

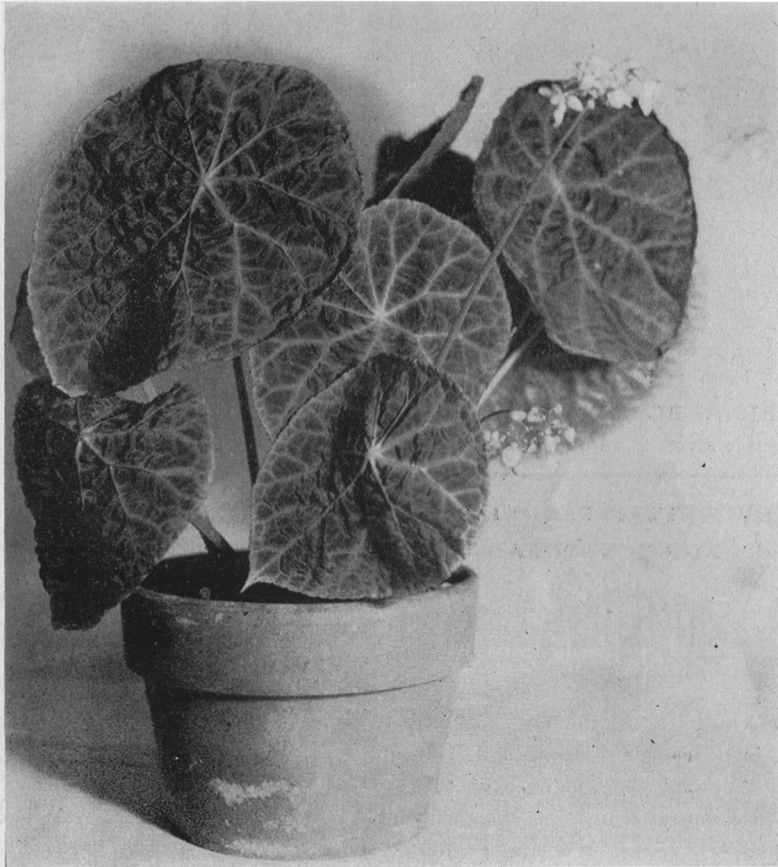


THE BEGONIAN



DEVOTED TO THE SHELTERED GARDEN

Monthly Bulletin of the American Begonia Society



GOGOENSIS



AUGUST



1939

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RESEARCH DEPARTMENT NOTES

By C. M. Kelly

The Van-Ex group of Rex begonias is being enlarged by the addition of numerous promising seedlings, the result of last season's crosses made by H. P. Dyckman. At this time the seedlings are beginning to show the first characteristic Rex leaves, but we must wait two years or more to know their true worth.

Mr. Dyckman has previously produced three begonias of this type which have not as yet been named, and Mrs. Helen Lewis has added eight or ten others which are now in their third year. All have Rex leaves and the typical branching, bushy habit of growth of the Van-Ex group. At maturity they attain a height of three and a half to four feet.

The pollen parents of these begonias are Rex varieties of different kinds, and the pistillate parent is the hardy tuberous species *B. evansiana*. The original Van-Ex was produced by Mr. Roy Berry, and the recent additions to the class are similar except as to leaf markings. These begonias which are summer growers, going somewhat dormant during the winter, are suitable for lathhouse or conservatory culture.

At the begonia gardens of Mrs. Rodenburg in Santa Monica, are displayed three new *Metallica* seedlings of merit. These chance crosses have been grown sufficiently long to have fixed characteristics, and have been named, Mussetta, Rody and Carlotta. The first has broad, round leaves slightly pointed, red underneath; Rody has narrower leaves, lighter green on upper surface and only the veining being red underneath; while Carlotta has shorter, narrow, dark green leaves more irregular edged. All are vigorous growers, and bloom profusely, carrying the flowers in clusters on long stems. These are worthy additions to the already large family of *Metallica* offspring.

