FLOWERS · A PORCH OR PATIO WITH MORNING SUN AND EASY ACCESS TO SHELTER

Let's grow pansy.

Viola × wittrockiana — upright garden pansies

This plan is for **Upright garden pansy in a cool-season pot**

Is this your plant? Choose upright Viola × wittrockiana with a tag spread of 6–12 inches. Trailing pansies and perennial violets need different space and care.

A small pot of color for the cool part of the year.

12 in. wide × 10 in. deep **1 nursery plant**

Before you start

Start during your local cool spring or fall window, not peak summer heat. Acclimate a greenhouse plant gradually and shelter the pot before a hard freeze.

By jennyzhuang

Sources checked September 29, 2026 View sources ↗

LIGHT

Sun in cool weather

Full to part sun works; choose morning sun and afternoon shade as days warm.

WATER

Lightly moist, never soggy

Check daily. Water when the top inch starts to dry; do not let the whole pot dry out.

FEEDING

Feed a growing, flowering plant

Use the fresh mix's nutrients first, then a measured flower feed only while growth continues.

BEFORE YOU START

Your little kit.

- ✓ 1 stocky upright garden pansy with healthy leaves and several buds
- ✓ One 12-inch-wide, 10-inch-deep pot with drainage holes
- ✓ Fresh enriched potting mix, a watering can, and small snips

THE SOIL

Miracle-Gro Organic Potting Mix (US, feeds for up to 2 months)

Start with what's on this list. Add plant food only when the feeding section says it's needed.

YOUR SIMPLE GROWING PLAN

One pot. Here's the plan.

A porch or patio with morning sun and easy access to shelter. Start with **nursery plant**.

THE POT

12 in. wide × 10 in. deep

Our roomy starter recipe uses one plant in this draining pot. Expect visible mix at first; a packed nursery bowl uses a different plant count.

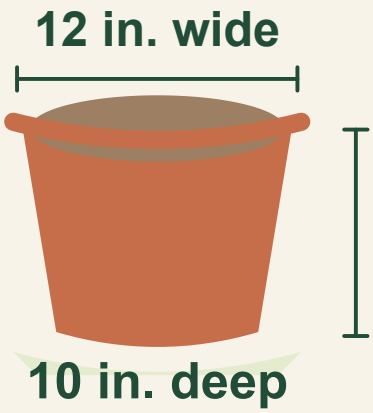
HOW MANY

1 nursery plant

Choose an upright garden pansy with a tag spread of 6–12 inches. This plan excludes vigorous trailing pansies and perennial violets.

THE CONTAINER

12 in. wide × 10 in. deep



START WITH

1 nursery plant



Illustration · not to scale

12 in. wide × 10 in. deep · 1 nursery plant Our roomy starter recipe uses one plant in this draining pot. Expect visible mix at first; a packed nursery bowl uses a different plant count. Choose an upright garden pansy with a tag spread of 6–12 inches. This plan excludes vigorous trailing pansies and perennial violets. Original illustration; not to scale.

01

Choose cool weather and a healthy start

Buy a compact plant with dark green leaves and buds, rather than long floppy stems. Spring or fall is usually simplest; in mild-winter regions, a fall display may continue through winter. Do not start this project in peak summer heat.

02

Plant one at its nursery level

Center one plant in moist potting mix. Set the root-ball surface level with the new mix, leaving about 1 inch below the rim for watering. Keep the leafy crown above the mix and all drainage holes open. Do not add more plants just to hide the visible mix.

03

Water, drain, and settle it in

Water slowly until excess runs from the holes, then empty the saucer. For a greenhouse-soft plant, begin in a protected shaded spot and gradually increase outdoor sun over 7–10 days. Shelter it from frost and strong winds during this transition.

04

Remove the whole finished bloom

Find a flower whose petals are faded or collapsed. Follow its thin, leafless flower stalk to where it joins a leafy stem, then snip that stalk just above the join. Remove the old flower and any seed pod together. Keep the leafy stem, healthy leaves, and unopened buds; pulling off petals alone leaves the seed pod.

Help with the setup: drainage holes and saucers · potting mix vs. garden soil.

Other ways to start

Start pansies from seed

Allow roughly 8–10 weeks before the intended outdoor planting time, plus any extra lead time on your seed packet. Use a seed-starting mix and follow the packet's depth and germination instructions. Young plants need bright light and cool growing conditions; a nursery start is quicker for one pot.

