

# ❁❁ MINIATURE AFRICAN VIOLETS & GESNERIADS ❁❁

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## Pittsburgh African Violet & Gesneriad Society

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### African Violet Sizes

- Microminiature = Less than 3"
- Miniature = Between 3 and 6"
- Semi-Miniature = Between 6 and 8"
- Standard = Between 8 and 16"
- Large = 16" and above

### Miniature African Violets

- Less than 6" in diameter for single crowned varieties
- Overall plant size small
- Small leaves
- Small flowers
- Can be trailers with small leaves, flowers, and individual crowns
- Can be equally or more floriferous than standards!

### History

- Most minis are hybridized from smaller species varieties, such as *Saintpaulia shumensis*.
- First mini hybridized by Lyndon Lyon.

### General Care

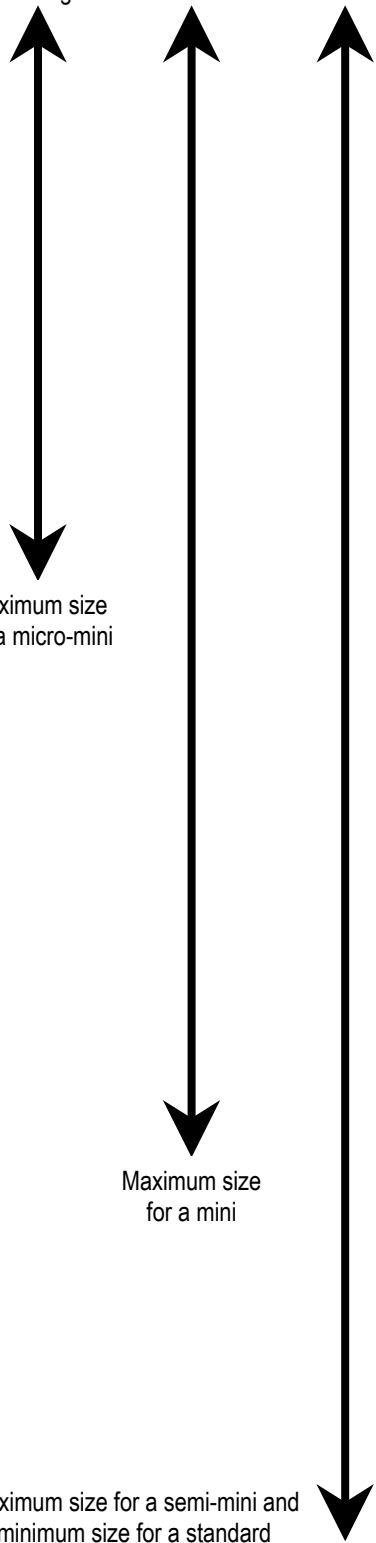
- Although the plants are small and look delicate, they are fairly resilient and require little additional care except careful handling and possibly some bifocals!
- Some require more light than standards, accomplished by raising plants on a pot closer to the light source, or sitting closest to the window
- Tend to build up fertilizer salts quickly, benefit from occasional flushes with clear water
- Small soil volume requires more frequent watering, especially for micro-minis
- Plants do well in a terrarium, which also eliminates constant need for watering
- Can be watered from above with a small watering can or turkey baster, or from below by letting water wick into soil from saucer or capillary matting
- Wick watering tends to rot small, sensitive roots
- If growing miniatures for show using the disbudding technique, the faster growing minis require disbudding closer to show time. Although this depends on the specific variety, the rule of thumb is 10 weeks for standards, and 8 weeks for minis.

### Potting

- Minis do well in 2-¼ to 2-½" pots
- Micro-minis require "thumb pots," which are available from some mail order supply sources, also Unique Boutique in Collier Township on Route 50.
- Because these plants grow quickly, they benefit from repotting every 6 – 8 months.
- Some "unruly" minis that grow larger than desired can be given a bonsai treatment, which requires more frequent repotting and root pruning to keep the variety smaller than it likes to grow.

### Miniature Gesneriads

- Unlike African violets, Gesneriads do not readily hybridize into miniatures
- Exceptions:  
Species *Sinningias* including *S. concinna* and *S. pusilla*  
Hybrids from these species include "Bright eyes" and "Wood Nymph"
- Other miniaturized Gesneriads include some varieties of *Streptocarpus*, and a florist Gloxinia variety named "Tom Thumb."
- More recent discoveries to the mini-Gesneriad world include most species of *Petrocosmea* and some *Koellikerias*.
- Care for miniature Gesneriads is similar to that of African violets.
- All are excellent choices for terrarium growing.
- Miniature *Sinningias* seem to do well in long-fibered sphagnum moss. Letting these tubers dry out will trigger dormancy, but placing them in a moist environment will almost guarantee constant growth and bloom.



Maximum size  
for a micro-mini

Maximum size  
for a mini

Maximum size for a semi-mini and  
minimum size for a standard