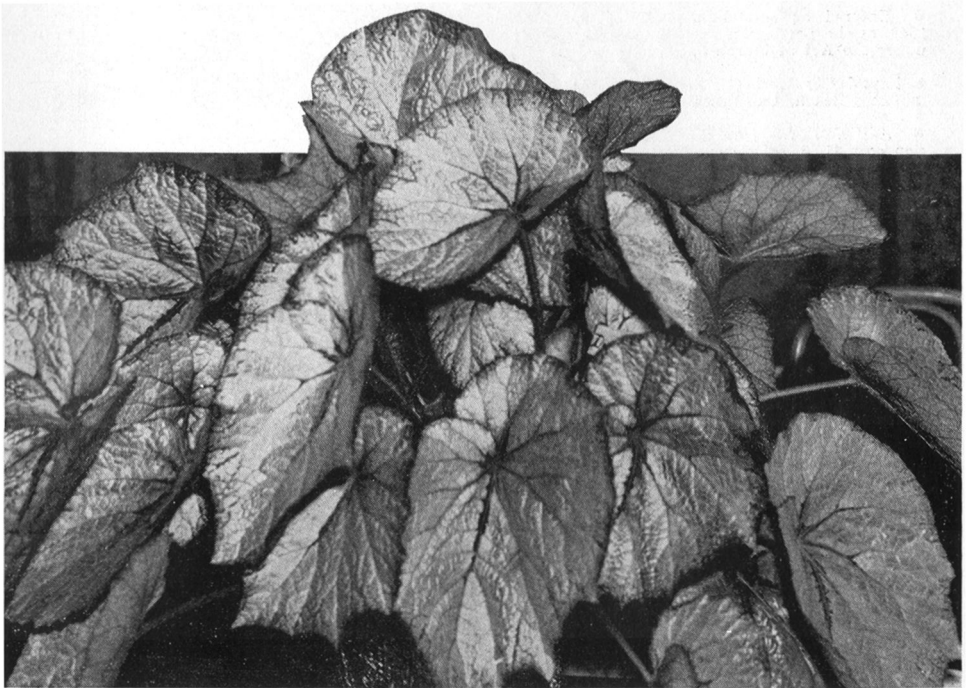


The BEGONIAN

Devoted to the Sheltered Garden



Rex Begonia

DUKE OF WINDSOR

The BEGONIAN

Monthly Publication of the AMERICAN BEGONIA SOCIETY

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I AM very happy to report to all that I have received the most splendid cooperation from the members of the Society. I couldn't possibly have hoped for more, which proves we are all anxious to do our bit, and I want to take this time to thank each and every one.

Now — let's try to double our membership and why not work for new branches, say a branch for each city or would you think I'd be covering too much territory? We can at least try.

I know it will not be necessary to ask you to keep up the good work, but I would like to ask you to be sure to patronize our advertisers and to mention having seen the ad in the Begonian.

—THE EDITOR.



Twins Have Increased The American Begonia Society to 18 Branches

Palomar Branch

Our good friends from San Diego County met to organize a new branch, which they named the "Palomar."

Our National President and National Secretary-Treasurer were very happy to be on hand to assist and to greet our new baby.

They elected their officers as follows:

Mr. J. A. Hayden.....President
Mr. R. G. Hagar.....Vice-President
Margaret Rutherford.....Secy.-Treas.
Mr. A. J. Rees.....Nat'l. Representative

They will meet the first Tuesday of each month, having the Vista Inn at Vista, Calif., as their next meeting place.

The enthusiasm displayed at their meeting is worthy of much praise.

Since the new branch is the first from San Diego County, we are looking forward with great expectations for this baby to become one of the largest of our great family.

Orange County Branch

Really and truly it makes us very happy, when we are able to write up two new branches at one time. Indeed, it is with great pleasure that we announce the birth of the Orange County Branch.

Mr. Dyckman (who seems to get around) helped with the election and installation.

The members of the branch chose the following officers:

Mr. Geo. Barrows.....President
Mr. C. B. Dudderar.....Vice-President
Florence Carrell.....Secy.-Treas.
Mrs. A. L. Martin.....Nat'l. Representative

Mr. Nutter, our National Secretary-Treasurer, gave a very splendid pep talk and as usual was ready to answer all questions.

Before the meeting adjourned, we were well aware of the fact that their branch was going to prove quite a competition for the other branches.

Their next meeting will be March 6, 1941 at the Y.M.C.A. in Santa Ana, California.

Frank Reinelt to Speak in Long Beach

• Members of the Long Beach Branches will have the pleasure of hearing Mr. Frank Reinelt of Capitola, talk on tuberous begonias Thursday evening March 14, 1941.

His lecture is scheduled for 7:30 P.M. in the auditorium of Long Beach Franklin Junior High School, located at sixth and Cerritos Streets.

All members should avail themselves of this opportunity of hearing Mr. Reinelt.

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WHAT DO WE UNDERSTAND BY ACIDITY?

by WALTER J. KNECHT



THE TERM acidity is nowadays often used in horticulture. Especially we who grow shade plants use it a lot. We talk about acid-loving plants, neutral soil, or alkaline soil, thus denoting a certain condition that certain plants require, or a certain soil condition which is necessary for different classes of plants.

Not much reference on that point is found in general horticultural books and in order to find a clear definition of what the term acidity and its expression pH means, not even chemistry books will divulge information on the subject unless one delves into the special subject of specialized organic chemistry.

It remains to Webster's Dictionary to give a clear definition of the term pH so often used now. So I quote Webster:

"pH Chem. A symbol (suggested by Sorensen) denoting the negative logarithm of the concentration of the hydrogen ion in gram atoms per liter. Thus a pH of six means a concentration of 10^{-6} , or .000001, a pH 5.7 a concentration of $10^{-5.6}$, or .000002, etc. This scale (the Sorensen scale) permits the expression of both acidity and alkalinity in units which can be measured directly by means of a hydrogen electrode and has become into extensive use."

