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BEGONIAN



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AIMS AND PURPOSES OF THE AMERICAN BEGONIA SOCIETY, INC.

The purpose of this Society shall be to promote
interest in begonias and other shade-loving plants;
to encourage the introduction and development of
new types of these plants to standardize the no-
menclature of begonias; to gather and publish in-
formation in regard to kinds, propagation and
culture of begonias and companion plants; to issue
a bulletin which will be mailed to all members of
the Society; and to bring into friendly contact all
who love and grow begonias.

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Views expressed in this magazine are not
necessarily those of the Editor, the Society, or
its officers.

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

As the incoming president of the American Begonia Society, I wish to welcome all members to the threshold of a prosperous, enlightening, and enjoyable year.

At the installation I stated that Faith is a word we often forget to dwell upon; so let us think of the word for a moment. Faith gives courage and strength to mind and body, making men and women of sterling character, inspiring them with confidence and assurance. It is a blessing to all who hold fast to its purpose and ideals.

The American Begonia Society represents a living, working faith, an abiding trust. It has solved many problems in the past. They were solved with intelligence and vision—this has been proven by the various projects, sponsored locally and nationally, for the benefit of horticulture and, especially, our wondrous begonia.

There are great opportunities ahead, and the decisions made by the members of this Society will be the foundations of tomorrow's progress in the American Begonia Society.

I am sure you have read the many new names in this issue of *The Begonian*. Please give all the officers your trust, ideas, and suggestions for a better *Begonian*.

We have members in forty-nine states and twenty-odd countries. Many of these areas have been neglected to the point that the members feel completely forsaken and forgotten. There are many things to be rectified, for we are in reality an international society, and all areas must be recognized and acknowledged. This cannot be done in a week

COVER PICTURE

Begonia 'Odora Alba' (*nitida*) featured in article on page 220.

—Photo courtesy of A. B. Graf from *Exotica III*.



Mrs. Margaret Ziesenhenne, installing officer, presents gavel to President Muriel Perz.

—Photo by Ralph Cowin

or a month; so let us work to strengthen the bonds of friendship to better the goal of the American Begonia Society.

As these officers begin this year with enthusiasm, we welcome all letters for a better *Begonian* and a successful Society.

—MURIEL PERZ,
Your President

INTRODUCING SOME CHANGES

This issue of *The Begonian* introduces some changes—new cover, new format, new style. Along with our well known writers, we present some new writers. These changes are for the same objective, to encourage our members to grow and enjoy begonias, and to give them more and more information about begonias.

How do you like this issue? I would appreciate your letting me know what you think of it.

—TRU PETERSON
Editor

The Editor welcomes articles contributed by members or non-members. Material for publication should be received by the Editor before the first of the month preceding month of publication.

NUMEROUS NAMES FOR NITIDA

By ROBERT L. SHATZER

A.B.S. Research Director

The first living begonia plant was introduced into European cultivation 188 years ago by a navy doctor, William Brown. He brought the specimen of this fibrous species from Jamaica to Kew Gardens, England, in 1777, where it was cultivated, recorded, and named *Begonia nitida* (Aiton). This "first" among begonias was described in 1791 by the Swedish botanist, Jonas Dryander, in his *Observations on the Genus Begonia*. He described twenty-one begonias known at that time, but he had actually seen only three of them as living plants. *Nitida* was one of these.

Since this plant has been with us in cultivation for so many years, one would think that everything must surely be known about it and thus there would be no confusion; but unfortunately this assumption soon proves false. This species is immersed in synonyms, harassed by confusion, and torn by controversy.

In its Jamaican home *nitida* is commonly referred to as "wild sorrel" while many gardeners in this country have called it "shiny-leaved begonia" or "elephant's ear begonia." The synonym listings for this plant alone are lengthy and confused. One can find it listed as: *obligua*, L'Hertier; *purpurea*, Sw.; *speciosa*, hort.; *lucida*, hort.; *minor*, Jacquin; *pulchra*, Schreb; *suaveolens*, Klotzsch, non. Loddiges.

The names *nitida* var. *'odorata alba'*, *nitida* var. *'rosea'*, *nitida odorata*, and numerous other combinations of the above have so clouded the records that it is difficult to separate the material correctly. In an attempt to unsnarl this knot, let us examine what the records say about just *Begonia nitida*.

It is an erect, heavily-stemmed plant that is free-branching at the base and will grow to a height of four to six feet. General appearance is shiny; thus its name *nitida*, which

means "shining;" it is described as glabrous, which means smooth, without hairs or projections. Young stems are red with green spotting, but with age these stems become a woody, light-brown, especially at its shrubby base.

Leaves have been called reniform-ovate, broad-ovate, or obliquely-ovate; fleshy with margins (edges) crenate-dentate or acute-wavy. All seem to agree that the convex leaves are dark-green and glossy with lighter green veins. These patent-leather-like leaves are approximately 2½ inches by 4½ inches, appearing alternately on the stems. The petioles are from one inch to equal in length of the leaf and are often entirely red or partially so colored. The leaf unfolds from two green, triangular-pointed stipules that reflex back against the stem where they remain inconspicuously dry. The underside of this glossy leaf is soft, frosty-green, a bit brighter on the raised veins. Young leaves may be red-flushed and cupped; but as they mature, they flatten out and even turn back.

