

Niagara College Greenhouse & Nursery Success Sheet No. 95

Streptocarpella

History

Streptocarpus saxorum is a member of the gesneriad, or African violet, family and is native to southern Africa.

The term “streptocarpella” is a Latin word meaning “streptocarpus like”; *streptocarpus*, in turn, means “twisted fruit.” The translation of *saxorum* indicates that the plant in its natural habitat is found growing among rocks and is most likely to be found suspended from the crevices in a rock face.

Description

Streptocarpella, commonly known as the Dauphin violet, is a small basket plant that has velvet-like green leaves approximately one inch long and has flowers in a grouping of three to five.

The flowers appear slightly pendulous and begin as narrow tubes that fan out into slanted five-lobed faces similar to those of a pansy. The most unusual feature of this plant is that its flowers often seem to be floating gracefully above its leaves.

The common flower colour is purple although various other cool-coloured shades do exist. Among them is the variety ‘Concorde Blue.’

Water

Like all members of the gesneriad family, streptocarpella prefers a moderately moist soil. When in bloom, streptocarpella must be consistently moist but not over watered. Do not allow the plant to sit directly in water, and

beware of wet foliage as it may result in brown leaves.

Soil

Streptocarpella does best in a well-drained, organic potting mix and can be presented in a decorative container, a window box or a hanging basket.

Although not a heavy feeder, it should be fertilized every two weeks during the spring and summer months and once a month in the fall and winter. Plants will flower periodically throughout the year if proper care is maintained.

Light

During the growing season, the plant should be situated in a bright location where it gets good light but is not in direct sunlight. In the winter months, give the plant an east or south window to ensure that it will get enough sunlight to continue blooming all winter.

Value

Streptocarpella is said to be the easiest of the gesneriad family to maintain. This plant not only will perform admirably outside on your patio or porch during the summer months but also will continue to bloom beautifully during the winter as a houseplant.

Streptocarpella can be propagated by terminal cuttings and, if maintained properly during the year, makes an excellent addition to any container or basket.

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