An ion is defined: "An electrified particle formed when a neutral atom, or group of atoms loses or gains one or more electrons."

Now this is pretty highbrow language for the average gardener, but it may give just enough of an insight into the chemical nature of all things, and for the more chemically- or scientifically-minded it explains what the term pH stands for.

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Water, chemically speaking, is a very weak acid and contains the hydrogen ion H and it is this hydrogen ion, or a number of them, which creates what we call acidity.

For horticultural purposes we don't need to juggle around with ions, or even think of them, but the Sorensen scale has become of great value in its application to our needs.

Since we know that we have to provide different reacting soils for many of our plants it is well to find out how we can provide them and what plants go with a certain acidity. A pH $7\frac{1}{2}$ for instance, is just above what is called neutral while any figures below 7 are called acid.

An acid soil may react to litmus paper, changing its color, when that test is made, but it does not give any degree of acidity.

If you are interested to test your soil for degrees of acidity you should get yourself a Sudbury Soil Test Kit. It is practical not only for this test but also to show you whether your soil contains enough of the important elements as nitrogen, phosphorus and potash.

You find a table among the instructions naming many plants and their acid requirements. Under pH $7\frac{1}{2}$ you will find Cineraria, Forget-me-not, Geranium, Gerbera, Heliotrope, Petunia, etc. This figure is just above neutral.

Just below neutral at pH $6\frac{3}{4}$ you will find Begonias, Carnations, Columbine, Fuchsia, Gladiolus, Peony, Primula, Poinsettia, Rose, Schizanthus, Violet, etc., while still lower (or more acid) at 6 pH you will find listed Bleedingheart, Bouvardia, Cyclamen, Delphinium, Ferns, Hydranega pink, etc., and at pH $5\frac{1}{4}$ you will find Heather and Orchid, etc., while at the bottom, or at the highest acidity with pH $4\frac{1}{2}$ you note Azaleas, Gardenia, blue Hydrangea, Rhododendron, etc.

There is a great latitude among some of the plants in their acid requirement, while others seem to be very specific and sensitive. If a pink Hydrangea, for instance, gets a more acid soil from pH 6 to pH $4\frac{1}{2}$ it turns blue. Thus a pink Hydrangea may prove a direct indication of your soil acidity.

Decaying organic matter like leafmold and peat create soil acidity, but with hard water, or any addition of lime the acidity is counteracted. Aluminum sulphate has long been used to increase acidity in the soil, but late tests seem to have proven that it creates a toxic combination in the soil. Now it is

recommended to use agricultural sulphur, or iron sulphate for the purpose. One azalea grower tells me that sulphur works very good, if frequently dusted between and around the plants. It seems that much can be learned yet about specific requirements of certain plant groups, or plants within groups according to their native origin.

Sometimes we strike it just plain lucky for certain plants, sometimes we wonder why they do not respond better. Soils vary from place to place and with that lime content and acidity. There is a big field for the amateur as well as the commercial grower to check up the question of acidity with the various soils and various plants, instead of depending on the trial and error method only.

We on the Pacific Coast who are using a lot of oak and chapparral leafmold for our shade plants and begonias would like to hear for instance what is used in potting soils by Eastern members and how the plants respond to it. In other words, how they create the necessary acidity. And from explorers and collectors in the wilds, we would like to gather information too. Only lately did we hear in this bulletin how *B. socotrana* grows in the wilds, but it still left lots to guess. Then we hear of other Begonias growing on lime rocks and still others on lava rock apparently a whole lot more accurate information would be worthwhile.

Mrs. Elsie M. Frey

• Mrs. Elsie M. Frey, president and founder of the Santa Barbara Branch of the American Begonia Society has combined a career of mother (she has four children) with the delightful hobby of growing begonias. Her success as a hybridizer is becoming important, as is evidenced by the lovely *Baumanni* x *glaucophylla* cross which is discussed in this issue by the Nomenclature Director.

Mrs. Frey finds hybridizing very interesting. She has crossed the *Rex-cultorum* with the tuberous hybrids but found them not hardy. *Luxurians* crossed with *venosa* looks promising but the plants are quite small. By crossing *metallica* x *Scharffiana*, a very beautiful plant was produced with leaves similar to *Haageana* but with tall flowering stems held nicely erect; this plant she named *Naomi*. Last year her hybrid between the University of California plant No. 1041 crossed with *Pearcei* bore apricot colored flowers which were slightly fragrant and leaves similar to *Pearcei*. Another interesting cross is *glaucophylla* with the "Rubra" Mrs. Schinkel. This plant has not yet bloomed but it has interesting spotted foliage and the stems are creeping or twining.

Mrs. Frey has raised plants from Europe and America but has not obtained many spiral-leaved types of the *Rex-cultorum* and so she has begun work to produce plants of this type. She has pollenized her own plants with curls and now has a large number of plants of which more than half are curls.

Mrs. Elsie M. Frey in her Cloth House

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BEGONIA X ELSIE M. FREY

by RUDOLF ZIESENHENNE, Director of Nomenclature

BEGONIA X ELSIE M. FREY (Baumanni x glaucophylla), a new plant, is described here for the first time.

This plant is by far the best hybrid produced by Mrs. Elsie Frey of Santa Barbara, California, and I believe it is therefore fitting that it should be named after her, since it is such an outstanding plant. In 1939 Mrs. Frey placed pollen from a flower of glaucophylla, Hook, onto the stigma of Baumanni, Lemoine, and the resulting seed were planted in 1940. Among the first generation seedlings there appears to be three variations, the differences of which are detailed below.

