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## African Violet Society of America

Weekly Growing Tip!

### *The Real Violet*

***Both are called "violets" but they are not related.***



Photo 1

Do you know which of these two photos shows an African violet?

One of these (photo 1) is a Viola, which is in the family of [Violaceae](#) from the [order of Malpighiales](#). The other (photo 2) is Saintpaulia ionantha, which is in the [Gesneriad](#) family from the [order of Lamiales](#). That means they have very little DNA in common.

The term "violet" is commonly used for both. But they are not the same, nor are they even related!

Both have similar pansy-shaped flowers and shades of purple are common in both. Both also have heart-shaped leaves but the Saintpaulia has a more succulent leaf covered with fuzz.

The African violet is shown in Photo 2. It's not hard to understand why it was named *ionantha* which means "violet-like flowers".



Photo 2

### ***Common Names***

Common names used for Viola are pansy and violet (and sometimes johnny-jump-ups). The common name for Saintpaulia is African violet.

Violets and Pansies (or [Viola](#)) are most commonly grown in the northern [hemisphere](#) often used as a bedding flower in gardens or found growing wild

in shady locations.

African violets (or [Saintpaulia](#)) were discovered in east Africa and today species are still found there. But Saintpaulia hybrids are some of the most common indoor potted plants in the world. There's an excellent chance that you grow and love Saintpaulia if you are reading this!

So when is a violet an [African violet](#)? Scientifically speaking, it's when that violet is a Saintpaulia!

[The Alpine Garden Society](#) studies Viola and related plants. The [African Violet Society of America](#) studies Saintpaulia and you are invited [to join!](#)

Sincerely,  
Joyce Stork

African Violet Society of America, Membership and Promotion Committee

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### ***News from the [African Violet Society of America](#)***

AVSA's Growing Tip email program has been named an All-Star by [Constant Contact](#). Thank you to all of you who open our weekly message and click on links. Even more thanks go to those who have shared photos, quotes, and stories that have made our content interesting. You helped us win this award.

[Press Release](#)



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