The flowers are not as simple to relate, as there is disagreement about color, bracts, and blossoming season. The blooms are 1½ to 1¾ inches in diameter and are borne on large, ten-inch peduncled clusters. The male flower is the larger and first to mature. It has four petals. Two are broad and two are narrow (see Fig. 1). The smaller female flowers have five petals of equal size and are slow to open as they are held back by two pink, deciduous bracts. The male flowers open first to reflex their petals of unequal size and display their attractive golden stamens, and fall away before the female blossoms burst forth to open wide, exhibiting their three-paired cluster of yellow, oppositely-twisted stigmas. This smaller female flower appears whiter because of the



Figure 1 *Begonia nitida*. a — female flowers; b — male flowers.

—Drawing by G. A. Sausaman

three-winged ovary backing it. One wing is larger than the others and is sometimes tinged with pink. Both flowers will appear pinker if produced in more sun.

The flowering season is disputed, but I am convinced that *nitida* and its varieties bloom in the spring and early summer. The thing to be remembered here is that the flower, regardless of the color variety, should NOT have persistent bracts, either one or two. This feature seems to belong to the “*odorata*” groups which will be discussed later in this article.

The obvious fragrance of blossoms among many in this group raises yet another snarled crop of knotted notes. Mrs. Buxton says that *nitida* var. ‘*odorata alba*’ has smaller pure-white flowers scented with a lily-like odor. This variety is the taller white-blooming one that so many people have written about after observing it in Alfred D. Robinson’s gardens in California. He maintained a hedge of this variety under lath that certainly must have been spectacular. Mrs. Helen A. Strader stated in a recent *Begonian* that her plant produced a rose-like scent.

Mrs. Hazel Snodgrass reported an early morning fragrance.

After reading the excellent article “*Begonia Nitida*, (Dryander) Variety, *Odorata Alba*” in the July, 1945, *Begonian*, so wonderfully researched and written by Alice M. Clark and illustrated with an excellent sketch by Alfred C. Hottes, it becomes apparent that *nitida* has two different varieties. I am indebted to this article for its detailed account of *Begonia nitida* var. ‘*odorata alba*’ which is the tall, white variety discussed above. A second variety, *Begonia nitida* var. ‘*rosea*’ is well chronicled by T. H. Everett in *Journal of the New York Botanical Garden*, Volume 51, Number 481, January, 1940. Mr. Everett here proposes this name for a smaller variety which blooms pink. He further states very clearly the difference found in the ‘*odorata*’ group that was mentioned earlier.

“The correct name of the plant commonly grown in the United States under this name is undetermined. In literature “*odorata alba*” of gardens is commonly referred either to *B. nitida* of Aiton or to the nearly allied *B. suaveolens* of Haworth. The plant grown seems to be quite distinct from either and is probably a separate species. It differs from *B. nitida* in being lower and much more freely branched, in having stems and petioles sparsely



Figure 2: *Begonia nitida* — Photo by Mabel Ragel

furnished with conspicuous hairs, in having glossier, flatter leaves, and in having pistillate flowers which are larger than the staminate flowers and form the attractive portion of the inflorescence (the staminate flowers usually drop without expanding). An important difference is that the pistillate flowers of "*odorata alba*" have two conspicuous, persistent bracts at the base of the ovary. Flowers white or tinged pink."

Helen K. Krauss also writes about these differences in the April, 1944, *Begonian*.

Many experienced growers have had success with these species and varieties.

Victoria Kartack writes: "It (*nitida*) is easy to grow with no special care. A robust grower that becomes leggy and must be started again from cuttings every three years as the young plants are better bloomers. I usually grow three cuttings to a pot. It will also send up new growth from the base." Mrs. Kartack is a long-time member of the A.B.S. and has grown begonias with success in her home at Baraboo, Wisconsin.

Paul P. Lowe of Goulds, Florida, relates: "I received my start of *nitida* from the plant introduction station here, and it is thought that Dr. Fairchild brought it from Jamaica. It likes plenty of light, in fact, I have observed it on two occasions growing in full sun here in South Florida. *Nitida* blooms in the spring and early summer. The plant is larger and heavier than *odorata* but the flowers are smaller. Both plants like plenty of light. *Odorata* is a continuous bloomer. *Odorata alba* and *odorata rosea* are from South America."

It is difficult to tell which variety or which species has been used in many crosses made by hybridizers through the long years of cultivation. T. Ingram of England crossed *nitida* with *fuchsoides* and produced his cultivar 'Ingrami' in 1849. Haage & Schmidt introduced 'Dr. Nachtigal' in 1886, listing its parents as *suaveolens* crossed with *Lyncheana*. It is believed

that the synonym refers to *nitida* var. '*odorata alba*'.

One of the most significantly important uses of *nitida* in hybridization was its role in the development of the *Begonia semperflorens cultorum* when in France, 1900, it was bred into the group producing our current double-flowering 'Bijou de Jardin' descendants.