B. X Elsie M. Frey is a valuable addition to the trailing group of Begonias, adapting itself nicely to use as a basket plant. In

habit of growth, the tips are inclined to grow more erect than those of glaucophylla but the weight of the leaves gradually bends the stems down gracefully. While the color of the flowers is more nearly that of Baumanni, the plant follows the male parent in other respects as it is fibrous-rooted and evergreen. The striking thing about the plant is the beautiful, glossy surface of the leaves and flowers, and the intense and brilliant, deep, rose-red flowers. As with glaucophylla the flowers usually do not open, but remain in a closed state, displaying the beautiful coloring on the back of the petals. While the plant has only been grown in glasshouses and cloth houses, it will probably do equally as well indoors.

The plant may be propagated by stem

B. X ELSIE M. FREY — LIFE SIZE, 10 INCHES



cuttings.

B. X Elsie M. Frey is a first generation plant and has not been used in hybridizing at this time, but because of its many nice qualities, it will be used for further hybridizing.

The description below is drawn from the plant pictured in the illustration which is in the collection of Mrs. Elsie M. Frey. I wish to thank her for her help and kindness in allowing me to stage the plant in order to photograph it properly. The plant was grown in a cloth house (that is, a house consisting of a wooden framework covered only by unbleached muslin, with no lath protection).

Description: The entire plant is free from hair. Root, fibrous. Stem, well branched, creeping or drooping with erect tips, of medium thickness ($\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$ inch), dull red with small, narrow, greenish spots; distance between joints very short ($1\frac{1}{4}$ inches long). Stipules, remaining on the plant a long time, almost round and not pointed, $\frac{3}{8} \times \frac{3}{8}$, dull red, thin, papery. Leafstem of medium thickness, $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch, dull red, not quite $\frac{2}{3}$ the length of the leaf. Leaf, heart-shaped, very shallowly lobed at the base, $\frac{5}{8} \times 4$ inches, palmately veined, nearly perfectly symmetrical, blunt pointed; upper side, veins depressed, area between the veins bowed up, very glossy, deep metallic-green with a medium green band along the leaf margin ($\frac{1}{4}$ inch wide); under side, light ox-blood red, paler in older leaves; margin toothed prominently where the veins reach the leaf edge, with smaller teeth in between, usually 2 to 4, not ciliated, wavy. Inflorescence, axil and terminal standing, stem dull red, about $1\frac{1}{3}$ inches long and $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick at the base, much-branched clusters of drooping glossy rose-red flowers. Flowers, very seldom opening, back of sepals glossy, center deep rose-red fading to Tyrian Rose (light rose) near the edge, inside of sepal and both sides of petals, Tyrian Rose. The male flowers are terminal and are produced first, with a female flower being produced axillary, at each side. Male flowers with 2 sepals $\frac{9}{16}$ inches long and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide, being almost round; petals, two, $\frac{7}{16}$ inch long by $\frac{1}{4}$ inch wide, cup-shaped and not pointed. Stamens numerous, golden yellow with pale lilac-rose tips occasionally. Anthers heart-shaped, symmetrical, the free end being the top of the heart, rounded, with the center depressed, the point of the heart being the base which is connected by free filaments to the flower base; pollen pockets split laterally; anthers thick with the connective very prominent; pollen yellowish. The female flowers were observed in a very small state so that com-

parative sizes between the male and it cannot be given. Sepals two, $\frac{6}{16} \times \frac{4\frac{1}{2}}{16}$ inch wide, oval in shape. Petals 3, $\frac{1}{4}$ inch long by $1\frac{1}{2}$ / 16 inch wide, oblong. Stigmas three, each divided into two with two twists of each branch. Seed pod, three celled. Placenta, divided, with seed produced on both surfaces; three winged, one of which is longer.

According to International Botanical Nomenclature rules, all plants raised by crossing the same two species receive the same "specific" name and varietal names are given to the different variations when necessary. To prevent unnecessary confusion due to differences in this new plant, I propose the following variations:

B. X Elsie M. Frey variety variegated. This plant is identical with the description given above except that the leaves have large areas of yellow-green or yellow coloring. The leaf margin is less dentate than the species. The under side of the leaves and stems are a deep ox-blood red. Veins of leaf not as depressed and space between veins not bowed-up appreciably.

Begonia X Elsie M. Frey var. green. This plant is identical with the description given under the description of the species except that the stems are light green with the new growth having a pale light red color. The leafstems are pale green. The upper leaf surface is a medium yellow-green color while the underside is a shiny greenish white. There is a red band on the stem where it joins the leaf on the same side as the upper side of the leaf. Flower stem, green with a tinge of pale red. The leaves are very wavy, while the veins are less depressed. Margin poorly toothed, teeth blunt, not pointed, (but not crenate) and in some instances, sinuate and occasionally entire, and not uniform in outline. Veins are less depressed and not so sharply defined.

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HOW TO GROW FUCHSIAS

(Continued From January Issue)

by RUBY LIEDLER



VARIETIES of fuchsias to plant in the ground, which will grow from 6 to 8 feet tall. **Jules Daloges:** Corolla dark violet tinted red, very large double. **The Chief:** Large double purple corolla, sepals of dark carmine. **Abby Farges:** Tall compact grower, single flower silvery lilac corolla with red sepals. **California:** Tall vigorous grower, light green foliage, flowers of bright orange with sepals of coral pink. **Glendale:** Tall growing vigorous plant, with a profusion of single coral pink flowers and will stand full sun. **Catalina:** Giant double flowers of pure white, with long wide sepals of rich crimson, which has very good foliage. **Cardinal:** Very strong grower with large single scarlet red flowers in great profusion. **President:** Large single red flowers with reddish foliage. These are splendid for a good back-ground and should be planted next to a building, fence, etc.

