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Van Wingerden

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[54] SAINTPAULIA PLANT NAMED 'COMET'  
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[73] Assignee: Green Circle Growers, Inc., Oberlin, Ohio  
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[56] References Cited  
PUBLICATIONS  
UPOVROM Listing for 'Comet' NL PBR VLK0314 (filed) Jan. 13, 1995.  
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[57] ABSTRACT  
A distinctive cultivar of Saintpaulia plant named 'Comet', characterized by its compact plant habit; moderate growth rate; durable dark green foliage; large white star-shaped flowers; and numerous long-lasting flowers.

1 Drawing Sheet

The present invention relates to a new and distinct cultivar of Saintpaulia or African Violet, botanically known as *Saintpaulia ionantha*, and hereinafter referred to by the cultivar name 'Comet'. It is anticipated that the plant of this application will be marketed under the Trademark "Ultra Violet". Accordingly, the plant of this application may be referred to as "Ultra Violet" 'Comet' in the market place.

The new cultivar is a product of a planned breeding program conducted by the inventor in Oberlin, Ohio. The objective of the breeding program was to develop compact and durable Saintpaulia varieties with numerous, upright, long-lasting flowers and uniform flowering.

The new cultivar originated from a cross made by the inventor of two unnamed proprietary seedling selections. The female parent had white rounded flowers and the male parent had blue star-shaped flowers. In side-by-side comparisons in Oberlin, Ohio, under commercial practice, plants of the new Saintpaulia had smaller foliage than either parent seedling selection. The cultivar 'Comet' was discovered and selected by the inventor as a flowering plant within the progeny of the stated cross in a controlled environment in Oberlin, Ohio.

Asexual reproduction of the new cultivar by leaf cuttings taken at Oberlin, Ohio, has shown that the unique features of this new Saintpaulia plant are stable and reproduced true to type in successive generations of asexual reproduction.

The following traits have been repeatedly observed and are determined to be the unique characteristics of 'Comet'. These characteristics in combination distinguish the new Saintpaulia plant as a new and distinct cultivar:

1. Compact plant habit.
2. Moderate growth rate.
3. Durable dark green foliage.
4. Large white star-shaped flowers that are held upright.
5. Numerous long-lasting flowers.

The new Saintpaulia plant has not been observed under all possible environmental conditions. The phenotype may vary significantly with variations in environment such as temperature and light level, without, however, any variance in genotype.

The accompanying colored photograph illustrates the overall appearance of the new cultivar, showing the colors as true as it is reasonably possible to obtain in colored reproductions of this type. Foliage color in the photograph may appear different from the actual color due to light reflectance. The photograph comprises a top perspective view of a typical potted plant of 'Comet'.

The following observations, measurements, values, and comparisons describe plants grown in Oberlin, Ohio, under

a double layer of polyethylene covering with average day and night temperatures of 21C. and an average light level of 1,500 foot-candles.

In the following description, color references are made to The Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart except where general terms of ordinary dictionary significance are used.

Classification:  
Botanical.—*Saintpaulia ionantha* cultivar 'Comet'.  
Commercial.—Saintpaulia or African Violet.

Parentage:  
Female or seed parent.—Unnamed proprietary seedling selection with white rounded flowers.  
Male or pollen parent.—Unnamed proprietary seedling selection with blue star-shaped flowers.

Plant Description:  
Plant form.—Leaves outwardly arching, flowers held upright and above the foliage.  
Growth habit and rate.—Moderately vigorous, yet compact. Suitable for 10-cm containers. Time to produce a finished flowering plant in a 10-cm container from a rooted plantlet is generally 8 to 10 weeks depending on temperature, light level, and cultural practices.  
Height, soil level to top of leaves.—About 3.5 cm.  
Height, soil level to top of flowers.—About 8 cm.  
Distance, top of leaves to top of flowers.—About 4.5 cm.

Foliage Description:  
Arrangement.—Rosette, arching outwardly.  
Leaf appearance.—Leaves have distinct raised or quilted interveinal areas.  
Quantity of leaves.—About 20 per 10-cm pot.  
Leaf size, largest leaves.—Length: About 6 cm. Width: About 5.5 cm.  
Leaf shape.—Rounded.  
Leaf tip.—Slightly acute to rounded.  
Leaf base.—Obtuse.  
Margin.—Entire.  
Leaf surface.—Undulating, quilted, raised interveinal areas.  
Texture.—Leathery, glossy pubescent durable.  
Pubescence.—Moderate on both upper and under sides.  
Venation pattern.—Pinnate.  
Color.—Young foliage: Upper side: 147A. Under side: 147C/147D. Venation upper side: 147A. Venation under side: 147C. Mature foliage: Upper side: 147A.



Under side: 147C/147D. Venation upper side: 147A. Venation under side: 147C.

*Petiole*.—Size: Length: About 3 cm. Diameter: About 5 mm. Shape: Tubular, narrow channel on upper side, more prominent towards leaf blade. Pubescence: Moderate. Aspect: Horizontal. Color: 147B.

ower Description:

*Flower arrangement*.—Branched panicle, flowers held upright and above the foliage.

*Flower type*.—Single, star-shaped, fused corolla with five petals that are about equal in size and distance from one another.

*Flower longevity*.—Individual flowers last approximately 7 to 10 days. Inflorescences are generally in flower for approximately 3 to 4 weeks under greenhouse conditions. Flowers persistent.

*Quantity of flowers per peduncle*.—Generally 7 to 10 open flowers and flower buds at a time are present, usually 3 to 4 per panicle branch.

*Flower diameter*.—About 4 cm.

*Flower depth, base of calyx to upper petal surface*.—About 4 mm.

*Petals*.—Appearance: Velvety, satiny. Texture: Smooth. Arrangement: Five equidistant petals fused into a corolla, not overlapping, star-shaped. Shape: Elliptic. Surface: Flat. Margin: Entire. Tip: Acute. Size: Length: About 1.5 cm. Width: About 1.2 cm. Color: When opening: 150D. Upper side: 155D. Under side: 155D.

*Peduncle*.—Size: Length: About 5 cm. Diameter, at base: About 3 mm. Strength: Strong. Angle: Arching to erect. Pubescence: Moderate. Color: 147B.

*Flower bud, just before opening*.—Length: About 8 mm. Diameter: About 8 mm. Form or shape: Spherical. Rate of opening: Rapid. Color: 145A.

*Calyx/sepals*.—Calyx shape: Star-shaped. Calyx size: Height: About 4 mm. Width: About 9 mm. Sepal shape: Linear. Sepal arrangement: Fused at base. Sepal size: Length: About 4 mm. Width: About 2 mm. Sepal texture: Pubescent. Sepal number: 5. Sepal margin: Entire. Sepal tip: Pointed. Sepal color: Upper side: 147B. Under side: 147B.

*Stamens, mature flower*.—Stamen number: 5. Anther size: Length: About 3 mm. Width: About 3 mm. Height: About 2 mm. Anther color: 7A. Filament length: About 4 mm. Filament color: 155D.

*Pistil*.—Pistil number: 1. Style color: 155D. Style length: About 5 mm. Receptacle height: About 3 mm. Receptacle width: About 2 mm.

**Disease Resistance:** Under commercial conditions, resistance or susceptibility to pathogens of Saintpaulias has not been observed.

**Seed production:** Seed production is rarely observed.

It is claimed:

1. A new and distinct Saintpaulia plant named 'Comet', as illustrated and described.

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