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African Violet Society of America

AVSA Weekly Growing Tip

November 14, 2016

Greetings!

Welcome to AVSA's Weekly Growing Tip email. We hope you benefit from our experience and expertise!

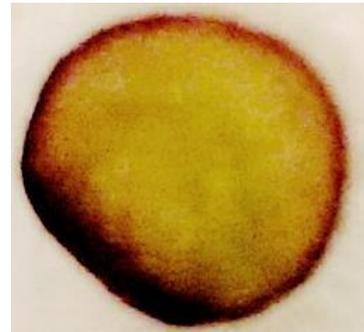


Sometimes we all need a laugh...

This ordinary looking African violet leaf with a nice thick [petiole](#) can be a lot of fun if you know what to do with it, and I'm not talking about [propagation](#) today.

First the science... a leaf petiole (the stalk attached to the leaf) is made up of specialized cells, including [xylem](#) which form a pipeline to transport water and

nutrients up from the roots up to the leaves. In the photo to the right, the xylem make up most of the greenish tissue shown inside a cross-section of the petiole. That simply means that the petiole is mostly filled with water. In many plants, the xylem has a woody structure but not in African violets. The xylem in the petiole is stiff but it is easily crushed.



Extreme close up of slice of an African violet petiole.

Back to the fun... if you squeeze the cut end of a petiole just right, you can squirt water—sometimes as much as 2 or 3 feet! Try it, right now. Remove a lower leaf from a violet plant. Place the cut end of a petiole between your thumb and forefinger and squeeze it firmly. If it doesn't work the first time, recut the stem (to trim off the squashed part) and try it again in a slightly different position. Do this until you see the water squirt. Now go show a friend your surprising African violet squirt gun!

Do you have questions about growing violets? Respond to [this email](#) and let us know. You might find the answer featured in an upcoming Weekly Growing Tip.

Feel free to share this tip with anyone who might be interested. Invite them to [sign up](#) for their own weekly email from the African Violet Society of America.

Sincerely,

Joyce Stork
AVSA Membership & Promotion

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

The [AVSA office](#) will be closed on Wednesday November 23 and Thursday November 24 for the Thanksgiving holiday. Normal office hours are 9:00 to 4:00 Monday through Thursday (Central Standard Time.)

The [AVSA Store](#) offers many products at a significant discount for members of the **[African Violet Society of America](#)**. Not a member yet? **[Join AVSA](#)** today and start saving!

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