

[54] AFRICAN VIOLET PLANT NAMED  
'IMPROVED HOUSTON'  
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Rep. of Germany  
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[56] References Cited

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[57] ABSTRACT

A new and distinct cultivar of African violet named Improved Houston characterized by its single, deep blue flowers; strong, upright flower stems that curve toward the center to form a compact bouquet above the leaves; medium green, serrated girl-type leaves; profuse flowering, vigorous 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 Improved Houston.

The new cultivar was referred to during the breeding and selection process by the designation Ao/79, 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 211/3. The male, or pollen parent was a cultivar designated 89.

Improved Houston 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.

Improved Houston 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 cultivars 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 Improved Houston, which in combination distinguish this African violet as a new and distinct cultivar.

- (1) Strong, upright flower stems curving toward the center.
- (2) Single, solid deep blue flowers.
- (3) Each plant carries 6–8 and more upright flower stems each of which carries 7–9 and more flowers.
- (4) Long lasting, non-dropping flowers.
- (5) Vigorous grower.
- (6) Plant saleable 10 to 11 weeks after potting.
- (7) Seed capsules push slightly through.

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(8) Medium green, girl-type leaves, wavy, serrated with a bright light green center.

(9) 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 Color Chart (R.H.S.), except where general colors of ordinary significance are referred to. Color values were taken under natural sunlight conditions at approximately 1 p.m. in Nashville, Tenn.

Botanical classification: *Saintpaulia ionantha*, Ramat., c.v. Improved Houston.

Parentage:

Male parent.—89.

Female parent.—211/3.

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

Plant: From 8 cm to 10 cm tall when grown in pots, and approximately 18–20 cm in diameter when fully grown.

Leaves.—General form: Round, girl-type. Diameter: 65–75 mm. Texture: Velvety. Aspect: Serrated, wavy, shiny, slightly hairy, bright light green center. Veins: Uppside: visible; underside: very well pronounced, light green, shiny, purplish red on the very young leaves. Color (uppside): Yellow-Green Group 147 A. Color (underside): Yellow-Green Group 148 D. Petiole: Strong upright, light green with purplish touch on side towards flowers, hairy.

Flowers.—Buds: Bell-shaped, 8–9 mm just before opening, purplish blue. Sepals: Five (5). Color: Purplish green. Calyx: Shape: Funnel-shaped. Aspect: Spear-shaped, hairy. Peduncle: Character: Strong upright, hairy. Color: Purplish brown. Individual flowers: Size: 40–45 mm. Shape: Single violet-shaped (3 large and 2 small petals). Color (uppside): Violet-Blue Group 80

B. Under cooler temperatures and more intensive lighting, the blue tends to intensify. Color (underside): Violet-Blue Group 89 B to C. Borne: Each flower stem carries 7-9 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 composed of 4 anther cells, seed capsule pushes slightly through. Filaments: Yellowish green with blue traces, 5 mm long. Pollen Color: Yellow Group 7 A. Styles: 7 mm long, purplish blue, base of ovary light green and hairy.

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

Disease resistance: Good.

General Observations: Improved Houston has a very attractive appearance due to its medium green, serrated girl-type leaves with a light green center. A

tight bouquet of flowers free standing above the leaves develops after approximately 10-11 weeks. Each of the 6-8 and more strong flower stems carries 7-9 and more single violet-shaped, deep blue flowers contrasting nicely with the bright yellow anthers. Occasionally, 1-2 additional small petals may develop. The flowers are long-lasting and non-dropping.

I claim:

1. A new and distinct cultivar of African violet named Improved Houston, as described and illustrated, and particularly characterized by its single, deep blue flowers; strong, upright flower stems that curve toward the center to form a compact bouquet above the leaves, medium green serrated girl-type leaves, profuse flowering, vigorous growth habit, flowering 10-11 weeks after potting, and its long lasting and non-dropping flowers.

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**U.S. Patent**

**Oct. 23, 1990**

**Plant 7,366**

