VIOLETS: THE WORLD'S FAVORITE FLOWER: JUPITER'S GODCHILD: BY ELOISE ROORBACH

NAPOLEON'S last message to his followers, as he parted from them for his long exile in Elba, was that he would "return to them with the violets." This warrior's promise, so tenderly phrased, won for him the affectionate title "Caporal Violette" and the little flower that faithfully touches the earth with the blue of heaven each spring came to be the badge of a mighty political party.

Many times has this shy blue flower that loves the quiet of woodland nooks, played a conspicuous part in history and legend. Away back in the dim days when mythology was in the making, it influenced the symbolic imagery of the new literature. When Jupiter changed his beloved Io into a white heifer to protect her from Juno's wicked jealousy, he caused violets to spring to life among the meadow grass, that she might be daintily fed with food such as never god nor mortal had knowledge of before. All through the writings of Homer and Virgil, Ion, the Greek name for this little flower, is used as a synonym for modesty and sweetness.

This favorite little plant has a curious way of unrolling its leaves as they develop so that it seems shyly unveiling its face at the bidding of its lord, the sun. Its blossoms, according to the interpretation of the poets, face the ground demure as any nun. The scientists say that this appearance of diffidence is not from a sense of humility, but from the desire to protect precious pollen from the rain. It has many clever little tricks and seems to possess an uncanny intelligence in outwitting scientific scrutiny.

With all its simplicity, the violet is a subtle flower. Its way of guarding honey sap, yet at the same time inviting winged visitors shows both caution and boldness. After it has flowered and all attention to its beautiful life is over, way down below its leaves, far out of sight, it produces clear, half-formed flowers without perfume,
honey or petals, but each one bearing stamens and seed germs, which somehow develop the seed from which the new plant arises. When the seed capsules are ripe, they split into three parts, shooting the seeds far into the air, much as little birds are pushed forcefully from the nest and made to fly far from home, that the circle of beauty may be forever widened.

Botanists say that some plants reproduce by walking from place to place, that is, by sending out suckers that root some distance from the parent plant, as the strawberry, for instance. Some seeds ride away from home on the backs of animals, clinging to the fur with curling or hooking seed pods, like the burdock. Some build airships and float away, like the dandelion, others grow wings, like the maple and ash. The violet is an archer, shooting its small seeds from its capsule as from a springy bow.

The demand for violets is luring both amateur and professional into experimental attempts to increase the yield per foot, size of flower and length of stem. Various indeed have been the results of cultivation, though all show a portion, at least, of success, for this popular flower is exceedingly easy to cultivate. In the West, florists plant whole fields to violets. Blue as a lake is such a field in springtime, the air for miles around telling its presence.

The method of cultivation, whether in field or hothouse, varies but little. Well-rooted runners with good crowns must be set out in a rich soil mixed with lime and manure. The plants must be at least a foot apart allowing free space for cultivation. The ground must be kept well hoed, the runners clear. For winter blooming the violet roots should be transplanted after the first frost to a cold frame that is at least twenty-four inches from the glass to the solid ground. As all violets have very long roots much care must be exercised in transplanting. The roots of a full-grown plant reach deep into the ground so that the soil of the cold frame should be two feet in depth. The roots must be set straight into the ground, not tangled in a bunch in a cramped way. In very cold weather the frame must be covered to keep the severe frost away. If properly planted, flowers should bear three or four weeks after the plants have been removed to the cold frame. Double violets are much more tender, and harder to cultivate than the single ones, and flower later in the fall.

The chief enemies of the violet are the red spider and the black fly. These can easily be kept in check by the sprinkling of tobacco dust over the entire plant just before a vigorous spray with fresh water.

The Marie Louise, the long stemmed, double Italian violet, and the Swanley White, a short-stemmed Russian variety, are perhaps the most popular of the double violets for amateur cultivation.
Seldom does one see a more appropriate setting than this for a clump of violets: the moss-grown rocks and stone, the tufted grass, the blossoms and foliage of tiny wild flowers all enhance the beauty of these modest children of the spring.
For an informal garden nothing gives a more pleasing touch than wild violets, transplanted from the woods, and set in clumps or borders or scattered among other growth. Their original natural setting should first be studied, however, so that one can give them in their new home just the sort of shade and shelter, moist or leafy mold, rocky or grassy setting in which they belong.
These three photographs suggest how each different variety of violet lends itself to some special arrangement when gathered for the decoration of the home: the luxurious little blossoms just below seem to fall naturally into this compact bunch; the slender, long-stemmed flowers on the right look best when somewhat loosely grouped; the double violets in the lower picture are particularly charming in their tightly clustered ball.