Buy a ready-planted bowl

A nursery bowl gives an immediate fuller display. Check that it drains and ask whether it already contains fertilizer. Follow its plant count and feeding information rather than adding another full dose to this one-plant recipe.

YOUR EVERYDAY ROUTINE

Water & fertilizer at a glance.

WATER WHEN

Check daily. When the top inch begins to dry, water the mix slowly until excess drains. Empty the saucer; wait if moist or frozen.

FERTILIZER

Jack's Classic Blossom Booster (US 10-30-20)

AMOUNT

1 level tablespoon in 1 US gallon of water

WHAT THAT AMOUNT COVERS

Mix into water. This is a mixing batch, not the total to pour into one pot.

HOW OFTEN TO FEED

Every 10 days during active growth after the starter feed ends.

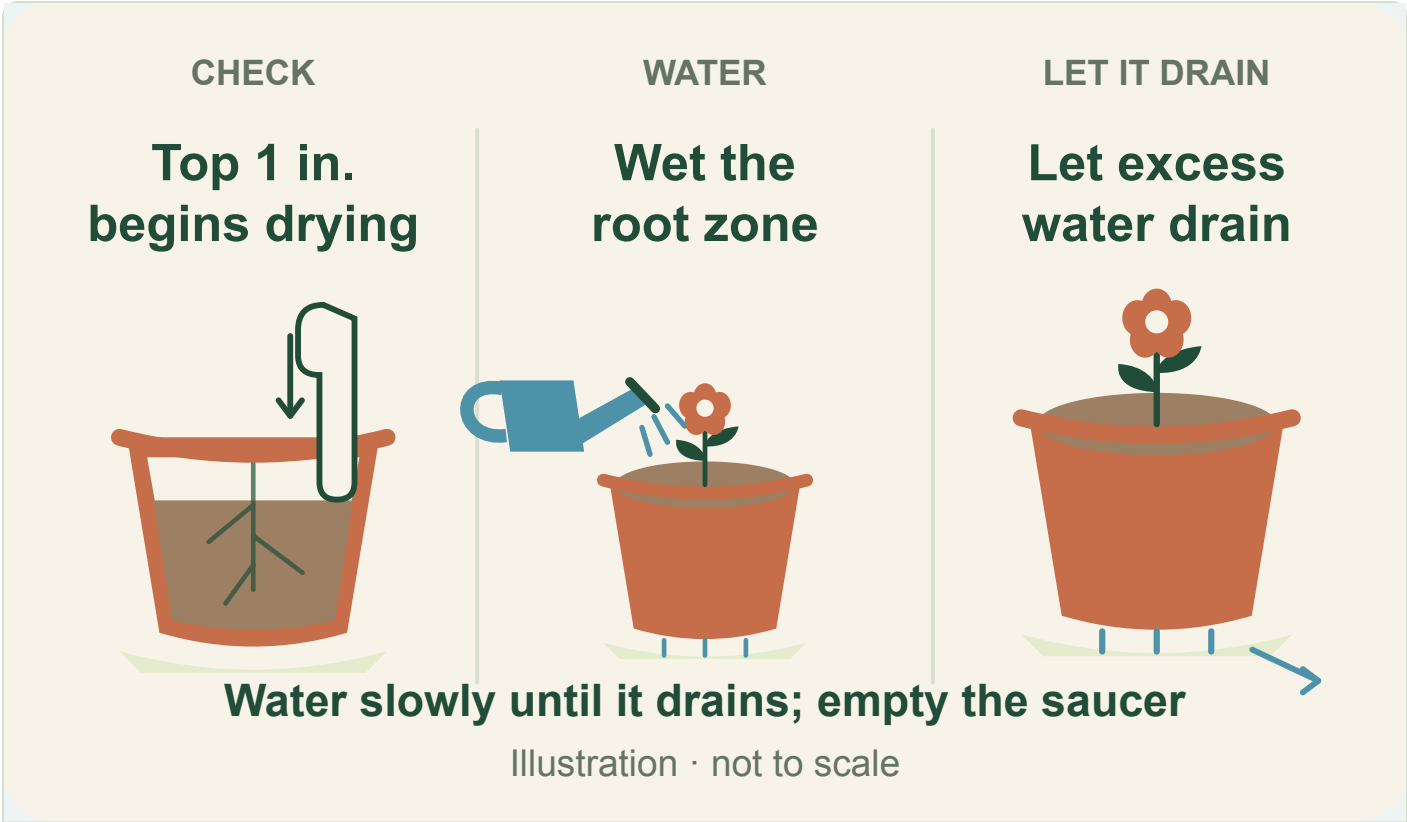
WHEN TO START OR PAUSE

Follow the fresh mix bag's starter-feed interval first. If wet, postpone without a catch-up dose. Pause when frozen, heat-stressed, or not growing; apply only until excess drains.

01 / EVERYDAY CARE

When to water.

Check the top inch of mix each morning. If it begins to feel dry, water slowly at the mix surface until excess drains, then empty the saucer. If it still feels moist, wait and check again tomorrow. There is no fixed cupful for every pot: drainage is the stopping point. Never let the entire root ball dry hard. Wind and sun can shorten the interval; cool cloud can lengthen it. If the plant wilts while the mix is wet, check blocked holes and heat before adding water. Do not water frozen mix.



Check before watering. Check daily. When the top inch begins to dry, water the mix slowly until excess drains. Empty the saucer; wait if moist or frozen. Original illustration; not to scale.

> **The easy rule**
>
> Check first. Water only when the plant needs it.

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02 / PLANT FOOD

Exactly what to feed it.

Add no extra fertilizer at planting with the enriched mix named here. The manufacturer describes feeding for up to 2 months, not an exact two-month timer. Follow your bag's starter-feeding interval. Before starting liquid food, check that drainage works, the plant is unstressed, and new leaves or buds are still growing; pale or wilted leaves alone do not prove hunger.