It is interesting to note that the American hybridist, Leslie Woodriff, of Oregon, crossed *odorata alba* with 'Bijou de Jardin', both closely related, to produce his cultivar 'Pet' in 1939. Mr. Woodriff continued to use this group in his work, producing two, still popular hybrids 'Oadi' and 'Tea Rose' from his *odorata alba* X *dichroa* seedlings in 1947. The usefulness of this begonia has not lost its distinction; I learned only last week of a cross using *nitida* var. '*odorata alba*' as one parent by M. L. MacIntyre in Liverpool, England.

Many members prefer to see pictures of the begonias discussed. Probably the finest color plate and text can be found in *Curtis Botanical Magazine*, Volume 16, plate 4046, 1843. Mrs. Buxton refers to a fine color plate of *B. nitida* in *Paxton's Magazine of Botany*, Volume 13. A. B. Graf's *Exotica III* is a wealth of pictures that many plant enthusiasts have found to be an invaluable addition to their libraries.

Mr. Graf writes: "*Begonia odorata rosea* is not illustrated in *Exotica III*, but I have a photograph received from Mr. Everett which I am holding for a new edition of a supplement to *Exotica III*." He also mentions that the picture on page 1508, a photo received from Germany labeled *B. nitida*, has been discovered to be incorrect.

He says, "I find that this begonia is listed by Parey as *Begonia minor* to which I will change it. This is most probably correct since Parey then lists *nitida* as a synonym, in other words, there may not be any true *nitida* at all. Parey's chapter on begonias was

(Continued on Page 234)

THE NEW HYBRIDS

BY EDNA KORTS

Did you see the new begonias at the American Begonia Society show? Division K in our show schedule had a special class for New Hybrids only, with no limit on the number of entries of plants created by one grower. Never has this class had so many outstanding plants as were shown this year. The plants were grown by California growers, but were hybridized in Wisconsin by Mrs. A. J. Kusler.

These plants were not judged for competition but each one was rated by a special score for new hybrids by at least three competent judges.

The highest score was given to a *B. crispula* hybrid grown by the Wilbur Olsons. Mrs. Kusler calls it B. 'Crispei'. *B. crispula* came from China, has a very crinkled leaf, rather round, and is considered difficult to grow because, if water stands in the crinkles, it causes the leaf to rot. I have no information on the other parent. B. 'Crispei' is very pretty.

Begonia 'Margaret Stevens' is a cane type and very lovely. It seems impossible to get a cane type from *B. georgensis* as a parent but it was crossed with B. 'Lenore Olivier'—a real cane because it comes from B. 'Elaine' x *B. dichroa*.

B. 'Margaret Stevens' is the most beautiful cane I have ever seen. I have been "cane begonia happy" for several years and have looked most of them over. B. 'Margaret Stevens' has large, dark leaves, shadowy silver-spotted on the surface and dark maroon on the back. The flowers are in large clusters and dark red in color. The plant grows compactly beautiful. It rated thirty-five points out of a possible forty points for distinctiveness. It also won the award for the best cane begonia in the show.

Begonia 'Dorothy Barton' is also a new cane entirely different from others. It is a cross of *B. dregei* x B. 'Lenore Olivier'. The leaves are different shades of green, ruffled on the

edges with a faint line of color. The flowers are a good pink; clusters are large and held above the foliage. This is a lovely plant and it blooms over a long period of time. Mine has been in flower over six months.

The judges rated B. 'Dorothy Barton' good.

All three of the plants described above received certificates for outstanding hybrids.

Begonia 'Sophie Cecile', another cane hybrid, is outstanding in that it really grows a cane that will hold itself upright. This is a cross between *B. sceptrum* and B. 'Lenore Olivier'. The leaves are large, notched similar to *B. sceptrum*, very dark in color, with silver spots that hold on all of them—not on just the old or the new. The backs of the leaves are dark red. The flowers are many and in clusters of bright pink.

B. 'Sophie Cecile' grows well outside of a glasshouse in a protected place. Mine has been under saran shade only all summer, like my other canes, and grows and blooms there.

Begonia 'Gwen Lowell' can not be called a cane; still it grows somewhat upright, but, I believe, would make a lovely basket. The cross is *B. vellozoana* x *B. obscura*. The leaves are oblong ovate, felt-like in substance, and very few drop. The flowers are white, very pretty, and held well above the foliage where they add much to the beauty of the plant. A picture of B. 'Gwen Lowell' was on the June, 1965, *Begonian*. This is a distinct begonia and an addition to all collections.

Begonias 'Lenore Olivier' and 'Laura Engelbert' are sister seedlings—both very beautiful. The rich color of the flowers against the large, dark leaves makes them the first plant noticed in the glasshouses. There is an old begonia named B. 'Elaine' which has very dark leaves, lightly spotted, and pink flowers. This be-

(Continued on Page 233)

AWARDS FOR 1965

At the annual Convention Show of the American Begonia Society in September, Award for Culture certificates were presented as follows:

To Mabel Corwin for her semperfloren, B. 'Charm'.

To Ruby Budd for her fibrous begonia B. 'Sophie Cecile'.

