

THE BEGONIAN

DEVOTED TO THE SHELTERED GARDEN

Monthly Bulletin of the American Begonia Society



Our 1938 Show Manager, J. N. Nutter, Inspects
Mrs. E. P. Saunders' Display



FEBRUARY



1939

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AN INTERNATIONAL COURTESY

In celebration and commemoration of the successful International American Conference at Lima, Peru, the people and government of Peru take great pleasure in offering, through the good offices of the Pan American Society of Tropical Research, a free, good-will packet of seeds of a beautiful native flowering plant of Peru. This offering is an expression of the feeling of peace and kindness that exists in South America for the people of North America.

The seeds offered are those of THE MUTUY O'PACTE, which is a small plant, bearing flowers of exquisite fragrance and exotic loveliness, that is native to the mountains and highlands of Peru. It is therefore hardy and can be grown throughout the latitudes of North America. The color of the flower is a brilliant shade of yellow, and the plant blooms for several years.

In connection with the free seed offering of this beautiful Peruvian flowering plant, a pamphlet will also be sent to applicants that will describe the results attained by the Pan American Powers in the recent Conference, and also will describe the country of Peru and carry the message of good-will from the Peruvian people and government to the people of North America.

This pamphlet and a packet of these seeds will be sent to every person in the United States or Canada who desires them. There is, of course, no charge or obligation. Send your name and a loose stamp to: THE PAN AMERICAN SOCIETY OF TROPICAL RESEARCH AT NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA.

Can We Tell You?

By Alice Fackelman

What is the most efficient spray for mealy bugs?

A weak solution of Black Leaf 40. If plant will stand it, turn upside down and wash thoroughly with a strong stream of water from hose. Or: wrap a toothpick with cotton wool, dip in camphor or alcohol, and touch bug with this.

What makes Saint Paulias rot, beginning at the lower leaves?

A dry rot may have set in. Remove plant from pot, shake dirt off roots; remove the diseased leaves with as much of the injured portion as possible. Pot in new dirt.

If you have problems, send in your questions to the Question Box department of the Begonian.

SHADE-LOVING PLANTS OF HAWAII

By Mrs. W. J. Seymour, Honolulu, Hawaii

There are many plants here that require the same care and growing conditions as the begonia. However, I will mention only those that are very often used with begonias in our tropical garden settings.

Perhaps the commonest but best loved of these is the Ginger family, or Zingiberaceae. Following is a selection of the more commonly known of these attractive plants.

The yellow ginger, (*Hedychium flavum*), is no doubt the hardiest of this group. It grows wild in open forests and damp places. It is in bloom about eight months of the year, its heavily perfumed flowers appearing at the very tops of the stalks anywhere from 2 to 8 feet high. The white ginger (*Hedychium coronarium*), differs slightly from the yellow, having larger blossoms and smaller, greener leaves. The Kahili ginger, called thus because of its resemblance to a Hawaiian kahili, has long spikes closely set with bright yellow flowers from each of which projects a long yellow filament. The shell ginger (*Alpinia nutans*) is an interesting member of this family. Its flowers are like clusters of pink and white waxy shells which open from the end showing red and yellow within. The torch ginger (*Phacomeria speciosa*) is a very decorative and attractive plant. It grows 10 to 18 feet high, has long graceful leaves, and flowers that form in large red or pink cone-like heads on stems 2 to 9 feet tall. There is a commonly cultivated cerise-red ginger here (*Globba speciosa*) whose history is somewhat uncertain. The plants grow from 4 to 8 feet high, and the flowers are very attractive. The poppy ginger is also an odd plant. It grows 6 to 8 feet tall, with light green leaves that point downward. At the top of the stems rise long bright red heads from which appear large white blossoms resembling white poppies.

The fuchsia is a well known shrub to island gardeners. The very small flowering variety (*Fuchsia gracilis*) grows wild in the Volcano district. The plants are thick, grow 8 feet tall, are always in bloom, and make attractive hedges. The larger varieties, the single and double, grow 5 to 6 feet high and also are free blooming.

As a hedge plant or ornamental shrub for lawns, the hydrangea is very often used here. The plants are hardy, and if cut back rather severely in early spring will bear enormous corymbs of blue, pink, or white flowers during the summer, autumn, and winter months.

Azaleas, when in bloom, whether grown outdoors or in pots, are one of our showiest shrubs. Very often 6 feet tall, they thrive at sea level and to a height of 3,000 feet.

Though not common in Honolulu, the *Pleroma* (*Tibouchina*) or more commonly known throughout the islands as the *Lasiandra*, can be found growing wild on this island especially along the upper part of the highway from Hilo to the Volcano district. A handsome shrub, it grows 15 feet high or more, bearing velvety purple flowers all year round.