This year for the first time, we are growing specimens of two hybrid begonias of Eastern origin, the gift to us of Mrs. Tillman of Rockville, Maryland. One is a cross of Mrs. Tillman's. The parent plants are *Sunderbruckii* and *Incana*, and so it has been named, *Suncana*. Its leaves, 4 to 6 inches in length, are pointed but not deeply separated; are dark green; the downy white fuzz that is present on the young leaves largely disappears on the mature ones. The stems and undersides of the leaves retain the hairy covering,

however. The plant is rhizomatous. Flowers white.

The other begonia, a *Feastii* seedling, is not named. It is an upright, branching plant, with oblong, shiny, dark green leaves which have a dark brown downy covering as do the stems. It is a constant bloomer, the clusters of flowers coming in pairs, a staminate and a pistillate flower to each branched stem. The staminate flowers soon drop leaving the three winged pods to ripen, seemingly self-pollinated. These pods have three pendant bractlets one between each two wings, which, together with the hairy stems make the plant an unusual one.

Last summer the three members who were fortunate enough to grow one specimen each, of the orange flowered, fragrant tuberous begonia No. 1041 of the University of California Expedition collection from South America pollinated various other types of begonias with its pollen. It is hoped that some of the resulting hybrids will retain the fragrance of the species—the fragrance being that of delicate roses. The seedlings are now being anxiously watched for evidences of hybridization.

Seeds of this species from flowers carefully self-pollinated were distributed to the contributors to the Seed Fund, and other packets were sold to members, thus assuring a greater distribution of this valuable begonia.

San Francisco Notes

The June meeting of the San Francisco Branch of the American Begonia Society was held on the evening of June 28, at the home of Miss Paula Schoenholz, 1060 Francisco Street, San Francisco.

It was our pleasure to have as speaker, Mr. Mervyn Hirschfeld, prominent San Francisco medical man, who addressed the fifty members in attendance on the subject of hybridizing. Mr. Hirschfeld illustrated his talk with pictures in color taken in his own garden and hothouse. They were truly beautiful.

Also in attendance for this meeting were Mr. and Mrs. Henry Werle of the Bungalow Nursery, Colma, California; Mr. and Mrs. Schath of the Redwood Begonia Gardens at Redwood City, California; and Mr. and Mrs. Frank Reinelt of Vetterle and Reinelt, Capitola, California.

The July meeting of the San Francisco Branch was held at the Bungalow Nursery, which Mr. Henry Werle so kindly turned over to us for the evening.

We are all sorry to hear of the illness of C. M. Kelly, our Research Editor, for it has been his deep interest and indefatigable work that has most largely contributed to making the American Begonia Society the effective and successful Society it is today.

Branch Secretaries please note that we would like information about your coming meetings. Copy must reach us by the middle of the month, however, if we are to be able to use it in the next month's issue.

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HORTICULTURE TURNS TO SCIENCE

Extracts from an article by Raymond E. Smith, of Melrose, Mass., in the July issue of *Horticulture*.

The entire article is very interesting and deals with various aspects of the title, including nutrient solutions, Colchicine treatments, plant injections for various purposes, as well as the material on insecticides and fungicides, from which the following extracts were taken.—Editor.

The bane of most gardeners is the continuous war which must be waged against disease and insect pests. It is in this field that science has been of most assistance to horticulture. It has classified most insects according to their feeding habits and has recommended certain types of sprays for each. Nicotine sulphate has long been considered the standard specific to be used on the sucking insects but, unless care is used in mixing and applying it, burning is likely to occur.

Now, a new method of preparing this toxic spray involves dissolving free nicotine in a petroleum oil so that a solution as low as two and one-half per cent effects a complete control of mealy bugs and a one per cent solution results in almost perfect control of red spiders. Since the concentration is so low, there is no danger of burning or injury to the plants. In addition, the presence of the petroleum allows for complete vaporization and dissemination of the toxic nicotine. A special type of equipment is necessary for applying this spray.