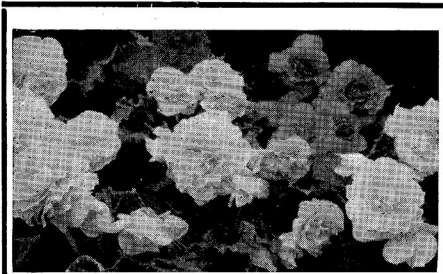
The following varieties are medium growers and are very lovely planted in front of the tall growing varieties. **Mme. Carnot:** Large double, corolla of soft pink streaked with red and sepals of deep rich pink. **Pride of Exiter:** Large double flowers with long light rose sepals and violet with cerise cor-

olla. **Carolyn:** Double flowers of soft rosy lilac with sepals of deep pink. **Lord Byron:** Medium size single flowers of red and dark violet, with very near growing habits which is one of the darkest of all fuchsias. **Rose of Denmark:** Medium size single flower, the corolla being a soft rose with sepals of waxy white. **Sunset:** Open bell-shaped single flowers with coral corolla set off by sepals of salmon pink with green tips.

Here are a few of the good hanging basket varieties. **Cascade:** Large single blooms, long pointed white flushed carmine sepals and deep carmine corolla. Very good foliage and a nice trailer. **Halloween:** Larger and more vivid colored flowers than Cascade, but has the same growing habits. **Muriel:** Large single flowers of transparent cherry with twisted sepals of crimson. **Marinka:** Very showy large single flowers of rich red with sepals of same color. **Balkan:** Dainty light pink single flowers.

The tall varieties of Begonias, such as Coralline de Lucerna, Dorothy Grant, Wal-low and other tall Begonias with dark foliage and dark pink flowers are very lovely planted in with the tall growing Fuchsias, which have light colored flowers. Any of the Rubras grow and blend in nicely with the darker flowered Fuchsias.

Full Credit to the "Sunset Magazine" for above article



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Glendale Branch

• On February 20, the Glendale Branch will meet to hear Mr. Leslie Woodriff of Inglewood discuss Begonias and, as February is the dead-line for this article, I will be unable to report on the talk. We are all looking forward to a very pleasant and instructive evening. Thank you, Mr. Woodriff.

The membership drive between Mrs. Wagner's "Tuberous Begonia" team and Mr. Ross's "Rex Begonias" is going forward at a very swift pace, the "Tuberous" being in the lead with a total membership of 55 members. I wonder who is going to buy that dinner!

A vote of thanks goes to Mrs. Georgia Hilliard for the very attractive book which she made and presented the Branch to be used by the Historian. This book was made of wood and trimmed with copper, and may our future history do full justice to it.

A little bird told me that President Farwell has a most delightful surprise in the form of an invitation from the Glendale Flower Show Association for the Branch to take full and complete charge of all begonia entries and displays at the Flower Show to be held late in April. A full report will be available later.

So many questions have been asked about ferns that arrangements have been made to have Mr. Ernest R. Tuttle, of the Baldwin Fernery in Pasadena as guest speaker at the March meeting.

Armchair Explorers Return

• The Armchair Explorers have returned and report a very pleasant and profitable voyage.

Watch the Begonian closely for the date of our next voyage, which will probably not be before next September or October.

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Philadelphia Branch

• The Philadelphia and its Vicinity Branch of the ABS met at the home of the President, Mr. Tristram Coffin Whitaker, 5343 Greene Street, February 10th.

The Philadelphia Branch had as their guest, The Margaret Gruenbaum Branch.

Mrs. Gruenbaum gave an interesting talk on Begonias as house plants. Mr. Whitaker told of his success with many plants, due to potting with pure leaf mold.

The wish was expressed that The Begonian would continue to print more articles about Begonias. They are so enthused and look forward to the magazine each month.

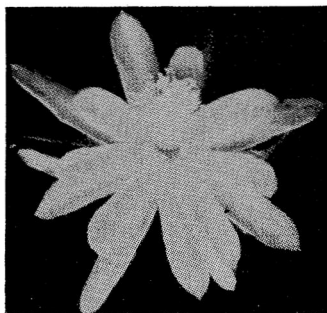
Tea and a social hour followed the meeting and a visit to Mr. Whitaker's Begonia Greenhouse.

The March meeting will be at the home of Mrs. J. N. Adam, "Dunnegan", West Chester, Pa., on March the 10th at 2 P.M.

—(Mrs.) SOPHIA E. WHITAKER

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LET'S GROW TUBEROUS BEGONIA SPECIES

by FERD. P. NEELS

WHY NOT TRY growing something different? Much well merited enthusiasm is being shown by amateurs in raising Tuberous Begonia Species. Their marvelous forms and colors are truly commendable.

The **B. Evansiana** is of branching habit, and blooms in showers of lovely clear pink flowers with little balls of yellow stamens. The leaves are moderately large, the whole plant very handsome. Readily propagated by bulblets which are produced in quantities in the axils of the leaves after flowering, and which give flowering plants the following year. Then there is **B. Pearcei** which is the only yellow flowered tuberous in cultivation. It has been the chief factor in the production of the hundreds of yellow, buff and orange-colored garden forms. It is low growing and excellent for borders or hanging baskets. Another favorite is **B. Sutherlandii** which is a bright vinous red plant reaching about six inches in height with numerous coppery or salmon-red flowers. Everything about the plant is delicate and graceful. **B. Unifolia**, an unusual tuberous and so named because it only has one leaf. It grows abundantly on the vertical marble or limestone cliffs of the Canyon de la Mano, in the State of Guerrero, Mexico. From the point where the stem joins the leaf, a flower stem rises carrying three or four small flowers and one or two imperfect leaves. There is another begonia which resembles this known as **B. Monophilla**. It is a native of New Spain (Mexico-Central America) having large flowers and tubers nine inches in diameter. Worth mentioning also is **B. Gracilis**. A native of Mexico where it grows plentifully in lava beds at an altitude of from four to eight thousand feet. It is tall, seldom branched, with pale green heart-shaped leaves, and pink flowers. Along with its varieties, *annulata*, *diversifolia* and *Martiana* it makes a very beautiful plant. In the axils of leaves between stipules a cluster of bulblets is borne, which may be gathered and sown as seeds.