Gardenias grow very well here. The smaller variety is a hardy shrub 4 to 8 feet high. The giant gardenia has beautiful thick glossy green leaves, and when laden with flowers, makes a beautiful display. During the flowering period, the blossoms are strung into leis (wreaths), and sold by our lei women for as low as fifty cents apiece.

In recent years, several hardy varieties of ground orchids have been found to grow remarkably well here. *Camellias* are also easy to grow but the blossoms are apt to rot with too much moisture.

The *Arum* family has provided us with many interesting and attractive evergreen plants. The taro vines, *Pothos* and *Monstera deliciosa*, are common throughout the islands. These are usually planted to grow or rather creep over stone walls or up the trunks of trees and royal palms. The *pothos* has huge heart-shaped leaves that are green with yellowish markings. The *monstera* has large perforated leaves, and attractive white blossoms with cone-like centers that when left to ripen are edible. Many varieties of the Ape, (*Alocasia* species) pronounced (ah-peh) are commonly cultivated here, being one of our most attractive plants. Their huge leaves, 2 to 4 feet by 6 to 24 inches, are their main attraction. Several species of *Anthuriums* have been for many years very popular in the islands. Today, the plain leaved varieties, with their oddly shaped beautiful blossoms in shades of white, pink, rose, red and orange, are as widely admired as orchids. *Caladiums*, with their attractively marked leaves, mix well with begonias. They make beautiful pot plants and are most effective in beds and borders.

Ferns of many descriptions grow wild here in the forests and on the lava flows. The *Hapuu*, the commonest of our Hawaiian tree ferns, grows as high as 25 feet. It is said that on this island alone there are about 400,000 acres of tree ferns. In recent years pots have been cut from their trunks to hold orchids, *anthuriums*,

(Continued on Page 5)

EASTERN SECTION

Mrs. H. H. Buxton, Eastern Editor

Due to the pressure of other work in connection with begonia activities, Mrs. Buxton will be succeeded next month by Earle A. Sampson, 67 Maple Street, Waltham, Mass. The Editor wishes to express at this time his appreciation of the splendid work Mrs. Buxton has done for the Begonian. Her never failing interest in begonias has been a source of inspiration for all of us. We are looking forward with pleasure to the publication of her new book on begonias.

The Neighborhood Group of the Eastern Section met in Lynnfield Centre, January 6th, and spent a profitable evening. We voted to enter an exhibit of begonias in the Spring Flower Show in Boston, March 16th to 21st. The schedule calls for an exhibit of 100 square feet, and there are two prizes: first, \$75, and second, \$50. The Logees, with other members in Rhode Island and Connecticut, will fill 50 square feet, and our group will fill the other fifty feet, thus completing the group. The prize money will swell our lean treasury to a noble sum for—something! We consulted on varieties which might be in condition by that time, and found we had about thirty, with a number of members yet to be heard from. So, wish us luck with our first venture! You in California have no idea of what this entails—the hiring of a heated truck, and the uncertainty of roads blocked with snow or ice. There will be worry, as well as work to this affair.

One of the members present recommended using permanganate of potash for rooting cuttings; one ounce of the crystals to 8 gallons of water. To reduce it to a size for home use, one gram to 36 fluid ounces, or 7 grains to 1 pint of water. Immerse the cuttings in this fluid for 30 minutes, then set in sand as usual.

For plants that are difficult to root, try a very old fashioned way: push an oat into the cut end, then set in sand. An old Italian said this method was used in Italy, and is very successful.

A remedy for mite or red spider (which is a species of mite) is to sprinkle naphthalene flakes over the pot of soil. Or moth balls may be used. (I hope this will not lead to any family jars!) A member reported good success using Nursery Volck for mite, using it one-half the strength of the weakest solution given in the directions. Dip or spray the plant with this once in two weeks. Use no sulphur in any form about the plants for a month afterwards.

The red spider has developed resistance to Selocide, which was such a successful remedy at first. Then adverse reports began to come in to the manufacturers, and they set the chemists at work to find out why. Another case of the survival of the fittest! Think how tough these survivors must be. Nothing short of a fire should kill them.

Sun Ray Tex or tobacco cloth was suggested as good to shade begonias in summer. It may be obtained from Puryear & Co., Rome, Ga. A new plant food, similar to Clay's Fertilizer, but less expensive, is Electra, made by the Universal Chemical Co., Lynn, Mass.

A home-made humidifier for dry air is made by using a large pan, with an earthen bulb pan, which is half the height of a regular flower pot, turned upside down in it. Then fill the pan with hot water. If *Foliosa* or *Multiflora* are dropping their leaves, set them on the bulb pan, the whole being set on the floor, or even on a low stand. An immediate improvement will be noted.

