves turn pale or change shape, it is probably too cool. They don't do well in temperatures less than 55 degrees Fahrenheit. If the surrounding air is too dry, mildew may appear.

They do like high humidity. Set them atop a container of water, with pebbles to raise the pot from setting in the water, to provide the needed humidity.

If you see sunken, brown spots on the leaves, especially underneath, a leaf miner is probably at work. If it is severe, destroy the plant.

Britain bound

Excitement is growing for the Great Britain trip, which includes London, Cardiff and Edinburgh. Call my voice mail number, or Barbara at (800) 451-0637. Brochures will be mailed soon.

See FIGLEY, 14D




MARTY FIGLEY

No shrinking violet: African Violets are easy to grow.


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