Five of the seven South American Species were introduced and distributed by James Veitch and Son of London, England. Of these **B. Davisii**, **B. Froebelii** and **B. Boliviensis** are most worthy of attention. **B. Davisii** is a favorite with hybridists because of its rich coloring and its free flowering. It has given rise to numerous dwarf, erect-habited garden forms, with small scarlet colored flowers. **B. Froebelii** blooming in the late fall and winter, this plant comes at a time

when our gardens are in the doldrums. The habit of growth is very dwarf with dark scarlet flowers. **B. Boliviensis** has recently been crossed with some of the double and single garden forms of the tuberous race and has given rise to a pretty and distinct type with long pendulous stems and drooping flowers which render them most useful as subjects for baskets.

The slightly rose-scented **B. Baumanii** and 1041 are chief source used in developing a fragrant hybrid. The former has the reputation of being a very large thing in every way. The growth in height is from one to one and a half feet, the flowers about four inches across, and the bulb the size of an ostrich egg. It was first distributed by Lemoine in 1890, and comes from Bolivia growing at an altitude of 8,000-9,000 feet. Many seeds of 1041 were obtained from the University of California and sown by members of the Begonia Society. As a result we are growing a lovely plant with bright orange flowers almost two inches across.

I hope that you will become better acquainted with the Tuberous Begonia Species and obtain much pleasure from growing them.

Dyckman Branch

• The Dyckman branch met at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Smith and had as their speaker Mr. Von Hofgaarden. Mr. Leslie Woodriff was also present and gave a brief talk.

The branch replaced the regular plant sale with a garden gadget sale and found them very useful. This might give other branches an idea.

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For Members Living Out of California

• These questions when answered will enable us to give more information in helping you to grow begonias, if we have a little of the background of your climatic and growing conditions.

1. Do you use leaf mold, if not, what soil do you use?
2. Do you have a glass house, if not, where do you keep your plants in the winter?
3. How cold does it get in your vicinity?
4. How long do you (if at all) keep your plants in the house?
5. What is the earliest month of the year which is warm enough to grow plants out of door?
6. Do you feed your plants?
7. Are your summers very hot and dry?
8. What kind of water have you, soft, hard, or alkali?

If we are successful in getting this information from other states, we have high hopes of helping each member with their problems in the growing of Begonias.

—MR. H. P. DYCKMAN
National President.

• Flower lovers living in the vicinity of Philadelphia be sure and attend the Philadelphia Flower Show March 24th to 29th.

• Why not a year's subscription to The BEGONIAN as a birthday or other gift?

Inglewood Branch

• National President Mr. Dyckman will be guest speaker at the March 7th meeting of the Inglewood Branch.

Anyone missing the plant sale at our branch is truly missing something. Orchids, fibrous and rex! Mrs. Knirck is the lady behind the gun in 1941. She has won many prizes at the Inglewood flower shows for her exhibits of huge rex and fibrous begonias—not one or two plants but tables of them. (I wonder how she does it?)

Mr. Ferd Neels is handling the coming convention activities.

To our wayward offspring: We surely miss you at our Inglewood meetings — is the separation permanent? We hope not, and will be glad to see your smiling faces at the March meeting!

—MRS. ALICE NICKLOW.

Venturans NOTICE

You heard the amazing testimonial of Mrs. Rinehart for the efficiency of Mrs. Likwid Gro with B1 at the February meeting. Visit her excellent nursery at Santa Ana, and see the results obtained with Likwid Gro.

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Parent Branch

• Mrs. Ross of Newport and Costa Mesa was greeted by a large group of Begonia lovers, when she spoke before the Parent Branch on February 13th.

She advised the placing of flowering plants, especially those bearing white flowers for a more pleasing effect in the lathhouse.

Culture of Tuberous begonias was discussed. She stressed the point of planting tuberous begonias NOW. Mrs. Ross also urged her audience to begin the fight against insects with snail spray, etc.

A cleverly arranged guessing game was presented by Mr. Palstine.

After the meeting the refreshment committee served coffee and cakes, carrying out the motif of St. Valentine.

All present enjoyed the meeting and are looking forward to the big meeting next month at which Mr. Reinelt will be the speaker.

—MISS LENA HIGGINS.

Glendale Offers Challenge

• President Farwell of the Glendale Branch wants the world to know that they are going places this year and to back up his boast he has offered to wager money, marble or chalk. He claims their branch will have more new members by October than any other branch.

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Begonias In New England

by BESSIE R. BUXTON



IN THE Editor's Mail Box of the January bulletin, I noted a cry for help about begonia culture in New England. As a fellow New Englander, I can at least tell my troubles, and thereby cause Californians to give thanks for their climate. Some one—was it Mark Twain?—said, if you do not like New England weather, just wait five minutes and it will change,—or words to that effect. This has to be considered in rooting begonia cuttings, which we all know should be taken in the Spring. But when is Spring in New England? We often have howling blizzards in March and I have known the thermometer to stand in the seventies, and crocuses and snowdrops to bloom in that uncertain month.

I should not dare to set a flat of begonia cuttings in the garden before June, and I can remember killing frosts in mid-June, although it is unusual. Ordinarily, I should feel safe in setting begonias in the garden in mid-June, in the vicinity of Boston. Southern Connecticut gardeners could do this ten days earlier, but our member in Kennebunkport, Maine, probably must wait until July 1st.

