

[54] AFRICAN VIOLET PLANT NAMED HARLEQUIN

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[57] ABSTRACT

A new and distinct cultivar of African violet named Harlequin characterized by its single, variegated flowers with white background and clear-cut purplish red frilled edges that are larger on the 2 small petals than on the 3 big petals; strong, upright flower stems that curve slightly toward the center to form a compact bouquet above the leaves; large, medium green, occasionally slightly serrated leaves; profuse flowering, vigorous and compact growth habit, flowering 10–11 weeks after potting, and its long lasting and non-dropping flowers.

1 Drawing Sheet

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The present invention comprises a new and distinct cultivar of African violet plant, botanically known as *Saintpaulia ionantha*, and hereinafter referred to by the cultivar name Harlequin.

The new cultivar was referred to during the breeding and selection process by the designation 1/13/81 and is a product of a planned breeding program. The new cultivar was originated from a cross made by me in the controlled breeding program in Haffen, Federal Republic of Germany. The female, or seed parent was a cultivar designated 2/76. The male, or pollen parent was a cultivar designated 4158.

Harlequin was discovered and selected by me as a flowering plant within the progeny of the stated cross in a controlled environment in Haffen, West Germany. Asexual reproduction of the new cultivar by leaf cuttings, as performed by me at Haffen, West Germany, has demonstrated that the combination of characteristics as herein disclosed for the new cultivar are firmly fixed and retained through successive generations of asexual reproduction.

Harlequin has not been observed under all possible environmental conditions. The phenotype may vary significantly with variations in environment such as temperature, light intensity and day length. The following observations, measurements and values describe the new cultivar as grown in Haffen, West Germany and Nashville, Tenn. under greenhouse conditions which closely approximate those generally used in commercial practice.

The following traits have been repeatedly observed and are determined to be basic characteristics of Harlequin, which in combination distinguish this African violet as a new and distinct cultivar:

- (1) Strong, upright flower stems curving slightly toward the center.
- (2) Single, variegated flowers with white background and purplish red frilled edges.
- (3) Profuse flowering.
- (4) Each plant carries 12 and more upright flower stems each of which carries 8 and more flowers.
- (5) Long lasting, non-dropping flowers.
- (6) Vigorous and compact grower.
- (7) Plant saleable 10 to 11 weeks after potting.
- (8) Seed capsules push slightly through.

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- (9) Large, medium green, oval to heart-shaped leaves.
- (10) After maturity the flowers dry off, and remain on the peduncle without becoming infected by botrytis.

The accompanying color photographic drawing shows a typical specimen plant of the new cultivar. The colors appearing in the photograph are as true as possible with color illustrations of this type.

In the following description, color references are made to the Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart (RHS), except where general colors of ordinary significance are referred to. Color values were taken under natural sunlight conditions at approximately 2 p.m. in Nashville, Tenn.

Botanical classification: *Saintpaulia ionantha*, Ramt., c.v. Harlequin.

Parentage:

Male parent.—4158.

Female parent.—2/76.

Propagation: The new cultivar holds its distinguishing characteristics through successive propagations by leaf cuttings.

Plant: From 10 cm to 12 cm tall when grown in pots, and approximately 25–28 cm in diameter when fully grown.

Leaves.—General form: Oval to heart-shaped. Diameter 65–75 mm wide and 75–85 mm long. Texture: Leather-like. Aspect: Shiny, slightly hairy, occasionally slightly serrated. Veins: Upperside: visible; underside; well pronounced, light green, shiny. Color (upperside): Yellow-Green Group 147 A. Color (underside): Greyed-Green Group 194 C. Petiole: Strong upright, light green, hairy.

Flowers.—Buds: Ball-shaped, 7–8 mm just before opening. Sepals: Five (5). Color: Light green. Calyx: Shape: Funnel-shaped. Aspect: Spear-shaped, hairy. Peduncle: Character: Strong upright, hairy. Color: Light green with light purplish touch. Individual flowers: Size: 45–50 mm. Shape: Single violet-shaped (3 large and 2 small petals, frilled edges. Color (upperside): White background with the edge being Red-Purple Group 72 A. Under cooler temperatures and more intensive, lighting, the purplish red tends to

intensify. Color (underside): Red-Purple Group 72 B. Borne: Each flower stem carries 8 and more flowers on strong, upright peduncle that are free standing above the leaves, thereby forming a compact bouquet. Flowering habit: Flowers 10-11 weeks after potting.

Reproductive organs.—Stamens: Two (2). Anthers: 2 decomposed of 4 anther cells, seed capsules push slightly through. Filaments: Yellowish green, 4 mm long. Pollen Color: Yellow group 7 A. Styles: 6 mm long, pink, base of ovary light green and hairy.

Roots.—Normally developed white when young, turning slightly brownish when older.

Disease resistance: Good.

General Observations: Harlequin has an extremely attractive appearance due to its variegated white and purplish red flowers. The flowers are white with a very clear-cut purplish red frilled edge that varies between 1/2-5 mm in width. The 2 smaller petals have a larger purplish red edge. A tight bouquet of single violet-shaped flowers free standing above the leaves

develops after approximately 10-11 weeks. Each of the 12 and more strong flower stems carries 8 and more flowers which are long-lasting and non-dropping. Occasionally 1-2 additional small petals may develop. The large, medium green, occasionally slightly serrated leaves give the plant a fresh look. The seed capsules push slightly through.

I claim:

1. A new and distinct cultivar of African violet named Harlequin, as described and illustrated, and particularly characterized by its single, variegated flowers with white background and clear-cut purplish red frilled edges that are larger on the 2 small petals than on the 3 big petals; strong, upright flower stems that curve slightly toward the center to form a compact bouquet above the leaves; large, medium green, occasionally slightly serrated leaves; profuse flowering vigorous and compact growth habit, flowering 10-11 weeks after potting, and its long lasting and non-dropping flowers.

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U.S. Patent

Jun. 13, 1989

Plant 6,847