To Betty Jo Miller for her rhizomatous begonia on a totem pole, B. 'Aquamarine'.

To Elmer and Ethel Reid for a tuberous begonia.

These hand-illuminated parchment certificates are available to Branches of the American Begonia Society for use in their shows, upon request to the Awards Chairman. Award for Culture certificates may be presented in four classes: fibrous, rhizomatous, rex, and tuberous.

Hybrid of Distinction certificates were won by Belva Kusler of Frederic, Wisconsin, for three of her hybrids: B. 'Crispii' with 96 points; B. 'Margaret Stevens' with 90 points; and B. 'Dorothy Barton' with 87 points.

The Alfred D. Robinson Memorial Medal was not presented for 1965, not because there was no begonia hybrid worthy of it, but because, from apparent indifference, none was nominated.

The Eva Kenworthy Gray Award was presented this year. This award, honoring the memory of Mrs. Eva Kenworthy Gray, who contributed so much of her knowledge to others, is given to a person for a high standard of achievement as contributed to the American Begonia Society.

Mrs. Mary L. Gillingswators of Upland, California, was the recipient of this award.

Mary L., the daughter of Nanie and Crawford Beauchamp, was born in Breckenridge County, Kentucky, one of six children, three girls and three boys.

Mary came to California in 1908 and married Joel Gillingswators, a rancher. They were the parents of one son, Wilson. There are two grandchildren, Annette Sue, and Joel.

Mrs. Gillingswators is a woman of deep religious faith, a faith that sustained her through the tragic loss of her husband. She and her son carried on the work of the ranch.

She is also a gifted artist, working in oils and other media. Her artistic ability made it possible for her to create lovely garden displays and, as show chairman, she won many first awards for her Branch.

Mary has been a member of the American Begonia Society for many years, becoming a member of the Riverside Branch in 1953, where she has been most active in recent years. She is also affiliated with the Redondo Area Branch and the Orange County Branch.

Many lovely rex hybrids are the work and inspiration of Mary Gillingswators: 'Green Pastures', 'Joseph's Coat', 'Annette Sue', 'Joel', 'Mt. Baldy', 'Riverside Benny', 'Pequena', 'Vigorousa', 'Gray Satin', and 'Upland Crest', to name a few.

Of them all, 'Mt. Baldy' is her favorite. Having lived at the foot of Mt. Baldy most of her life, this is a natural choice.

Dorothy Behrends describes this rex as follows: "The large, very heavy-silvered center zone reminds one of Mt. Baldy capped with snow in the winter. The dark green outer zone is remindful of the foliage at the base of the mountain."

Mary has always given freely of her time and talent to the American Begonia Society as a judge, a teacher, a gracious hostess, and a friend. It was with affection and admiration this award was given.

MARGARET B. TAYLOR,
Chairman, Awards Committee.

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Officers at installation banquet: (from left) Mrs. Margaret Ziesenhene, installing officer; Mrs. Muriel Perz, president; Mrs. Mabel Corwin, past president; Everett Wright, president-elect; Wilbur Olson, vice-president; Mrs. Evelyn Keaster, secretary; Harold B. Burkett, treasurer. — Photos by Ralph Corwin

PERPETUAL AND CHALLENGE TROPHY WINNERS

In the American Begonia Society's Begonia and Shade Plant Show, held September 4, 5, and 6, these awards were earned by exhibitors:

Herbert P. Dyckman Perpetual Award for the most distinctive new fibrous begonia—won by Mabel Corwin for B. 'Margaret Stevens'.

President's Challenge Trophy for the best begonia—won by Betty Jo Miller for B. 'Aquamarine'.

Palos Verdes Begonia Farm Challenge Trophy for the best tuberous begonia—won by Elmer and Ethel Reid for B. 'Marmorata'.

Orris B. Martin Perpetual Trophy for the best tuberous begonia in the novice division—no award.

Effie Chapman Cup for the best fibrous begonia—won by Ruth Pease for B. 'd'Artagnon'.

Gonda Hartwell Cup for the best rex begonia—won by Betty Jo Miller for B. 'Ceciculia'.

John R. Williams Cup for the best rhizomatous begonia—won by Ruth Pease for B. 'Zug Kenworth Seedling'.

Redondo Area Branch Trophy for the best semperflorens begonia—won by Mabel Corwin for B. 'Charm'.

Gordon Baker Lloyd Trophy for the best seedling one year old—won by Chester Nave for B. 'Hammond Hybrid'.



Bert Slatter, show chairman, with Mrs. Slatter, enjoyed the banquet.

Inglewood Branch Trophy for the best species—won by Chester Nave for B. *cathayana*.