At a recent conference of florists, a member of the faculty of Michigan State College recommended that derris in combination with sulphated castor oil be used as a remedy for red spider. Apparently the sulphated castor oil increases the toxicity of the derris. The formula given called for one pound of derris, two and two-thirds gallons of sulphated castor oil, and 100 gallons of water.

Although it is poisonous to humans, a spray containing tartar emetic was recommended highly, at the same conference, to control the thrips which infest gladioli. One pound of tartar emetic and twelve pounds of brown sugar should be mixed and dissolved in 100 gallons of water. Six applications should be made a week apart and care should be taken that none of the spray comes in contact with any vegetable which is to be eaten, since no antidote for

this poison is known and even small amounts are poisonous.

The uses of coal tar are almost innumerable and now it has been discovered in Europe that some of the aniline dyes derived from it are of great benefit in controlling plant diseases. These color combinations, called heliones—and particularly the yellow heliones—are so effective when mixed with water and sprayed on mildew—or rust-infested leaves that within 15 minutes the disease is destroyed.

Although the copper compounds have been used heretofore as fungicides, they are powerless once the disease has invaded the interior of the leaf. Such is not the case, however, with the heliones, for they kill at all stages of the fungi. The one restriction in their use is that the foliage must be free from all other chemicals except copper.

EASTERN BRANCH

"If you lose your Begonias, try again."
Earle Sampson, Eastern Editor

Summer is a fine time to watch your begonias grow, it just seems as though they are trying very hard to please. At the present time Helen and Subvillosa are trying to outdo each other in my greenhouse. Both of them about four feet tall and well blossomed out. *Argyostigma* is also in bloom as well as some others.

I feel quite proud of the fact that I have been able to flower my *Imperalis Smaragdina*. This is the first time that I have seen one in bloom. Certainly it seems to be a very delicate type and needs very careful attention.

The *Cathayana* which I have has grown like a weed this summer and am looking for buds most any time now. At the present time it stands eighteen inches tall and is well-branched. The coloring of the foliage is very beautiful.

One of my *Templini* plants was in flower around Christmas and to the latter part of April, and now it is starting again to bloom (mid-July). I am going to ask the question if that is normally true of this type? Personally, I recall this plant to bloom only once each year.

We understand that Mrs. Buxton's new book, "Begonias and How to Grow Them," is now off the press. It is an exceptionally well-illustrated publication, and Mrs. Buxton has spent much time in going over her material. Her first pamphlet was so good that I feel sure we will want this more complete book.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Mrs. Clarissa Harris

Question: What causes Azalea leaves to turn brown and drop?

Answer: This condition could be caused by red spider and also lack of watering. Spraying with water will discourage the red spider.

Q.: Has anyone been successful in raising azaleas in leafmold instead of peat moss?

A.: Quite a number of people have had very good luck raising azaleas in leafmold. It is advisable to feed them with an acid reacting fertilizer regardless of what soil medium they are placed in.

Q.: Is cottonseed meal good for tuberous begonias?

A.: Cottonseed meal has been used very successfully by a number of growers. Others have found other fertilizers successful. For detailed information as to using cottonseed meal I would like to refer you to the Questions and Answers by Miss Fackelman for July, 1939.

Q.: Should tuberous begonias be repotted after they start to bloom?

A.: Yes. Tuberous begonias seem to like being repotted, that is, they never like their roots crowded and seem to suffer no ill effects from repotting.

Q.: Many bedding begonias are becoming unsightly due to old blossoms. Should the stems be broken off at this time, and if so, will there be another blooming season?

A.: Bedding begonias may be cut back to a joint at any time thereby allowing the strength of the plant to go into new growth which will bring a profusion of new blooms in a very short while.

Q.: Can Gloxinias be planted out in the ground after being transplanted from a 3-inch pot to a 5-inch pot, and what is the best soil mixture?