1 level tablespoon in 1 US gallon of water Mix into water. This is a mixing batch, not the total to pour into one pot. Every 10 days during active growth after the starter feed ends. Follow the fresh mix bag's starter-feed interval first. If wet, postpone without a catch-up dose. Pause when frozen, heat-stressed, or not growing; apply only until excess drains. Original illustration; not to scale.



US PRODUCT REFERENCE

Jack's Classic

Blossom Booster

10-30-20

Soluble: mix into water

Check the official US product ↗

Illustrated reference; check the manufacturer's current packaging and US label.

A SPECIFIC US PRODUCT

Jack's Classic Blossom Booster (US 10-30-20)

After the starter feed ends, dissolve 1 level tablespoon of Jack's Classic Blossom Booster 10-30-20 in 1 US gallon of water. This uses the 10-day end of the manufacturer's outdoor 7–10-day interval. When feeding is due and the pot needs water, use the solution instead of that normal watering, just until excess drains. The gallon is a mixing batch, not this pot's dose. If still wet, postpone; do not double the next dose. Pause in frozen conditions, heat stress, or stopped growth, and do not add another fertilizer at the same time.

Check the manufacturer's product page ↗

This combines the manufacturer's outdoor flower-food rate with Extension guidance for active container pansies. It is not a professional winter-bed feeding program. Check your US package if its directions differ.

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03 / WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

A cool-season display and when it finishes

Ordinary upright pansies are small mounds, usually about 4–10 inches tall and wide, with larger cultivars approaching 12 inches. A plant already in bud can color a pot quickly. Treat it as a cool-season display: hot weather often ends the show, even if watering and feeding have been correct.

Local spring, fall, and winter conditions

Use your local cool spring or fall planting window. Acclimated pansies tolerate light freezes, but an exposed pot can freeze harder than a garden bed. In mild winters they may keep flowering; in colder places, plan for a seasonal display and shelter the pot during a hard freeze. There is no single planting month for the whole US.

For regional planting windows, find your local Cooperative Extension office ↗.

PHOTO NOTES

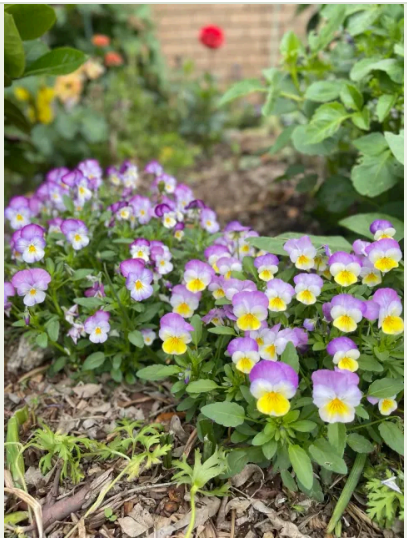
A closer look at the flowers.