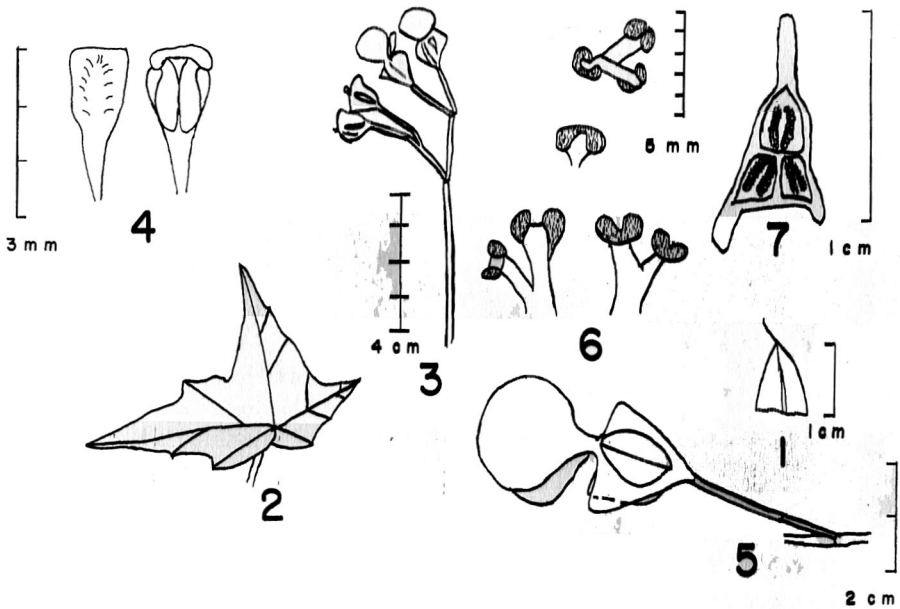
Edna Korts Perpetual Trophy for the best cane type begonia—won by Mabel Corwin for B. 'Margaret Stevens'.

San Miguel Branch Trophy for the best begonia in cultivation 25 years or longer—won by Mabel Corwin for B. *geogoensis*.

Edward L. Korts Perpetual Trophy for the best three rex begonias less than one year old—won by Margaret Drennon.

Bessie Buxton Branch Award for the best six begonias—won by Robert Hale.

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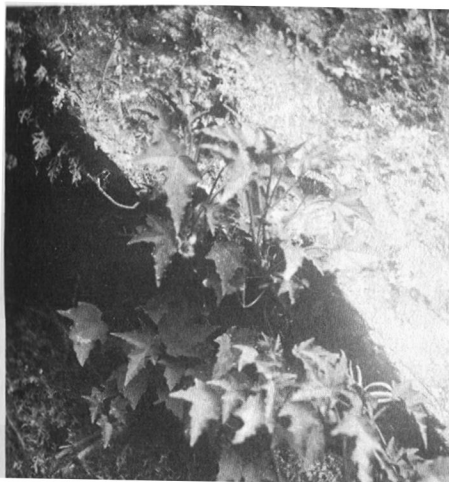


Begonia Bettinae Zies.

BEGONIA BETTINAE ZIES

BEGONIA (section **GIROUDIA** (KLOTZSCH) A. DC.) *bettinae*, Ziesenhenné, new species, herbaceous perennial: stem erect, round, base woody, one foot tall, diameter near the tip $\frac{1}{8}$ inch, seldom branched, foliage confined near the tip; internodes $\frac{3}{8}$ inch long near tip; covered with dense reddish brown matter hairs: stipules (fig. 1) remaining, papery, triangular, tip acute, margin even, $\frac{7}{16}$ inch long, $\frac{5}{16}$ inch wide, keeled with the tip terminating in a long hair. $\frac{1}{8}$ inch long, reddish-brown; outside covered with long reddish-brown hairs: leafstem round, $\frac{1}{16}$ inch in diameter, $\frac{2}{4}$ inches long, covered with reddish-brown woolly hairs $\frac{1}{16}$ inch long; leaf blade (figure 2) papery spinach green, dull, 5 nerved, very sparsely covered with reddish-brown hairs $\frac{1}{16}$ inch long; below dull pod-green, dull, moderately covered with crinkled and matted thin reddish-brown hairs, nerves

thickly covered with the same hairs; oblong-ovate to lanceolate-oblong, unequally three large and three small lobed, tip running out to a long tapering point, base rounded and lobed, margin irregularly wavy and vertically, edge even, bare tip portion of leaf $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches long and one inch wide at base, narrowly triangular, on the outside $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches from the tip is a small lobe, on the inside $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches from the tip is a small lobe, base of the leaf rounded and lobed, $1\frac{1}{8}$ inches long, $\frac{7}{8}$ inch wide, $\frac{7}{8}$ inch from the tip on the inside is a shallow lobe, outside of the leaf is a lobe $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches long on the tip side and $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches long on the basal side, triangular in shape, leaf $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches long, $2\frac{3}{8}$ inches wide, five palmately-nerved, laterally 1, basally one, laterally outside one, basally inside one, laterally inside one; inflorescence an auxiliary cyme (figure 3), few-flowered, equally divided flower cluster with paired branches of equal length, flowering from November through January:



Begonia bettinae Zies.