The shy blue violet has played a conspicuous part in history and legend, and has always been loved by the poets for its fragrant, modest ways.
CLUSTERING SNUGLY AROUND THE FOOT OF A TREE, THEIR TINY BLOSSOMS SHINING LIKE STARS AMONG THE GREEN LEAVES, THESE FRIENDLY VIOLETS SEEM THE VERY EMBODIMENT OF WOODELAND BEAUTY.

THE GROUP BELOW SHOWS AN EQUALLY PICTURESQUE GROWTH, THE GRAY STONES FORMING A WONDERFUL CONTRASTING BACKGROUND FOR THE FRAGILE FLOWERS AND SLENDER STEMS. VIOLETS ARE FOUND IN MOST PARTS OF THE GLOBE; THERE ARE ABOUT ONE HUNDRED SPECIES ALTOGETHER, MOST OF WHICH GROW IN NORTH TEMPERATE ZONES: THE VIOLET RANKS THIRD IN COMMERCIAL IMPORTANCE AMONG THE FLOWERS OF THE UNITED STATES.
THE WORLD’S FAVORITE FLOWER

California and the Prince of Wales are the most desirable as single violets.

In the West the presence of spring is shown in the hills by myriads of little yellow violets that fleck the green hills with bits of gold. The two upper petals of this small flower are brown, so that the tiny yellow face seems hooded with a wee brown fur cap. This little round-leaved violet, first of all the tribe to appear, is a favorite with the children, who liken it to funny little gnomes.

The common blue violet of the East, full of whims as Lady April herself, is loved in a corresponding way by the children of the East. The dog violet is not such a favorite because, though it is low branching, long stemmed, larger than all others and with a longer blooming season, it is without scent. The sweet white violet of the wet woods and boggy meadows well deserves its name, heartsease. The bird’s foot violet with a velvety blossom like a pansy, though too frail for cultivation, is one of the prettiest of all the woodland species.

The Viola canadensis grows to an unusual height in moist, shady situations, so that it is especially desirable for rock gardens or borderings of brooks, natural or artificial. With its whitish flowers tinged with purple, rising above heart-shaped leaves which are fully a foot to two feet in height, it makes a showy addition to any wild garden. The sweet white violet, Viola blanda, should be planted with this larger violet because it is much smaller and will fit in informal planting among its larger cousin, canadensis.

The common blue violet, a strong growing plant, with flowers deep or pale violet blue, is best for massing on banks or through a grove or bordering a walk. It will grow well in half shade; filtered sunlight and shade giving it just the atmosphere it needs for it to put forth its most perfect blossoms. The horned violet, sometimes called horned pansy, an old garden plant, sweet perfumed, also should be found in all violet gardens. It is exceedingly hardy, flourishing either in dry or boggy situations.

For window-box gardening no violet is as satisfactory as the large single, deep blue California violet. It is a profuse bloomer, forms
large clumps of beautifully shaped, rich green leaves on stiff stems. It needs little protection in the winter, will grow within doors in a sunny window or if covered slightly with brush or fern fronds will bloom early in the spring in its natural condition outdoors, even in Eastern climates.

In any florist's catalogue will be found a number of old-fashioned favorites under unfamiliar names. These lists from reliable growers give one choice of double or single, pale or dark blossoms that will grow from the first melting of snow to the very latest blooming, so that the flowering months of the violet, this favorite flower of the world, will cover a period of many months if carefully selected.

Whether violets come fresh from the cozy nooks of sunny spring woods, from the steam-warmed conservatories of growers, who with commercial ambitions have sheltered them expensively from winter storms, or from the poor little vendors on street corners, they never fail to quicken the memories and touch the emotion of every beholder. Their marvelous color and sweet perfume make an appeal to the tenderest and best in everyone. Even the cheap velvet and cloth imitations sprayed with perfume take hold upon one's heart, unconsciously leading the mind back to the hopes and fine ambitions of youth; even those poor caricatures recall fresh woods, beautiful pastures, free winds, sunny skies and the great out-of-doors.

One reason why violets are the favorite flowers of the world is that they belong to sweet woods and dooryard gardens. We can plant, tend and pick them ourselves, make borders for our walks, fringe a brook or star a corner of the lawn with their flecks of deep rich blue. Year after year they will come to remind us of our first planting.