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African Violet Society of America

AVSA Weekly Growing Tip

July 25, 2016

Greetings!

Welcome to today's Growing Tip email from the [African Violet Society of America](#).



What does 'Ma's Blue Penguin' have in common with a three headed Greek monster? They are both examples of chimera [ki'mirə, kə'mirə] and neither could be described as ordinary. Today the African Violet Society of America Plant Registration Chair, [Joe Bruns](#), is going to tell you more about this extraordinary type of violet!

In Greek mythology, a chimera is character composed of parts of more than one animal. Genetically, a chimera is composed of tissues from two different layers. An African violet chimera has blossom petals that are composed of tissues from both the mesophyll and the epidermis, hence the two different colors or color patterns.

Earlier African violets mostly had solid-color blossoms, so the chimeras that came from them had two distinct colors, with a sharp transition from one color to the next. However, today's African violets have complex color patterns, with fantasy markings (both streaks and spots - "puff" fantasy), rays, different-colored eyes and edges, etc. Therefore the stripes on the newer chimeras are not always distinct.

For example, '[Ma's Blue Penguin](#)' (shown above) could be described as white with a blue edge. However, since it doesn't reproduce true by leaf cutting, it's a chimera. It's assumed that the outer stripes are solid blue, while the center stripes are white with a blue edge. Since it's not a distinct edge (the white fades into blue on the edge), similarly, but to a lesser extent, the white fades into the blue outer stripes.

So what distinguishes a chimera is that it does not bloom true when propagated by leaf cutting, and it needs to be [propagated by sucker](#) or blossom stem. A chimera will have stripes, but they are not always distinct. In fact, it's possible to have a chimera blossom with tissues from two different layers, where both tissues have the same coloring. (In that case we wouldn't even know it was a chimera.) In some cases the color and pattern on the two different tissues are very similar, making it difficult to say where the outer stripes end and the inner stripe begins.

The above refers to blossom chimeras. There are also leaf chimeras, where the leaves are

produced from two different tissue layers, and they appear to be variegated. We refer to them as "chimera variegated."

Anyone is welcome to [sign up for this growing tip](#) from the African Violet Society of America. Subscribers are not required to be members of AVSA. Please share it with your friends!

Have a growing question? Feel free to contact us at the [AVSA Office!](#)

Sincerely,

Joyce Stork
African Violet Society of America, Membership & Promotion

News from the

[African Violet Society of America](#)

Attention African violet growers in **Arizona**! A new African violet club is forming in the fall of 2016. Meetings will be held in the greater Phoenix area starting in September. For more information email [Copper State AVC.](#)

Would you like to start a club too? Contact [Mel Grice](#) for a list of AVSA members in your area and for tips on programs and organizing. And, yes, you are also invited to use our weekly email to find members in your area.

Not a member of the African Violet Society of America? You are invited to [Join](#) today!

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