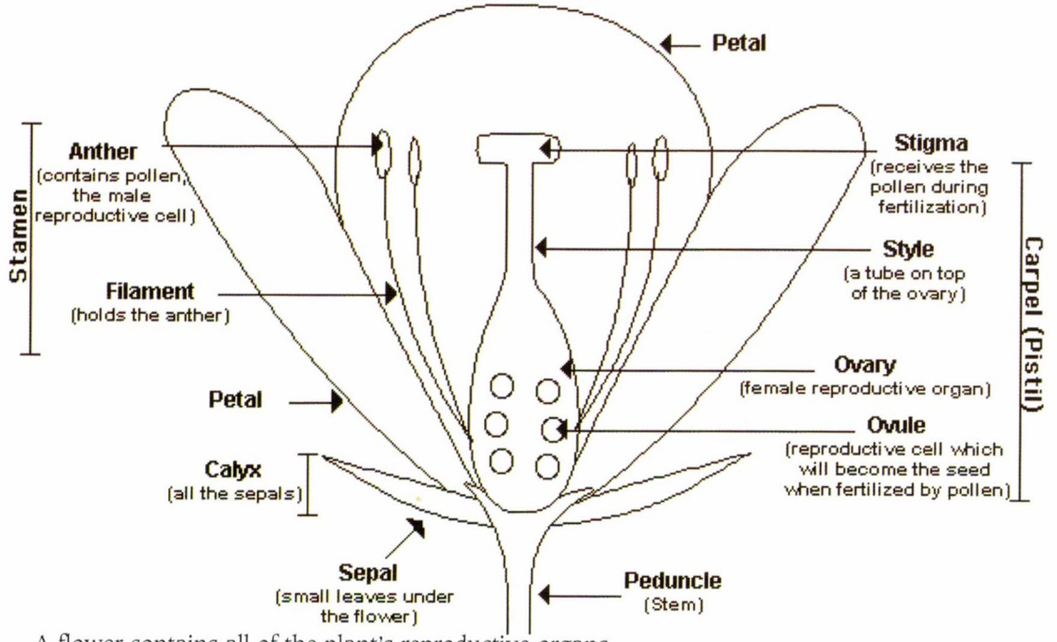
Parts of a Flower

By Ernie Stall

When I was in college, I received a minor in horticulture. Part of obtaining that degree involved learning the technical names of plant parts. Recently, I was reading an article about hybridizing African violets, and the author was explaining how to transfer pollen from the male parts of the flower to the female parts of the flower. Of course, the author was using the appropriate terminology to refer to the flower parts, but it made me realize that while I recognize most of the terms, I have forgotten what they refer to. So, I decided to familiarize myself with the terms, and I thought I would share what I learned with you.

The following picture illustrates the parts of a typical flower:



A flower contains all of the plant's reproductive organs.

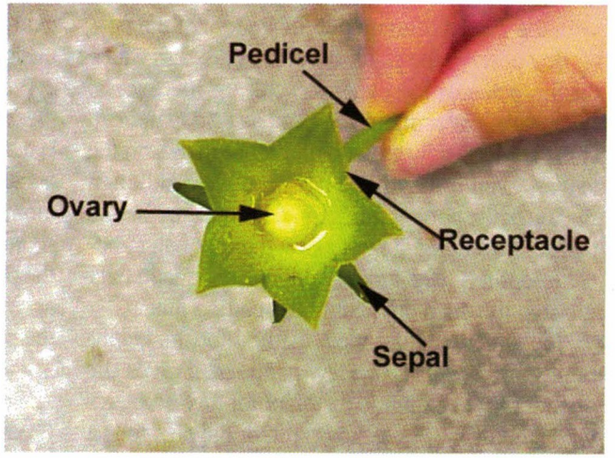
The **peduncle** is the main flower stem. It grows out of the crown of the violet and supports the blooms.

A **pedicel** is another type of flower stem.