—Thomas McDougall photo #C.220

flower stem from the leaf axil, round, 3-3¼ inches long, 1/16 inch in diameter at the base, medium green, dull, thinly covered with 1/16 inch long reddish brown hairs, first internodes ½ inch to 11/16 inch long, second internodes 3/16 to ¼ inch long; leaflets on flower stems all missing since they fall early: male flowers in bud only, petals 2, pink, oval, tip blunt, margin even, bare, ¼ inch long, ¼ inch wide; stamens (figure 4) 10, filaments free, as long as the anthers, oblong, wedge-shaped, tip flat 1/16 inch long, 1/16 inch wide, connective produced; female flower (figure 5) petals 2, pink, roundish transversely, tip blunt, narrowing at the base in the dried flowers, 5/16 inch long, ⅜ inch wide; stigmas — 3 (figure 6) united at the base for 1 mm., branches 2 mm. long, crescent-shaped, slightly 2-lobed, stigma pappillae around the tip and edge; capsule (figure 7) 5/16 inch long, ¼ inch wide, oblong, ends blunt, wings 3, unequal, larger one ⅛ inch long, ¼ inch wide at the base, triangular, blunt tip, other two 3/32 inch long ¼ inch wide at base; ovary elliptical, blunt, 3-celled, placenta 2 divided carrying seed on all sides.

Mexico, Chiapas, Sierra Madre above Custepec, 5000 feet. Mr. Mac-

dougall's collection number C. 185. November 17, 1956.

The following are Mr. Thomas MacDougall's collection notes:

"C. 185. Dwarf, shrubby." As listed above.

"C. 219A. It grows on the Sierra Madre, above Finca Prusia, Angel Albino Corzo, Chiapas at an average altitude of nearly 7,000 feet. The plant grows on well drained spots, in partial shade. April 29, 1960."

"C. 220. South side of El Trinifo, 7,000 feet. April 30, 1960. Because of the slight break in the habitat localities I gave this the collection number C. 220, although I consider it identical with the C. 185. The underside of the leaves of this plant are oxblood red."

Mr. MacDougall has asked that this new begonia be named in honor of Señora Bettina von Knoop who is the wife of Don Hubertus von Knoop, superintendent of Finca Prusia at the time the plant was collected.

The plant appears to be similar to *Begonia lobulata* A. DC. but it is easily distinguished from it by the more acutely lobed leaves, the thin woody stems, and the dwarf habit of the plant.

LATIN DESCRIPTION

BEGONIA (section GIROUDIA (Klotzsch) A. DC.) *bettinae*, Zies, spec. nov. Herba perennis: caule persistente, erecto, elliptico, lignoso, 31 cm. longo, 2 mm. crasso raro ramoso, superne foliato; internodis 1 cm. longis, dense ferrugineo-villosis; stipulis persistentibus, papyraceis, triangularibus, acutis, marginibus integris, 1 cm. longis, 8 m.m. latis, carinatis, apice in filum 3 mm. longum exeuntibus, extus ferrugineo-villosis: petiolis teretibus 2 mm. crassis, 6 cm. longis, dense ferrugineo-villosis 2 mm. longis; foliis papyraceis, supra viridibus spinaceis, opacis, villis paucis ferrugineis 2 mm. longis pontis; subtis viridibus valvaris, opacis, ferrugineo-villosis, nervis dense ferrugineo-villosis, oblongis-ovatis vel lanceolato-oblongis, foliis 8.2 cm. longis, 3.5 cm. latis, inaequaliter tri-lobatis; apice acuminatis, basi rotundatis et lobatis, margine sinuatis et undulatis, lobo medio 4.5 cm. longo, 2.6 lato, anguste triangulari; extus lobo minore 3.2 cm. ad apice remotos imbricatis; intus lobo brevioris intrudis, basi rotundatis et lobatis, 4 cm. longis in basis, triangularis;

palmatinerviis, nervis 5, lateralibus 1, basilaribus 1, extus lateralibus 1, intus basilariibus 1, intus lateralibus 1: inflorescentia cymosa, pauciflora; pedunculis axillaribus, teretibus, 7.6-8.3 cm. longis, 2 mm. crassis, viridibus, sparsim ferrugineo-villosis 2 mm. longis; internodiis primariis 1.2-1.6 cm. longis; pedicellis 4-6 mm. longis; bracteis deciduis inopiaris; tepalis masculinis 2, immaturis, puniceis, ovalis, obtusis, glabris, integris, 5 mm. longis 6 mm. latis; staminibus 10, filamentis inaequalibus, liberis; antheris cuneiformibus, apice obtusis, 1.3 mm. longis, $\frac{3}{4}$ mm. latis, connectivo pyramidalis: floribus femineis ebracteatum tepalis 2, puniceis, rotundis, obtusis, 1.3 cm. longis, 5 mm. latis, marginibus integris; stylis 3, basi .5 mm. connatis, parte libera 2 mm. longis, apice sickelfomig, stigmatibus capitatis et marginalibus; capsula glabra 9 mm. longa, 9.5 mm. lata, ellipsoidea; nuda, inaequaliter trilata; ala maxima triangula obtusa, 4 mm. longa, 8 mm. lata, reliquis angustis, 2 mm. longa, 8 mm. lata; ovario obtuso, 7 mm. longo, 5 mm. lato, 3-loculari; placentis bilamellatis, undique ovuliferis.

CORRECTION CORNER

BEGONIAS, written by Roy Genders, was published by John Gifford Ltd. in London in 1958. In the book are fine photographs of thirty-four begonias. I would like to give the correct names for some of the plants which are incorrectly labeled.