If one has a cold frame, the flat of cuttings can be set in that by May 1st. Otherwise, the house is the only safe place. I set cuttings in a round glass covered bowl, which holds about three gallons. The bowl is filled about one quarter full of moist sand, a white cloth tied around it, and it is set in a sunny window. The white cloth gives the necessary

shade for the cuttings, but admits the warmth of the sun for bottom heat. On cloudy days, the bowl may be set on the very back of a coal range, if watched carefully to keep it faintly warm, but no more. The cover of the bowl is tilted from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. and closed the rest of the time. This gives almost greenhouse conditions. Peat, either clear or mixed with the sand, is not satisfactory in this jar, as it holds too much moisture and the cuttings mould and rot. The cuttings root in from 17 to 21 days. When they have a good strong cluster of roots, pot them in 2½ or 3 inch pots. This is the most difficult time. Although I make every effort to humidify the dry house air, it is almost impossible to get the potted cuttings safely started unless they are in a Wardian case, which is just a large, glass box with a sand-pan and a cover.

When the cuttings are well started, I set them outdoors in a sheltered porch, in mid-May, bringing them indoors at night if the thermometer drops to 45 degrees.

Large plants, which I do not intend to take in the house again are taken from the pots and set in the garden in semi-shade, in mid-June if the season is normal. Sometimes I nip off a cutting and set it in the ground beside the mother-plant, but usually a flat is filled with half sand and half peat, well watered, and the cuttings set therein. The flat is set under a small peach tree, which gives a good mixture of shade and sun. One year I set the flat under an apple tree, and lost most of them because the shade was too dense.

Usually New England has showers enough so that begonias in the garden need no watering. If there is a long drought, I run the sprinkler all day until the ground is deeply soaked. (It almost invariably rains the day after this is done!) Last June, no sooner were the plants set in the garden than the floods descended almost every day for a

month. The plants were battered and muddy, but none died, although growth was retarded.

For two months, the plants in the garden are off my mind,—almost! But those in the sheltered porch must be watered daily, and rain water saved for that purpose, for our city water is heavily chlorinated. July is our hottest month, and the thermometer may stay in the high nineties for three or four days, until the blessed east wind, or a thunder shower comes to our relief and the thermometer drops 40 degrees in half an hour. During this hot spell, the hose is used freely every morning on roof, walls and cement floor of the porch, which is really a shed, open to the south only, connecting the house and barn in the old New England fashion. The plants are sprayed with a very fine spray, which keeps the foliage clean.

Begonias make better growth in August than any other time. Fog drifts in from the sea almost daily, and night dews are heavy. By September 1st the plants are at their best. An experienced grower told me long ago that begonias in this vicinity should be settled for the Winter by October 1st. So by early September the pots are washed and the soil mixed. Since my garden has been in use for more than eighty years, the soil lacks humus, so I buy a bushel or two of good potting loam from a florist, and mix 2 parts of this with 1 part sand, ½ part old leaf mould and ½ part old cow manure. Be generous when the leaf mould is measured, and add a handful of crushed charcoal to keep the soil sweet. Begonias need good drainage, so put a good handful of broken crocks in the bottom of the pot, with some old leaves or sphagnum moss over it to keep the soil from washing out in the saucer. Set the begonias carefully, remembering that they like light potting, not the firm potting which geraniums and ivies require. The newly potted plants are set in the shady porch for a week or ten days to settle themselves in their new homes. Light frosts are usual by Sept. 20th, sometimes earlier, and while no damage is done in the porch, chilly nights check growth. If plants are brought in before the fires are started, while windows and doors can be open most of the day, they get a good start. Begonias are quite dependent on fresh air, so plan to open a door or window during the middle of the day, being careful to avoid drafts. When the bitter weather comes, more care must be taken to avoid chilling the plants, but they must have some fresh air daily. Noon is the best time for this.

During September and October we have plenty of rain, and a supply is saved for

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daily use. In mid-winter, snow can be melted for use, and on sunny days the snow melts from the roof and pails soon fill. They must be brought in before night, as freezing will bulge the pail, causing it to leak. A big 50-gallon crock and several tubs are kept filled in the cellar for a surplus supply.

Most of the begonias are set in the north-east windows, especially the spotted leaved varieties. The *semperflorens*, *Corallina de Lucerna*, *Elaine* and other flowering types do well in the south windows. The sun is now rapidly going south, the hours of sunlight grow less each day and December and January have little sun. During these months, water sparingly and only on sunny mornings. Usually there is no severe cold until after Christmas, so plants need not be moved from the window sills at night. If the thermometer drops below 20 degrees and the night is windy, a newspaper should be put between the glass and the plants. When zero weather comes, they must be taken from the sills before 5 P.M. and not replaced until the morning sun has melted the frost from the glass. When we have a cold spell, and the thermometer stays well below zero for a week at a time, the plants should be kept off the window sill, as the roots will be chilled, with fatal results.



Sheltered Porch in Distance

The March sun is hot on the glass, so begonias should be set on the back shelves of the plant stands, behind other plants, or taken to the northeast windows, because the sun will blister the leaves. More water must be given now, and plants may need shifting to larger pots. More air, too, is needed, and it may be necessary to draw the shades for an hour or so in the middle of the day, or to put a thin white curtain over the entire window. By using a bottle type sprayer, the plants may be sprayed daily, being careful to do this after the sun has gone from the window to avoid blistering the foliage. There are many kinds of bottle sprayers

which throw such a fine spray that furnishings are not injured. The small sprayers sold in the ten-cent stores for fly sprays are excellent for this, also bottles which have held cleaning sprays for automobile windows. Once in two weeks the plants should be set in a sink and sprayed vigorously and completely. Do not return to the window until the foliage is dry.

