Introduction

The Philippine Violet is an herbaceous perennial that attains a height of 36 to 48 inches (Fig. 1). Leaf tissue is puckered around the veins which appear recessed. The plant remains dense in the full sun creating a nice barrier planting. The dark green foliage is medium in texture and becomes hard and “prickly” after freezing weather. White or lavender flowers appear on this plant in the late summer and early fall.

General Information

Scientific name: *Barleria cristata*

Pronunciation: bar-LEER-ee-uh kriss-STAY-tuh

Common name(s): Philippine Violet, Bluebell
                  Barleria,
                  Barleria

Family: *Acanthaceae*

Plant type: perennial; herbaceous

USDA hardiness zones: 9 through 11 (Fig. 2)
Baleria cristata Phillipine Violet

Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Description

Height: 4 to 6 feet
Spread: 3 to 4 feet
Plant habit: upright
Plant density: dense
Growth rate: fast
Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: ovate
Leaf venation: bowed; pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches
Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: pink; white
Flower characteristic: summer flowering; fall flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: no fruit
Fruit length: no fruit
Fruit cover: no fruit
Fruit color: not applicable
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not particularly showy; typically multitrunked or clumping stems

Current year stem/twig color: green

Archival copy: for current recommendations see http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu or your local extension office.
Current year stem/twig thickness: thin

**Culture**

**Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun

**Soil tolerances:** acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay;

**Drought tolerance:** moderate

**Soil salt tolerances:** poor

**Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 inches

**Other**

**Roots:** not applicable

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

**Outstanding plant:** plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

**Invasive potential:** may self-seed each year

**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

**Use and Management**

The Philippine Violet is a good background or specimen plant but also looks nice when massed. It can be used for a hedge or border planting to create a wall effect in a garden or landscape. It will stay small enough for use along a house foundation provided they are not placed in front of a low window. Plants in the northern part of its range will be killed to the ground in freezing temperatures. Cut them back to clean the plant of dead foliage and stems. New growth emerges in the spring from the base of the stems.

Place *Barleria cristata* in an area of the landscape that receives full sun or partial shade. This plant prefers welldrained soils and is drought tolerant. Prune the Philippine Violet to the ground each spring to maintain a bushy plant. Wear gloves when cleaning up this plant in the spring; the leaves become coarse after freezing and could irritate exposed skin.

*Barleria cristata* is “weedy” and will readily reseed itself and can invade adjacent land. Seeds and cuttings may be used for its propagation.

**Pests and Diseases**

None of major concern.