Compare the flower markings and plant shapes in these garden photos. The pictured types are unconfirmed; check the nursery label for an upright garden pansy before following the single-plant pot recipe. These photos do not show a dated growing sequence.



A close view of petal veins, yellow centers and foliage. Flower color alone does not identify a cultivar or tell you its mature spread.

Photo supplied by jennyzhuang.



Small pink-and-white flowers grouped in a bed. The type and plant count are unconfirmed; do not copy the planting density for the guide's 12-inch pot.

Photo supplied by jennyzhuang.

Something looking off?

How many pansies go in a 12-inch pot?

This starter plan uses one upright pansy with a 6–12-inch mature spread. It is an intentionally roomy choice, not a universal maximum. A ready-planted nursery bowl can contain several plants; follow its care information rather than copying its plant count into this recipe.

How do I deadhead pansies without cutting off new buds?

Choose a bloom with spent petals, trace its thin flower stalk to the leafy stem, and snip the stalk just above that join. Remove any seed pod with it. Keep the leafy stem and unopened buds. If you cannot tell a bud from a seed pod, leave it and check again later.

Should I fertilize if the mix is still wet on feeding day?

No. Postpone the feed until the pot needs water. Then use the normal dilution, without an extra catch-up dose. The calendar does not override moist mix, heat stress, frozen conditions, or stopped growth.

Will this pansy come back every year?

Some plants survive a mild winter, but ordinary bedding pansies are usually grown as cool-season annuals. Do not plan on a permanent perennial pot. Renew the display when plants decline in sustained heat or severe winter weather.

Why are my pansies wilting?

Feel the mix first. Dry mix needs a thorough watering; persistently wet mix needs drainage and root checks. Hot weather can also make plants decline. Fertilizer is not a cure for summer heat or rotting roots.

Can potted pansies stay outside in a freeze?

Acclimated pansies tolerate light freezes, but that does not guarantee survival of an exposed frozen root ball. Before a hard freeze, shelter this movable pot for the coldest period. Keep drainage open and return it to outdoor light when conditions improve.

Can I use the same plan for trailing pansies or violets?

Not the one-plant size plan. Trailing pansies can spread much farther, and perennial violets have different growth habits. Check for an upright Viola × wittrockiana with a 6–12-inch tag spread before buying.

One-plant setup, deadheading, and seasonal decisions

Why this recipe uses one plant

One upright plant is the editorial starter recipe for this 12-inch pot. A compact variety can leave visible mix even when mature; do not expect every variety to fill the rim. A nursery display with multiple colors may contain several plants. Use the name and mature spread on the label to choose your plant, rather than using a photograph as a planting-density guide.

Find the spent flower stalk

During your weekly tidy, remove flowers as they fade and clear fallen petals from the mix. Snip the spent flower's own stalk where it meets a leafy stem; do not shear the whole plant across. A seed pod can resemble an unopened bud. If uncertain, keep it for now and watch it develop. The diagram below shows the part to remove and the growth to preserve.

Adjust the position as the season changes

Start with full to part sun while the weather is cool. A move to morning sun and afternoon shade can help during a brief warm spell. When heat persists and growth deteriorates, replace the plant with a summer flower instead of trying to rescue the display with more feed.

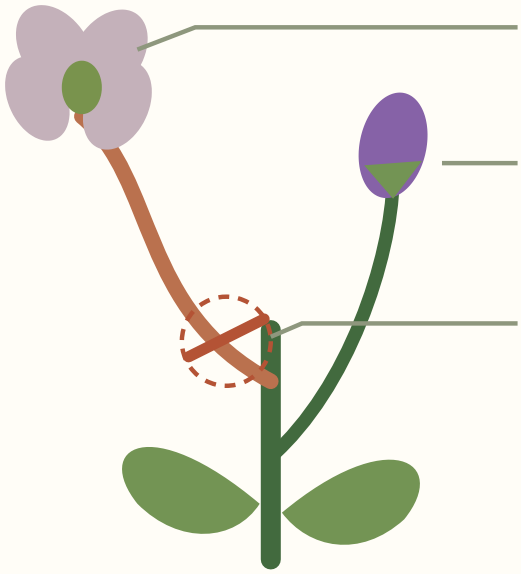
Shelter the pot before a hard freeze

Check the forecast during your weekly tidy. Before a hard freeze, move the pot to a sheltered, unheated space such as a garage for the coldest period. Return it to outdoor light when conditions improve; it is not a permanent dark-storage plant. Keep drainage holes open. Resume watering only after the mix has thawed and needs moisture, and feed only after active growth resumes.