The most difficult—and the most necessary—thing to supply is moist air. If the air is dry, insect pests abound, the plants are weak-stemmed, the leaves curl and drop. Most heating plants take all the moisture from the air, with dire results, not only to the plants, but to pictures, furniture and to our throats and noses, making us more susceptible to colds. The first thing to do is to find out just how dry the air is, and you will probably be shocked. Buy a little, inexpensive Air Meter and know the worst. 50 degrees is the ideal amount of humidity, although more is beneficial. If the plants are set on zinc pans of wet gravel or pebbles, they will improve. If there are many plants, they help themselves and you, for 25 or more pots of moist soil in a room will send the Air Meter up several points. There are many types of humidifiers, from the expensive electric ones to the home-made one of a clay flower pot inverted in a pan of water, with or without an electric fan behind it. There is a small zinc pan, suspended by wires, which fits the back of standard radiators, and a large flat pan which covers the top. Keep these filled, and you will be surprised to find how often it must be done. Pans of water or wet moss may be hidden in various corners of the room. The steaming teakettle on the kitchen stove is the secret of the beautiful plants we see in the farmhouses.

All this sounds like work, and it is, but all the worthwhile things of life necessitate work. If you doubt its worth, ask any plant lover, especially a "begoniac" and you will be reassured, advised to begin at once and never stop. It is even more worthwhile in cold, snowy New England than in sunny California. When trees and shrubs are bare, when the snow lies deep over the garden and the north wind howls, then the passerby stops to feast his eyes on the window full of lush green foliage, the pink, white crimson or yellow blooms, and the flower grower may close her eyes to the cold, outdoor facts, and dwell in the lovely garden of her own creating.

● When answering ads, don't forget to mention **The BEGONIAN**.

WILD FLOWERS FOR THE HIGHWAYS AND BY-WAYS

by A. A. LONGMIRE

JUST THINK of having the highways and by-ways a gorgeous mass of wild flowers! It could be accomplished in several ways. First, it could be taken over by all public schools, having children from all classes collect seed of any kind of flowers, either cultivated or wild. Have a day set for the sowing, letting the children broadcast them from the school bus window, as it moves along the highway. Any time in February or March should be the time so as to let the rains help to plant them. Second, encourage the children to take packets of seed and sow them around the picnic grounds and on mountain trails. I do not think that any caretaker or nurseryman would object to children gathering seed from his flowers for this purpose, and perhaps he would save such seed as he has, for the children. The same thing should be done, not only by the school children, but by all flower lovers. Just drop some seed from the car window or the train and they will find their place. All garden societies should have their members save seed from cultivated or wild plants and sow them in some favorite spot along the trail. Try and collect wild flower seed when out on a trip and broadcast them before you return home some miles away from their former place of growth. Perhaps you could enlarge the scope of range of the variety or specie. Have your friends send seed from out of the State or from the old home place, where there were many wild flowers that were dear to you. The head of all State, County and City departments should sow wild flower seed in unsightly places along the highways. The newspapers should encourage it by asking all to take a part in such a movement. Wild flower seeds are inexpensive and flower societies should purchase or gather seed and furnish them to the members to sow when on outings or trips. Many seedmen would furnish seeds to get such a worthwhile movement started. I think it would be a pleasing thought for a boy or girl or any person for that matter, to look out over a spot and be able to say that

he or she was the cause of such beautiful flowers growing, and if the seeds had not been sown, the place would still be bare and without beauty. Even tree seeds and ornamental shrubs could be planted the same way. All trees must start from a tiny seed and the one you plant may some day grow to be a stately tree to add beauty to some isolated spot. It does not require any skill to broadcast or scatter a few seeds. Just find some place where you would like to throw them to the wind, and Mother Nature will take care of the rest. Perhaps there would be so many that nature would let die, but what you sow might be nature's selection for that given spot and such a selection by nature, would be constant thereafter. Flower seeds collected in one locality and planted in another, might improve the specie, as has been proven many times. In sowing wild flower seeds you enlarge the feeding place of birds and encourage more of our feathered friends to come to cheer us with their beauty and song. New environment will often enable a plant to survive in entirely different soil and climatic conditions, than it formerly enjoyed. In many instances changes occur that make them quite different than the parent stock. Such changes would be the forerunner of a new colony of plants.

It is not up to the one sowing the seed to say that this or that should be planted. Just plant anything and trust to nature to help bring them to maturity. Seed of many kinds of wild bulbs as well as cultivated ones could be used. Seed from cultivated bulbs make splendid wild flowers if they find just the right place to grow. Seed from many of the berry shrubs might prove satisfactory. One must consider that they are wild plants growing in other places, and might do well or better, if they once get a foothold in the new spot you have selected. This is a thought that has been lingering with me for many years, and I have done my part in years past and will continue in time to come. And how easy it would be if all had the planting habit. And how easy it would be to brighten up the dull and unsightly places along the highways and the by-ways, by the simple procedure of gathering seeds and scattering them to the four winds, for Mother Nature to take care of.

• Why not a year's subscription to *The BEGONIAN* as a birthday or other gift?

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A MORE ABUNDANT LIFE FOR BEGONIAS

by ALFRED D. ROBINSON

BACK OVER fifty years of close association, I look at the begonias and find them in the underprivileged class crowded or shunted to the corners or spots where other things would not grow in the open garden, giving way to the entrenched favorites such as roses, dahlias and what not; and I have said, this should not be, the practice is merely a tradition, not a law of the Medes and Persians and even if it were so, to - - - - or some other hot place with the Medes and Persians. Let us have other standards and new laws, that will give these underprivileged ill-treated plants a **MORE ABUNDANT LIFE**.

That is a synopsis of an urge I have had to make a plea for a use of Begonias in ordinary landscaping, or gardening as I prefer to put it. The climax to this urge came when I was told of a hedge of Begonia Multiflora Rosea in Monterey County, clipped like a privet, that bloomed all the year 'round. This Begonia at Rosecroft, in all sizes, six inches to six feet, has been in perfect condition and blooms for more than a year, **EVERY DAY**. Under lath? Yes, but for the Winter months it is fair to assume it would have preferred the outside where a higher temperature prevailed.