Plate XXIII: *Begonia coccinea* is *Begonia corallina* Carr.

Plate XXVI: *Begonia corallina*, Mme. Dr. Charrat is *Begonia albo-picta* Bull.

Plate XXX: *Begonia heracleifolia* is *Begonia serratifolia* Irmsch.

Plate XXXII: *Begonia manicata* *crispa* is *Begonia crispula* Brade.

Plate XXXIII: *Begonia rex*, Iron Cross is *Begonia Masoniana* Irmscher.

—E. IRMSCHER.

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RAISING BEGONIAS A PLEASURE OR A TASK?

By RICHARD R. HAMMOND
Northwestern Editor

Fellow Begonia growers! If you raise begonias as a hobby, are you in control of your hobby, or does it control you? Is it still something you do for enjoyment and relaxation, or is it merely another daily task that must be done? If it becomes more of a task than a pleasure, then something should be done about it.

Often you start out with just a few plants that you have time to care for and raise to perfection. The few plants that you have are a real joy. It seems that most horticultural hobbies, however, are very contagious and it isn't long before you have a great many plants. If you are only a spare-time gardener it takes more and more time to give the plants only basic care, and thus the hobby becomes a task instead of a pleasure.

I'm not advocating that you give up growing begonias when you reach the point of saturation. Far from that. The A.B.S. needs all of its members. Perhaps, however, when you reach that point you should cut down. Maybe specialization is the answer. Pick certain species or varieties and really learn about them. Or perhaps the answer might be doing research on problems concerned with begonias—or hybridizing to create new varieties.

The point I'd like to emphasize is —this—do not let your hobby become stagnant. If you have many begonias that are merely existing from lack of care, and you dread taking the time to give them minimum care to keep them alive, then it's time to consider doing something about it.

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BEGONIA MAPHIL OR CLEOPATRA

By ELDA HARING

In our collection of begonias is one which we have found to be as easy to grow as *Semperflorens*, as have some of our experienced friends. I refer to Begonia 'Maphil Cleopatra'.

We discovered this one while on a visit to Florida. The grower warned us to grow it in osmunda, the medium which he uses for growing his scale begonias. His advice, I am sure, is good for South Florida, but hardly for our climate in Connecticut.

For most of our begonias we use a mix of two parts garden loam, one part bacto-peat, one part vermiculite, and one part builder's sand, with a tablespoon of bonemeal added for each quart of soil.

Last year a friend came to visit, bringing with her a beautiful alabaster compote which she thought she would like to have planted. Because she leads a busy social life, this lady had never been successful with house plants, although she loves to use them in a decorative way in her home. Much of her trouble was caused by the fact that all her plants were under-watered and, one by one, would succumb to desert conditions.

I was reluctant to plant a container with no drainage hole, but upon reflection decided that a container which did not permit water to drain away might be the answer to her problem.

I had several 'Maphils' (Cleopatra) about ten inches in height and as broad. My friend fell in love with this begonia at first sight.

Since there was a possibility that the plant might not survive in the compote and my friend might want to use the compote for something else in the future, I lined it with aluminum foil to the soil level, to prevent the soil from staining the delicate alabaster. In the bottom, I created a drainage area by placing an inch of bird gravel (the kind I buy for the parakeet's cage) and mixed a small

quantity of crushed charcoal with it. I placed a piece of paper towel over the gravel and charcoal to keep the soil from sifting into this drainage area. Then a thin layer of the potting mix was sifted in over the bottom layer, the root ball of 'Cleopatra' was reduced slightly to give it room in the compote, and the container was filled within a quarter-inch of the top.

'Cleo' looked gorgeous in the compote and my friend proudly took it home.

Some time later when I went to see her, I expected to be met with a long tale of woe, but — there was the plant looking very happy. The outer leaves drooped over the edge and the others had arranged themselves tastefully, as though they were never meant to be grown in an ordinary flower pot.

Apparently this method of planting has solved her growing problem. She has placed all her house plants in decorative containers and they are all thriving. I had warned her to be very careful with her watering, and if the soil in the container should feel too moist, she should turn it on its side and let excess moisture drain out. However, since she is cautious about the use of water on her potted plants, evidently she is using just the right amount and no more.

The compote is used as a center piece when the lady has guests, and spends the rest of the time on a step-table with other container-grown plants in her family room.

My own experience with 'Maphil' has proved what a versatile plant it really is. In four-inch pots, the leaves have stayed small and the blossom stems not out of proportion with the size of the plants. Some of them have been shifted to larger pots as they grew. One, growing in an Italian

(Continued on Page 232)

CLAYTON M. KELLY SEED FUND FLIGHT

No. 1 — *B. masoniana* syn. 'Iron Cross' —

Introduced in England in 1952, by Mason, it is said to be one of the most beautiful begonias in cultivation. Leaves are large and puckered, Nile-green, marked with a contrasting bold, brown-red pattern, resembling the German iron cross. Stems are white-hairy and reddish. Flowers are waxy, greenish white, with maroon bristles on the back. At first the seedlings will resemble the rex type begonia but, according to authorities on the subject, *B. masoniana* bears no relation to this group of plants. Price \$1.00 per pkt.