Socotrana Hybrids

The plant display for the January meeting at Long Beach was very creditably arranged by Miss Flossie Kelly. It consisted entirely of *B. socotrana* and its hybrids, a very timely group, as this group will receive special attention in your latest revision of the Tuberous Begonia Cultural Bulletin.

B. socotrana in bloom was exhibited by C. M. Kelly. It is a small plant with peltate leaves, above which the showy rose-colored flowers are borne in an upright cluster. This begonia, coming as it does from the hot, sandy Island of Socotra, in the Arabian Sea, needs heat for successful culture.

Miss Edna Ziesenhenné exhibited a splendid blooming plant of *Gloire de Lorraine* and emphasized the fact that these hybrids also require a moderate supply of heat. Mrs. Tom Smith then exhibited a vigorous plant of *Lady Mac* that had been grown in the lath house without heat. These plants may be propagated by leaf cuttings, taking a small piece of the stem, or heel, along with the leaf. Bottom heat should be used, and powdered charcoal should be scattered on the sand to prevent damping off. During the summer the plants should be kept about 60°, but during the blooming period a little cooler, with a night minimum of 45°. Bone meal or other phosphate fertilizer is desirable in securing good blooms. Frank Reinelt will soon supply us with a comprehensive article on the *Socotrana* hybrids and their culture.

RESEARCH DEPARTMENT SEED DISTRIBUTION

C. M. Kelly

With the cooperation of Sunset Magazine the Research Department started a campaign to interest most people in Begonias and in the activities of the American Begonia Society. The plan was to offer bulbils of *B. evansiana* and *B. sutherlandii*, and seeds of other kinds of begonias free to readers of Sunset who would send a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

The interest of the public in begonias exceeded all expectations as over 4000 requests were received. Bulbils were sent only to the first 1000, but seeds have been sent to all others. All of the cities and larger communities of the coast responded with hundreds of letters, and as a result we expect to see several new branches of our Society shortly. The organization of a Chapter in San Francisco is already under way.

We wish to express to the Sunset Magazine our appreciation for the opportunity to present this offer to their readers; to the members who contributed bulbils and seeds and to those who assisted in assembling and posting the material.

Seeds of Two Rare Begonias

The Research Department has for sale ten packets of the seed of a rare, orange flowered, tuberous species originally collected by the University of California South American Expedition of 1936-37. The name of this species has not, as yet, been determined. This seed is the 1938 crop of a California grown specimen, and is not available elsewhere, so far as we know. \$1.00 will be asked for these packets.

We also offer 10 packets of seed of a fibrous species from Panama. This is a very low-growing plant, the first flowers appearing with the fourth or fifth leaves. The flowers are small white, and the leaves are light green. This may be an annual type. These packets will be 50 cents. The proceeds from the sale of these seeds will be used for the Research Department.

The Bernheim Oriental Gardens will present a special Orchid Show on February 4, 5, and 6, Saturday, Sunday and Monday. This will give us an opportunity to see both these beautiful and interesting gardens, and a splendid exhibit of garden orchids. The orchids will be supplied by the Rapella Orchid Company.

WINTER FLOWERING BEGONIAS

In response to inquiries about winter-flowering begonias the following list has been compiled from many authorities. The list does not include many of the late fall bloomers, like *Argenteo-guttata* and *B. angularis*; or the early spring flowering kinds such as many of the rhizomatous or thick-stemmed types, as *B. feastii*, *B. sunderbruckii*, or *Templini*.

As the winter-flowering characteristic is dependent upon summer cultural practices and winter cultural conditions there will be found a great diversity of opinion. Some, for instance, will bloom in the house that will not bloom freely without heat in the south. As a rule winter-flowering begonias should have full sun in the winter. Winter-flowering plants must receive several feedings during the winter.

Mrs. W. A. Wallow, Fibrous, Pink.
Washington Street, Fibrous, White.
B. incarnata, Fibrous, Pink.
Rosea Gigantea, *Semperflorens*, Rose-red.
Haageana, Fibrous, Light pink.
Corbeille de Feu, Fibrous, Coral red.
Multiflora rosea, Fibrous, Pink.
Medora, Fibrous, Pink.
B. dichroa, Fibrous, Orange.
Odorata alba, Fibrous, Fragrant white.
Vitafolia, Rhizomatous, White.
Bertha von Lohringen, Fibrous, Pink.
B. albo-coccinea, Rhizomatous, White and Red.
Glaucophylla scandens, Trailer, Brick-red.
Alba scandens, Trailer, White.
B. foliosa, Small-leaved, White.
B. fuchsoides, Small-leaved, Scarlet.
B. socotrana, Bulbous, Rose.
Socotrana-fibrous hybrids, Various.
Socotrana-tuberous hybrids, Various.
Manicata group, Rhizomatous, Pink.
Semperflorens group, Various.
Gracilis group, Various.