A.: They have been very successfully grown in beds; however, they must have shade and it is not advisable to wet the foliage or blossoms. Soil mixture: one part sand, one part peat, two parts leafmold, two parts decayed manure soil, with the addition of a small amount of bonemeal. The soil should be coarse and loose.

When your editor dropped into Long Beach for a few days between trips he found a great accumulation of mail from members, contributors, and others interested in begonias. It is both an inspiration and a pleasure to find there is such a widespread interest in begonias.

The New-Reel that has been advertised for the past few months is a very clever contrivance. You can reel or unreel just what hose you need without disconnecting at the faucet. The Flex-nek nozzle is also unique in that it stays immovable in whatever position you place it, making it especially fine for sprinkling parking strips or narrow beds.

INGLEWOOD INCIDENTS

Grand total of two firsts, four seconds, and two special prizes were received by the Inglewood branch for their exhibits at the Centinella Garden Club show held June 23 and 24, the following entries receiving ribbons: Ford Neels for Beg. Mrs. Fred Scripps, Frank Harrison for Beg. *Sutherlandii* and fern basket, Leslie Woodriff for tuberous begonia, Mrs. Van Gelder for Beg. *Digswelliana*, Mrs. Rose Hescok for Beg. Neely Geddis, and Mrs. Frank Harrison for Beg. Tingley Mallet.

At the June meeting beautiful specimens of staghorn ferns from the lathhouses of President Harrison held the spotlight, also many beautiful orchid plants brought by the speaker of the evening, H. J. Rappella.

New members made the acquaintance of Vice-President Bob Smith, who presided. An interesting feature was the presence of several people who spoke recently. They included Mr. and Mrs. Fewkes of Montalvo Gardens, San Diego, Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Sim of Manhattan Beach, Mr. and Mrs. Rodenburg of Santa Monica, Leslie Woodriff of Inglewood and Mr. and Mrs. Dyckman of Long Beach.

The July 7 meeting certainly taxed the capacity of the Odd Fellows hall when members and visitors numbering 162 were present to hear Mrs. Charlotte Rodenburg give one of her most interesting and instructive talks on preparing hanging baskets and a short history of the Elevation of the Garbage Can Lid into use as a hanging basket, an idea so novel and original that it has been used in motion pictures and on the air.

President Frank Harrison welcomed visitors from Pasadena, Los Angeles, Santa Monica, El Segundo, Beverly Hills, Hawthorne, Redondo and Fort Worth, Texas. Miss Alice Fackelman, National Director, was a distinguished visitor.

Frank L. Marrin of West Los Angeles will be the speaker August 4. His subject will be summer care of fuchsias in the lathhouse. Meetings begin promptly at 8 p.m.

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For most of the work of this issue you will be indebted to Miss Lou Bulgrin, for before this can go to press your editor will be out in the Pacific, studying the plant life of our outlying Channel Islands. While there are probably nearly a hundred plants on these islands that have not been found on the mainland of California, alas! there are no begonias. Most of these islands are dry, wind-swept, and desolate and the plants living there are mostly survivors of a past geological age, that have adapted themselves in remarkable ways to the arid conditions of the present. While the work of this survey is in the realm of "pure" science, it is expected that a few worth while new plants for our sunny gardens, and perhaps even a very few for our sheltered gardens, will be by-products of this work.

Meetings for August

Friday, August 4, Inglewood, Odd Fellows Hall, 161½ La Brea Ave., 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, August 8, Ventura, Coca Cola Hall, Thompson Blvd., 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, August 10, Long Beach, Community Hall, Ninth and Lime, 7:30 p.m. Mr. M. C. McNeil who represents the Swift & Co. Fertilizer Works, will speak on "Plant Nutrition."

Wednesday, August 16, San Francisco, 1060 Francisco St.

Thursday, August 24, National Board of Directors. At the home of J. Williams, 2034 Florida, at 7:00 p.m.

GARDEN TOURS

August 13

Ventura:

Mr. and Mrs. H. L. Wietz, 1655 Thompson Blvd.