Where to snip a finished pansy flower

Remove the spent flower + stalk

Keep the leafy stem and young buds.



Faded bloom
Remove its stalk.

Unopened bud
Leave it to flower.

Snip here
Just above the join.

Keep green leaves.

Unsure whether it is a bud or a seed pod?
Leave it for now and check again later.

Remove: the finished flower, any seed pod, and its own stalk. **Keep:** the leafy stem and new buds. Do not trim the whole plant at the marked height; the mark applies only to that flower stalk.

Original teaching schematic, based on RHS pansy deadheading advice and RHS guidance on the stalk join and young buds. The drawing is simplified; it is not a photograph of a particular cultivar.

A pot you can move with the weather

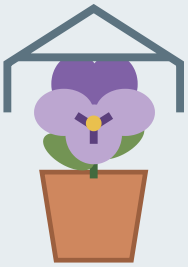
Pansies: let the weather guide you

One movable pot. Three simple choices.



Cool weather

Full to part sun.
Check moisture daily.



Hard freeze forecast

Shelter the pot.
Return to light afterward.



Warm days arrive

Give afternoon shade.
Lasting heat? Renew later.

Light frost tolerance is not freeze-proof roots.

Cool weather: full to part sun. **Hard freeze:** a sheltered, unheated space for the coldest period, then back to light. **Persistent heat:** switch to a summer flower and plant fresh pansies in the next cool season.

Seasonal care: Iowa State Extension. Protection for pots: UGA Extension. Original teaching schematic; timing depends on your local weather.

Help with your next step.

Check the fertilizer already in your potting mix

Read the bag before adding plant food so the starter feed and liquid-feed plan do not overlap.

Set up a freely draining container

Drainage holes and an empty saucer help you avoid treating wet-soil wilting with more water.

BEHIND THIS GUIDE

Where the advice comes from.

Plant care is based on the sources below. Planting layouts and beginner routines combine that guidance into one practical plan; they are editorial choices, not results from a Plant Care Steps growing trial.

- Iowa State: pansy size, cool-season care, container feeding, and seed starting ↗
  https://yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu/how-to/growing-pansies-violas
- RHS: removing spent pansy flowers and their stalks ↗
  https://www.rhs.org.uk/garden-jobs/deadheading-plants
- RHS: finding the stalk join and protecting young buds ↗
  https://www.rhs.org.uk/education-learning/school-gardening/resources/gardening-skills/picking-and-deadheading-flowers
- NC State: Viola × wittrockiana identity and growing conditions ↗
  https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/viola-x-wittrockiana/
- Iowa State: moisture checks and care for a container ↗
  https://yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu/how-to/care-plants-growing-containers
- Iowa State: acclimating and planting nursery bedding plants ↗
  https://yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu/how-to/selecting-hardening-and-planting-bedding-plants
- UGA Extension: drainage and protection for winter pots ↗
  https://site.extension.uga.edu/newtonextanr/2020/12/winter-potted-plant-care/
- Iowa State: when to replace cool-season flowers ↗
  https://yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu/how-to/growing-cool-season-annuals
- Manufacturer: starter feed in the named potting mix ↗
  https://scottsmiraclegro.com/en-us/brands/miracle-gro/products/potting-mix/miracle-gro-organic-potting-mix/78951430.html
- Manufacturer: US fertilizer formula and application directions ↗
  https://www.jrpeters.com/online-store/Blossom-Booster-10-30-20-p184837332
- JR Peters: Classic outdoor watering-can dose and frequency ↗
  https://www.jrpeters.com/copy-of-draft-resources-for-garden-ce

Something needs updating? Suggest a correction

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Compiled with AI assistance. These first-edition guides have not yet had an independent horticultural review. Read our editorial approach.