The editor would be glad to receive additions or corrections to this list.

SHADE-LOVING PLANTS OF HAWAII

(Continued from Page 3)

ferns, and other plants. The Boston fern, the bird's nest fern, and several species of the Maidenhair fern are not only found growing wild in the forests but are being more and more cultivated for ornamental use around houses.

(Mrs. Seymour says there are many more plants that she could tell of, if we wish. Surely, we might find many of these plants adaptable to our sheltered gardens, and we hope she can find time to write further about them to us.—Ed.)

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It is surprising to find how many thousand people are interested in Begonias, as has been revealed by some of our recent activities. Hundreds have expressed a deep interest in the activities of our Society, and particularly in the organization of branch chapters of the Society in their community. It appears that the Society is about to start on the most rapid expansion of its existence.

Members who are grooming plants for the Exposition display at San Francisco, should be giving the final steps in cultural care, as the call for shipping the plants will probably come quite suddenly during the latter part of February or early in March.

It would be a distinct service if you would write the editor in case you know of any member not receiving the Begonian regularly. Mistakes will occur in spite of every care when five people handle the names in our constantly growing mailing list. We only want the opportunity to correct them.

Mention the Begonian when answering advertisements.

February Meetings

February 4, 5, and 6. Orchid Show. Bernheimer Oriental Gardens.

February 9, Thursday, Community Hall, Ninth and Lime, Long Beach. Leslie Woodruff will speak on the planting of tuberous begonia seeds. Mrs. Helen Lewis will speak on the culture of fibrous begonias.

February 14, Tuesday, Coca-Cola Hall, Ventura. Mrs. Myrtle Frances will speak about her past summer's European trip, particularly the gardens and landscaping methods used in Paris.

February 20, Friday, Community Hall, G. W. Crozier School, Queen St., Inglewood. H. P. Dyckman will be the speaker on "Cutting of Fibrous Begonias and their Care."

February 23, Thursday, 4543 Colorado St., Long Beach. Meeting of the Board of Directors.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board met January 26, at the home of C. M. Kelly. J. N. Nutter presented the budget allowances for 1939. The membership dues will be divided as follows: Begonian, 75%; Research Dept., 5%; General Expenses, 10%; San Francisco Show, 5%; and Reserve Fund, 5%.

An additional sum of \$25.00 was voted from the Research Fund toward the expenses of the University of California South American Expedition. H. P. Dyckman was elected an honorary director for 1939.

Plans for the San Francisco Show were discussed. The space allotment in the horticultural building has been changed to give our exhibit a commanding position in the center of the building, divided into three sections, fronting and flanking the information booth.

Begonian Song

By Tom Smith

We're the lovers of begonias,
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We're the growers of begonias,
to brighten up our day.

How we love our Rex and fibrous
love our tuberous too,

How we spend our nights and Sundays
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How we'd love to have a lath-house,
in some sunny spot.

We could show our Rex in winter
instead of just the pot.

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DEVELOPMENT OF TUBEROUS BEGONIAS

George Otten

As early as the year 1847 the tuberous rooted begonias made their first appearance in Europe. In this year Mr. Henderson, a floriculturist, received seeds of these begonias from a man in Bolivia, named Bridges. Henderson called this introduction "Begonia cinnabriana." This was the only tuberous begonia at that time in England.

Soon after Mr. Waddell, of Bolivia, discovered a bulbous begonia, which Alphonse de Candolle, the great Swiss botanist, called "B. boliviensis."

In 1864 the world firm of Veitch in England sent their travelling botanist to Bolivia to search for plants or seeds of any interest to floriculture, and among others, sent tubers and seeds of begonias. The foreman of Veitch, named Seden, took great interest in these new importations and created many different varieties. Most of the crossings were poor; only one showed of real value. The firm named this one after their foreman, "Sedeni", which is today on the market.

Occasionally we find among our seedlings tuberous begonias some with prettily marked foliage. This very likely originated from *B. tuberosa pearcei*. This species was found by Mr. Pearce in Bolivia in 1866, and sent to Veitch, through which firm it was introduced. *Begonia socotrana* was discovered in 1881 on the island of Socotra, by Dr. J. J. Balfour, who sent it to Kew Garden, England. It blooms from November to February and has pretty pink flowers. Our winter blooming tuberous begonias are a cross of these *Socotrana* and present fibrous and tuberous begonias.

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