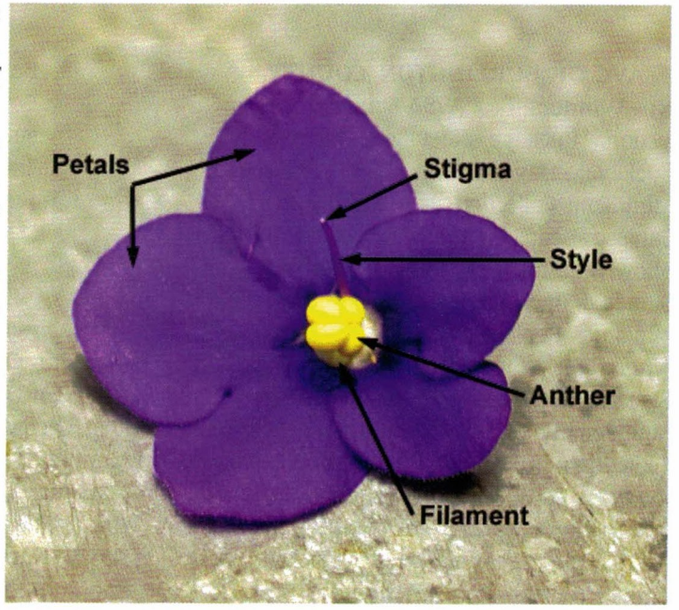
It is a secondary stem, which grows from the peduncle and supports a single bloom. Multiple pedicels grow from a peduncle.

The **receptacle** is the swollen tip of the pedicel that supports the flower.

The **sepals** are typically green and are modified leaves that cover and protect the flower bud before it opens. They grow from the receptacle and also support the flower. Collectively, the sepals form the **calyx**.



The **petals** are the colored portions of the African violet flower. Petals are sometimes referred to as lobes. Collectively, the petals are called the **corolla**. Single blooms are comprised of five petals. Double blooms have additional petals inside the outer petals. The **perianth** is made up of the calyx and the corolla. The **pistil** is the female structure of the bloom.



The pistil contains the female reproductive organs of the flower, which are the stigma, the style, the ovary, and the ovule.

The **stigma** is the sticky tip of the pistil that receives pollen to fertilize the flower.

The **style** is the long, thin, filamentous tube that connects the stigma to the ovary. It is through the style that the pollen fertilizes the ovule inside the ovary.

The **ovary** is the structure that contains the ovules. The ovary is more or less a protective chamber for the ovules.

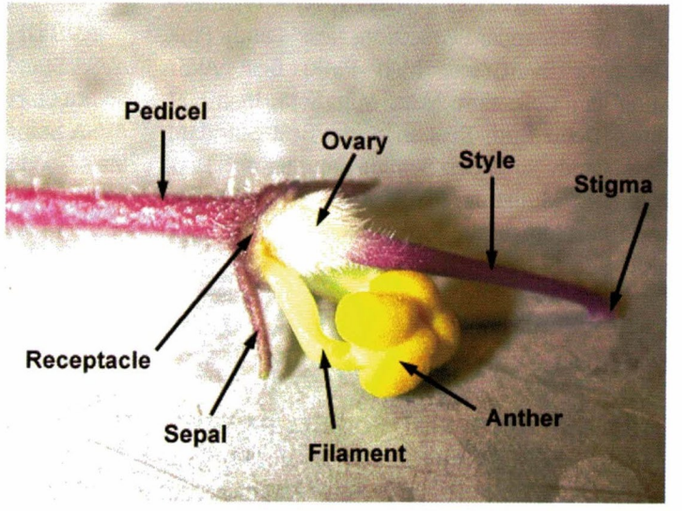
The **ovule** contains the female reproductive cells which, when pollinated, develop into a seed.

The **stamen** is the male reproductive structure of a bloom. It is made up of a filament and an anther.

The **filament** is the stem, or stalk, of the stamen and supports the anther. The filament also carries nutrients to the anther.

The **anther** is the part of the stamen that produces pollen.

Pollen contains the male DNA of the plant. It is usually yellow or greenish- yellow in color and is produced by the anther. When it lands on the stigma, the pollen produces a tube that travels down through the style to the ovary.



Originally reprinted from ***African Violet Notes,*** the newsletter of the Columbus African Violet Society, Volume 15, Issue 10, October 2013, Ernie Stall, editor.