

[54] AFRICAN VIOLET PLANT NAMED LITTLE OPAL

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[57] ABSTRACT

A new and distinct cultivar of African violet named Little Opal characterized by its miniature growth habit; single, violet-shaped and funnel-shaped, white flowers with bluish touch in the center radiating irregularly into the petals; strong stems which curve toward the center to form a compact bouquet above the leaves; profuse and continuous flowering; bright green, spear-shaped, finely serrated leaves; flowering 10–11 weeks after planting of unrooted shoot, and by its long lasting and non-dropping flowers.

Primary Examiner—Robert E. Bagwill

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 Little Opal.

The new cultivar was referred to during the breeding and selection process by the designation I 482 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 4 Mini. The male, or pollen parent was a cultivar designated H 73/3.

Little Opal 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.

Little Opal 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 a 4 cm pot 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 Little Opal, which in combination distinguish this African violet as a new and distinct cultivar:

- (1) Little Opal will not grow taller than 5–6 cm.
- (2) Single, funnel-shaped, white flowers with bluish touch in the center radiating irregularly into the petals.
- (3) Strong, wirelike and upright flower stems curving toward the center.
- (4) First flash of flowers forms a tight bouquet above the leaves.
- (5) Profuse flowering; under good growing conditions, continuous flowering.
- (6) Each plant carries 7–10 and more upright flower stems each of which carries 4 and more flowers.

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- (7) Long lasting, non-dropping flowers.
- (8) Plant saleable 10 to 11 weeks after planting of unrooted shoot.
- (9) Seed capsules push slightly through.
- (10) Bright green, hairy leaves.
- (11) Spear-shaped leaves are 1.5 to 2.5 cm in size.
- (12) After maturity the flowers dry off, and remain on the peduncle.

The accompanying color photographic drawing shows a typical specimen plant of the new cultivar grown in a 4 cm pot. The plant is pictured on a hand to highlight the miniature size and growth habit of Little Opal. 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*, Ramat c.v. *Little Opal*.

Parentage:  
Male parent.—H 73/3.  
Female parent.—4 Mini.

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

Plant: From 5 cm to 6 cm tall when grown in pots, and approximately 8–10 cm in diameter when fully grown.

Leaves.—General form: Spear-shaped. Diameter: 15–20 mm wide and 22–25 mm long. Texture: Leatherlike. Aspect: Finely serrated, shiny, hairy. Veins: Upperside: visible; underside: well pronounced, light green, shiny. Color (upper-side): Yellow-Green Group 147 A. Color (under-side): Yellow-Green Group 147 D. Petiole: Strong, green, hairy.

Flowers.—Buds: Size: 3–5 mm just before opening. Shape: Bell-shaped. Color: Light green. Sepals: Five (5). Color: Green. Calyx: Shape: Funnel-shaped. Aspect: Spear-shaped, hairy. Peduncle: Character: Strong upright, hairy. Color: Green.

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Individual flowers: Size: 22-24 mm. Shape: Single, violet-shaped (3 large and 2 small petals) and funnel-shaped. Color (upperside): White with center being Violet-Blue Group 92 A. Under cooler temperatures and more intensive lighting, the bluish touch tends to intensify. Color (underside): White with traces of Violet-Blue Group 92 C. Borne: Each flower stem carries 4 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 planting an unrooted plantlet.

*Reproductive organs.*—Stamens: Two (2). Anthers: 2 composed of 4 anther cells, seed capsule pushes slightly through. Filaments: Yellowish green, 2 mm long. Styles: 5-6 mm long, white, base of ovary light green and hairy.

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

Disease resistance: Good.

General observations: Little Opal is a super miniature violet, which does not grow taller than 5-6 cm. The single, violet-shaped and funnel-shaped flowers are white with a bluish touch in the center radiating ir-

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regularly into the petals. The flowers are very long-lasting and non-dropping. Under good growing conditions Little Opal will bloom continuously. A nice bouquet of flowers free standing above the leaves develops approximately 10-11 weeks after planting an unrooted plantlet. Each of the 7-10 and more strong flower stems carries 4 and more flowers. The bright green leaves are spear-shaped and finely serrated.

I claim:

1. A new and distinct cultivar of African violet named Little Opal, as described and illustrated, and particularly characterized by its miniature growth habit; single, violet-shaped and funnel-shaped, white flowers with bluish touch in the center radiating irregularly into the petals; strong stems which curve toward the center to form a compact bouquet above the leaves; profuse and continuous flowering; bright green, spear-shaped, finely serrated leaves; flowering 10-11 weeks after planting of unrooted shoot, and by its long lasting and non-dropping flowers.

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U.S. Patent

Jul. 18, 1989

Plant 6,933