Mrs. Gowdy, 919 E. Main St.

Mrs. Rudolph, 87 Lincoln Drive.

Mr. McBurney, 2220 Channel Drive.

Santa Barbara:

Rudolf Ziesenhenné, 1130 No. Milpas Ave.

Mr. Fred Jackson, on Mission Ridge. (Directions given at Ziesenhenné's. Note: This is an all-day trip so take your lunch. Mr. Ziesenhenné would like to have the visitors there as early as possible.)

August 27

Park's Nursery, 4360 Imperial Highway, Lynwood (½ blk. west of Atlantic.)

Leslie Woodriff, 205 S. Inglewood Ave., Inglewood.

Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Sim, 305 Sepulveda Blvd., Manhattan Beach.

Mr. and Mrs. G. Bauman, 525 Palos Verdes.

Dr. West Palos Verdes Estates.

September 8

Evening visitation—7 to 11 P.M.

Mr. and Mrs. H. Dyckman, 141 W. 53rd St., Long Beach. Mr. Dyckman will give instructions as to where the other visitations will be. This is the last visitation of the year. All members are urged to attend, for a big surprise awaits all.

Gardens open at all times:

Mrs. Jessie Jenkins, 3615 Cerritos Ave., Long Beach.

Mr. and Mrs. F. Liedler, 5858 California Ave., Long Beach.

Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Hixon, 1831 San Marcus St., Compton.

Dr. and Mrs. Caseley, Modjeska.

Director's Meeting

The July meeting was held at the home of Miss Alice Fackelman in Brea. Miss Fackelman's father is a cactus fan, while Mrs. Fackelman has a very fine collection of succulents and herbs. The family is really united, however, when it comes to begonias.

Mrs. Green reported the organization of a new chapter in Berkeley, and two new chapters in Long Beach, where the mother organization has become too large for the informal discussions and demonstrations that were so much enjoyed a few years ago. A list of officers for the new chapters will probably be available for the September Begonian.

FERNS

By Lillian C. Sloan, Corona Del Mar

Every plant lover admires ferns, but many are deterred from cultivating them by the belief that they are difficult to grow.

On the contrary, if attention is given to properly preparing a place for them, ferns grow quite readily, require little care, and increase in vigor and beauty. Many a dreary corner too dark for flowering plants can be given a woody atmosphere by the planting of ferns, whose cool greenness will bring a sense of restfulness and refreshing which is very welcome in the garden.

While some ferns will thrive in a very dark position, and some few will flourish even in sunlight, the majority of the ferns prefer a shaded place with plenty of light. Good drainage is an absolute essential. As to soil, a fairly good loam will need no preparation for ferns other than a good digging and a generous admixture of leafmold. If the soil is inclined to be heavy, part of it should be removed and in addition to the leafmold, peatmoss or other humus, and sand or finely crushed granite should be liberally incorporated in the soil. Avoid a position exposed to strong wind. In planting ferns be careful not to set them so low in the ground as to cover the crowns.

In their native growth ferns are neighbored by low-growing plants, mosses, little creeping vines and such wildlings, so that the ground about them is covered. They will not thrive if the ground around them is bare so that dirt is washed up on their leaves. Bear this in mind and if you cannot reproduce something of their wild habitat, at least give a light mulch of peatmoss. This will also help to keep the roots cool and moist.

Ample moisture should be given at all times. Old fronds should be cut off when their beauty is past.

There seems to be some difference of opinion on the point of fertilizing. In general I think most growers consider an occasional top dressing of good leafmold is all the fertilizer an outdoor fern bed requires. Potted ferns are sometimes fertilized with a good plant food in solution, a teaspoonful to a quart of water. Maidenhair takes kindly to feedings with liquid cow manure. Bloodmeal is also a good fertilizer, but must be used in very small quantities dug in around the rim of the pot, about a teaspoon to a six-inch pot. Except for maidenhair and the various types of the Boston fern, probably it is safest to avoid fertilizer on ferns. If you do use it, let it be with the utmost discretion.