Multiflora Rosea is only one of many Begonias that have made good in the open garden in addition to the ubiquitous bedding and tuberous types. The Lucerne and Rubra types, Diswelliana and Robusta and the rhizomatous group headed by the magnificent Ricinifolia that loves a hot sunny situation. Even the delicate Odorata Alba has been seen growing well on the East side of a house. In fact there are but a few that it would not be worth while taking a chance on. The recent introduction from Macchu Pichu that has already been given several names, beside a number, is a great possibility for outside and is a true winter bloomer. Outside it might be more restrained in growth. Its chief drawback under lath is its rapid growth and consequent straggling habit which severe pinching partly controls.

Here somebody says, what about wind?

Well, what about it? Do roses and dahlias and chrysanthemums love wind? You know they don't, and conditions and location are made and chosen for protection. The fact is that the Begonia has been relegated to the class filled by collections of things, like postage stamps for instance. Single plants of as many varieties as possible are obtained and the hunt is on for more, the newer the better or the old and forgotten, in lieu thereof.

Sometime ago the Begonia Society interested the City of Long Beach in a real lathhouse for its Park and I understand the matter went so far as selecting a site and no doubt the site is still there if the house is not. Now suppose the Society once more approach the most potent grave and reverend signors that control such affairs and say, forget the lathhouse for a time, let us have a plot of ground out in the open to plant Begonias as a trial. If you do this and furnish labor, etc., we will furnish the plants and direction. At the worst might be a refusal or a run-around that would be comparatively painless. Such an offer should be accompanied by a notice of its making in the press for record's sake.

I am sure the members of the ABS would furnish the plants with enthusiasm and a competent committee to supervise the project. This committee should include someone whose main care would be for decorative effect rather than collective display.

One of the objects of the Society is to sell the Begonia to the general public and this would seem to be a way of doing so.



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**MEETING
DATES**

PALOMAR BRANCH

Tuesday, March 4, 7:30 P.M.
Vista Inn, Vista, Calif.
Margaret Rutherford, Secy.-Treas.
Route 2, Box 340, Escondido.

HERBERT DYCKMAN BRANCH

Tuesday, March 4, 7:30 P.M.
4404 Greenbrier Street,
Lakewood Village, Long Beach.
Mrs. Anna Smith, Secy.-Treas.
250 East Home St., Long Beach.

THEODOSIA BURR SHEPHERD BR.

Tuesday, March 4, 8:00 P.M.
American Legion Hall,
North California Street, Ventura.
George Fitch, Secy.-Treas.
70 South Hurst St., Ventura.

SAN FRANCISCO BRANCH

Wednesday, March 5, 8:00 P.M.
1060 Francisco Street.
Harry F. O'Donnell, Secretary.
1575 - 31st Ave., San Francisco.

ORANGE COUNTY BRANCH

Thursday, March 6, 7:30 P.M.
Y.M.C.A. Building,
Church & Sycamore St., Santa Ana.
Florence Carrell, Secy.-Treas.
214 No. Yale, Fullerton.

INGLEWOOD BRANCH

Friday, March 7, 8:00 P.M.
Woman's Club, 325 No. Hillcrest Blvd.
Mrs. Rose Hescok, Secretary,
4209 West 111th St., Inglewood.

PHILADELPHIA & VICINITY BRANCH

Monday, March 10, 2:00 P.M.
Mrs. J. N. Adam, "Dunnegan",
West Chester, Pa.
Sophia E. Whitaker, Secy.,
5343 Greene St., Germantown, Phila., Pa.

HOLLYWOOD BRANCH

Wednesday, March 12, 8:00 P.M.
Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd.
Mrs. Helen Ehret
7507 Lexington Ave., Hollywood

LONG BEACH PARENT BRANCH

Friday, March 14, 7:30 P.M.
Franklin Junior High School
6th and Cerritos Sts., Long Beach
Mrs. Ethel G. Arbuckle, Secy.-Treas.
5932 Seville Ave., Huntington Park.

GLENDALE BRANCH

Monday, March 17, 8:00 P.M.
Sparr Heights Community Center,
3311 Downing Avenue, Glendale.
Mrs. M. B. Dewar, Secretary,
709 Milford Ave., Phone Citrus 17517.

SANTA BARBARA BRANCH

Tuesday, March 18, 7:30 P.M.
1595 East Valley Road, Montecito.
Mrs. Louise Schwerdtfeger, Secy.,
246 No. Alamar Ave., Santa Barbara.

NORTH LONG BEACH BRANCH

Thursday, March 20, 7:30 P.M.
1644 East 55th Street
H. A. Cuyler, Secy.-Treas.
5675 Olive Ave., Long Beach.

SAN GABRIEL VALLEY BRANCH

Friday, March 21, 7:30 P.M.
Arcadia City Hall, Arcadia.
Mrs. A. N. Hartwell, Secretary,
1719 Alamitas Ave., Monrovia.

EAST BAY BRANCH

Monday, March 24, 7:30 P.M.
Berkeley Council Chambers
Geo. Pascoe, Secy.-Treas.,
2125 McGee Ave., Berkeley.

MARGARET GRUENBAUM BRANCH

Annual Philadelphia Flower Show
Mrs. Wm. L. Paxson, Secretary,
Willow Grove, Pa.

SYRACUSE BRANCH

Richard C. Atwood, Secy.-Treas.
1405 East Fayette Street, Syracuse, N. Y.

NEW ENGLAND BRANCH

Secretary—Mrs. B. W. Skinner,
Lynnfield, Mass.

PHILOBEGONIAN BRANCH

For information write to
Mrs. Albert H. Gere, Secy.-Treas.
362 Brookway, Merion, Pa.

• The National Board meeting will be held at Ferd P. Neels residence, 426 E. Maple Ave., El Segundo, Calif, on March 6, 1941.

• Note:— Calendar listed according to meeting dates.

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