

Topic Page: [Violets](#)

Definition: **violet** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

Any of c.400 species of herbs and shrublets of the genus *Viola*, found worldwide. Violets may be annual or perennial, with five-petalled flowers that grow singly on stalks; usually blue, violet, lilac, yellow, or white.

Family Violaceae.

Summary Article: **violet**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

common name for some members of the Violaceae, a family of chiefly perennial herbs (and sometimes shrubs, small trees, or climbers) found on all continents. Violets, including the genus *Viola* and similar related species, are popular as florists', garden, and wildflowers. Of this large group, with its fragrant blossoms ranging from deep purple to yellow or white, over 60 species are native to the United States and well over 100 varieties are offered in trade as ornamentals. Florists' violets are usually the sweet, or English, violet (*V. odorata*). Garden violets (often called violas) are generally hybrids and may be purple, blue, rose, yellow, white, or combinations of these, sometimes with double flowers. It became the flower of Athens; followers of Napoleon, who promised to return from Elba with violets in the spring, used the blossom as a badge; and in the United States a violet is the floral emblem of three states (New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin). The flavors of various species, particularly the sweet violet, have been used for perfume, dye, and medicine and have been candied. The common pansy was originally derived, long ago, from the Old World *V. tricolor*, one of several species called heartsease and Johnny-jump-up; the Eastern field pansy, a wildflower of North America, is a separate species. Some unrelated plants are also called violets, e.g., the African violet of the family Gesneriaceae (gesneria family) and the dog-toothed violet of the family Liliaceae (lily family). True violets are classified in the division Magnoliophyta, class Magnoliopsida, order Violales, family Violaceae.

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violet. (2018). In P. Lagasse, & Columbia University, *The Columbia encyclopedia* (8th ed.). New York, NY: Columbia University Press. Retrieved from <https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/violet>



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