Ferns are reasonably free from pests, but are sometimes attacked by aphids, red spider, thrips and scale. These can be controlled by spraying with a light mixture of Black Leaf 40 (about three or four teaspoonfuls to a gallon of water). Several of the new plant sprays are also suitable to use on ferns in a light mixture. Scale, which more commonly seems to affect the broader leafed ferns, can be attended to by washing the scales off with soapy water. A little Volck, or some other oil spray, added to the water is helpful. Or with a toothpick you may dab the scale with lemon oil, next day wash off with Ivory soap and rinse with clear water.

Some botanists claim there are around 8000 known species and varieties of ferns in the world. A comparatively small number of these are cultivated. But we have offered by Southern California fern growers quite a variety of pleasing ferns, many of them easy to grow.

If you want the tip-top tallest, there are the tree ferns. The Australian tree fern is the most familiar here and is a strong and rapid grower, too rapid for a small lath house.

Two splendid ferns growing six feet or so tall and spreading widely are Cibotium barmetz, with arching fronds of delicate feathery form, and Davallia platyphylla, not so fine a frond but very handsome, a beautiful green, and smooth as to stem and leaf. Our native Woodwardia also makes a splendid large fern and will stand a considerable degree of sunlight.

The large family known as the Pteris ferns furnishes several members of easy and pleasing growth. Pteris longifolia grows up to four feet, a long, narrow frond, dark green; good in the background. Pteris argyrea has a distinguished frond of green and white, grows to four feet or more. Pteris victorae is also green

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and white, prettily marked. I have never seen a mature fern of this but believe it to grow some two and a half feet tall. *Pteris albo linneata* is another green and white, a foot and a half to two feet tall, and very attractive. *Pteris Wilsonii* (one and a half or two feet) has the tips of the cut fronds beautifully crested. *Pteris tremula* grows taller, four feet or more, fresh green, spreading fronds, quite woody looking. There are a number of other *Pteris* ferns of easy culture.

Asplenium bulbiferum (three feet) is a fern which always excites interest from its habit of bearing little ferns directly on the pinnae, or leaf divisions of the frond. *Polystichum angulare*, and its denser form, *p. angulare plumosum densum*, commonly called "lace fern," also bear little ferns on the pinnae of the old fronds. This is a foreground fern. *Tectaria cicutaria* (three to four feet) bears little bulbils along the tops of the fronds, which fall off and a fern of this species is always surrounded by scores of little baby plants springing from the self-sown bulbils.

Onychium Japonicum (about a foot and a half) sometimes called the "carrot fern"—and it does somewhat suggest a very elegant and refined carrot top—is very dainty and pretty, and nice to cut for use with flowers.

The various holly ferns, particularly the types of *Cyrtomium rockfordianum*, have dark green, glossy fronds of marked distinction and are splendid for accent, standing out boldly against the finer foliaged ferns. Good in pots, too. As are several of the smaller *Pteris* ferns.

Aspidium tsussimense is a very pretty small fern, for pot, or foreground of a fern bed.

The maidenhairs are botanically "adiantum," which means "unwetted," referring to the way in which the fronds shed water. *Adiantum OBrienii*, with dark foliage and strong, clean black stems, and *A. Altadena*, with lighter green color and a more dense growth, are excellent for growing in the ground. *A. Jordani* (sold also as *A. Emarginatum*) is a California native and a very handsome fern. *A. cuneatum* is extremely graceful. *A. grandiceps* has a heavily doubled and frilled tip (sometimes called "fish tail fern") and is fine for baskets.

It is rather unusual to see a fern climbing and spreading delicate lacy fronds in midair, but one who enjoys this novelty need not hesitate to plant *Lygodium Japonicum*, a Japanese species of climbing fern, very hardy and easily grown. There is one American species of *Lygodium*, native in New England, but I have never seen it offered in the trade here.

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