

streptocarpus



STREPTOCARPUS SPP.

BOTANICAL NAME

Streptocarpus spp. (strep-toe-KAR-pus)

COMMON NAMES

Cape primrose, False African violet

DESCRIPTION

Streptocarpuses have short, ovate, fuzzy leaves and tiny, trumpet-shaped flowers. The flowers “float” above the foliage on long petioles.

COLORS

The blossoms are available in hues of white, pink, red, blue and purple. They also can be bicolor with white or yellow throats or white petal edges.

CONSUMER LIFE

A single *Streptocarpus* plant can produce flowers for up to six months. Keep pinching off faded florets to prevent the plant from going to seed.



STREPTOCARPUS SPP.
CAPE PRIMROSE



STREPTOCARPUS SPP.
'PURPLE PICOTEE'

in-store and consumer care

LIGHT Bright, indirect light will maximize plant quality and flower development. Flowers that open at lower light levels will be pale and irregularly colored, especially on darker cultivars. Choose an east, south or west window to provide the correct light levels.

WATER *Streptocarpuses* never should be allowed to dry out, even slightly. When watering the plants, avoid getting water on the leaves.

TEMPERATURE *Streptocarpuses* do best with nighttime temperatures of 60 F to 65 F or warmer and daytime temperatures of 70 F to 75 F.

HUMIDITY Humidity levels should be medium to high. This can be achieved in the home by placing the plant on a pebble tray.

FERTILIZER Use a high-phosphorous bloom fertilizer such as an African violet

food product. *Streptocarpuses* can be fertilized moderately at every watering.

SOIL Use a pasteurized potting mix.

GROOMING Remove individual flowers as they fade. If lower leaves turn yellow, they can be removed without damaging the plant.

challenges

ETHYLENE SENSITIVITY *Streptocarpuses* are sensitive to ethylene gas. The blossoms will wilt when they are exposed, and the plant will not recover. Make sure your plants have been treated with an anti-ethylene agent at the grower level or during transportation.

PESTS Wipe mealybugs off with a cotton swab dipped in rubbing alcohol. Keep spider mites down by fumigating, vaporizing or syringing with insecticide.

fun facts

MEANING The name “*Streptocarpus*” means “twisted fruit” in Greek.

FAMILY *Streptocarpuses* are members of the Gesneriaceae family. This diverse family comprises more than 2,500 genera. Perhaps the best-known member is the African violet (*Saintpaulia*). Other popular plants in this family include gloxinias (*Sinningia*), lipstick plants (*Aeschynanthus*), flame violets (*Episcia*) and cupid’s bows (*Achimenes*). The genus *Streptocarpus* contains about 140 species.

ORIGINS *Streptocarpuses* are native to Africa, Madagascar, Thailand, China and Indonesia.

HISTORY *Streptocarpuses* were discovered and sent to England by James Bowie (1790-1853), who discovered and named many of today’s popular commercial plants like *Clivia*, *Euphorbia*, *Aloe* and *Gladiolus*.

of note

BUYING TIP The plants should have 25 percent of their flowers open and others showing color at the time of sale. **sfr**

Some information provided by:
The Chain of Life Network®, www.chainoflifenetworg.org
The Gesneriad Society, www.gesneriadsociety.org
Virginia Cooperative Extension, www.ext.vt.edu/departments/envirohort/factsheets/pottedplants/strept.html
Dave’s Garden, <http://davesgarden.com/pf/go/2114/>
Michigan Nursery and Landscape Association
<http://web1.msue.msu.edu/imp/modzz/masterzz.html>
Society of American Florists’ (SAF) Flower & Plant Care manual

Reach “Blooming Plant of the Month” writer Steven W. Brown, AIFD, at sbfloral@aol.com or (415) 239-3140.

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