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# United States Patent [19]

Van Wingerden

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[54] SAINTPAULIA PLANT NAMES 'FIREBALL'

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[57] ABSTRACT

A distinctive cultivar of Saintpaulia plant named 'Fireball', characterized by its compact plant habit; moderate growth rate; durable dark green foliage; dark red flowers; and numerous long-lasting flowers.

1 Drawing Sheet

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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 'Fireball'. 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" 'Fireball' 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 flowers with a coral pink edge and the male parent had solid red flowers. The cultivar 'Fireball' 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.

In side-by-side comparisons in Oberlin, Ohio, under commercial practice, plants of the new Saintpaulia had more compact foliage and stronger petioles and peduncles than either parent seedling selection. Compared to the male parent, the flower color of the new Saintpaulia is darker red.

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 'Fireball'. 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. Dark red flowers.
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. Flower and foliage colors in the photograph may appear different from the actual colors due to light reflectance. The photograph comprises a top perspective view of a typical potted plant of 'Fireball'.

The following observations, measurements, values, and comparisons describe plants grown in Oberlin, Ohio, under a double layer of polyethylene covering with average day

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and night temperatures of 21 C 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 'Fireball'.

*Commercial*.—Saintpaulia or African Violet.

Parentage:

*Female or seed parent*.—Unnamed proprietary seedling selection with white flowers with coral pink edge.

*Male or pollen parent*.—Unnamed proprietary seedling selection with red flowers.

Plant description:

*Plant form*.—Leaves arching outwardly, 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 with leaves arching outwardly.

*Leaf appearance*.—"Plain" or "tailored" foliage.

*Quantity of leaves*.—About 20 per 4-inch pot.

*Largest leaves*.—Leaf length: About 5.5 cm. Leaf width: About 5 cm.

*Leaf shape*.—Ovate.

*Leaf tip*.—Acute, rounded.

*Leaf base*.—Cordate, overlapping

*Margin type*.—Faintly crenate.

*Leaf surface*.—Slightly undulating.

*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. Venation upper

side: 147A. Venation under side: 183B. Mature foliage:

Upper side: 147A. Under side: 147C. Venation

upper side: 147A. Venation under side: 147B/183B.

*Petiole*.—Length: About 4 cm. Diameter: About 5 mm.

Shape: Tubular. Pubescence: Moderate. Aspect:

Horizontal. Color: 183A.

## Flower description:

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

*Flower appearance.*—Single, fused corolla with five petals. Two upper petals usually smaller than the lower three petals.

*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 10 open flowers and flower buds at a time are present, usually 4 per panicle branch.

*Flower diameter.*—About 3 cm.

*Flower depth, base of calyx to upper petal surface.*—About 3 mm.

*Petals.*—Appearance: Velvety, satiny. Texture: Smooth. Arrangement: Five fused into a corolla, overlapping. Upper two petals smaller than lower three petals. Shape: Ovate, rounded. Margin: Entire. Surface: Slightly undulating. Tip: Rounded. Size: Largest petals, length: About 1.5 cm. Largest petals, width: About 1.3 cm. Smallest petals, length: About 1.1 cm. Smallest petals, width: About 1.1 cm. Color: When opening: 61A. Upper side: 71A. Under side: 71A.

*Peduncle.*—Length: About 5.5 cm. Diameter, at base: About 3 mm. Strength: Strong. Angle: Erect. Pubescence: Moderate. Color: Base: 183A. Apex: 187A.

*Flower bud just before opening.*—Length: About 7 mm. Diameter: About 7 mm. Form or shape: Spherical. Rate of opening: Rapid. Color: Darker than 71A. *Calyx/sepals.*—*Calyx shape:* Star-shaped. *Calyx size:* *Height:* About 3 mm. *Width:* About 7 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:* 187A. *Under side:* 187A.

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

*Pistils.*—*Pistil number:* 1. *Style color:* 187A. *Style length:* About 5 mm. *Receptacle height:* About 4 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 'Fireball', as illustrated and described.

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**U.S. Patent**

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**Plant 10,102**