No. 2 — *B. listada* —

New species from Brazil; said to be very rare in its native Brazil, where only a few plants are in cultivation. The plant is small, only about a foot high. The leaf is smallish, dark green above with an emerald-green band surrounding the mid-rib, hairy and red beneath. Flowers are two-toned from the leaf axils. A friend who lives in a mountainous section of Brazil not far from Sao Paulo has a greenhouse full of the most beautiful and rare begonias, and he was kind enough to send us the seed of the beautiful *listada*. \$1.00 per pkt.

No. 3 — *B. socotrana* —

Herbaceous perennial with more or less deciduous branches. Growth bushy. At the base we find a number of connected green bulbils which are covered with brown scales. Stem ramified, petioles 10-15 cm. long, succulent, hairy, green. The leaves of the lower and center parts are peltate, almost circular, about 12 cm. x 12 cm. when fully grown; slightly bent at the margins, crenate and wavy, fresh green on top, slightly glossy, bare; beneath pale green, hairy at the elevated veins. The upper leaves are more or less cordate or have 3 to 5 lobes. Flowers are very large and pink. The bulbils should be collected in the fall and stored in a dry place until spring.

The two types of Christmas or winter-flowering begonias are both descendants of *B. socotrana*. 50 cents per pkt.

No. 4 — *B. carolineafolia* —

Mexico. Rhizome grows upright, seldom branches; will send out new shoots when tip is cut off. Large leaves resembling the horse chestnut; seven to nine neatly fluted green leaflets attached to the stem end. Spires of rosy flowers. Magestic. 25 cents per pkt.

No. 5 — *B. acuminata* —

Jamica. Showy and dainty plant with many large white flowers on arching stems. 25 cents per pkt.

No. 6 — *B. sp. no. 1170* —

Africa. Related to *B. dregei*. 50 cents per pkt.

No. 7 — *B. sp. no. 1055* —

Africa. Like *B. sutherlandi*, but leaves are hairy and flowers are deep orange. Good plant. 35 cents per pkt.

No. 8 — *B. ottonis* —

Large plant with small, glossy leaves. 25 cents per pkt.

No. 9 — *B. inciso-serrata* —

Glossy, dark green leaves, red beneath. White flowers in summer. 25 cents per pkt.

No. 10 — *B. rostrata* —

Large leaves with curious upright red hairs. Small flowers. 25 cents per pkt.

No. 11 — *B. jairi-Brade* —

Medium tall plant, very floriferous, pretty leaf. From Brazil. 50 cents per pkt.

No. 12 — *B. undulata* —

Brazil. Shiny green leaves on spreading branches. Tight clusters of white flowers. 25 cents per pkt.

No. 13 — *B. salicifolia* —

Brazil. sp. Fruticose. 25 cents per pkt.

No. 14 — *B. heracleifolia* type —

Seeds were collected from a garden near Sao Paulo, Brazil. The owner of the plant states that it is a species but the collector has some doubt

about this. The plant has fine racemes of white flowers over star-shaped, variegated leaves. It will be interesting to try this one and compare it with *B. heracleifolia*. 25 cents per pkt.

No. 15 — B. Brazil sp. —

Sm., angel-wing leaf from a brushy gully in full sun at 5,850 feet elevation. Deep residual soil, rainy, foggy area. Good white flowers. 25 cents per pkt.

No. 16 — B. egregia —

Syn. *B. quadrelocularis*. Brazil. Plant with long, tapering, pointed, pebbly green leaves, drooping neatly from both sides of the stem. Flowers like tiny pink-tipped hearts, with uncharacteristic four-winged ovaries. 50 cents per pkt.

MRS. FLORENCE GEE
Seed Fund Administrator
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ROUND ROBIN NEWS

Happy new Begonia year! We are really going to miss Herb Warrick as Director this year, but we hope that the American Begonia Society and *The Begonian* will benefit from his research.

I know I will have a wonderful year, reading all your letters as the robin flights come winging in. What a wealth of shared experiences and experiments, shared research and descriptions of plants and methods, new information, perhaps new begonias—and certainly new friends—we are all anticipating! Each flight will enrich its members—and let's keep them moving in and out quickly.

The robins are vital transfusions—with this magazine—for all of us who are far from other enthusiasts and cannot belong to a Branch or visit growers or shows. Some flights find value in studying one begonia or a group at a time, with members contributing to build up full description and information on growing habits and needs. Others may pursue a specific problem or question for a while. We are starting some robins that specialize in one subject or phase

of begonia growing. Still others are more like a continuing question-and-answer column. Who hasn't questions?. The answers may be only a mail box away.

Slow robins: Some members have such full schedules they cannot answer letters as quickly as other members. They hate to delay the flights, yet they hate to give up their robin friends. Perhaps an answer to this old problem would be a special robin for members who would not mind if their flight is slow in going around. What do you think — would you like such a robin? Don't let this problem keep you from enjoying this program.

For new members: The American Begonia Society has a growing program of round robin letters, with about 25 flights. Ideally, each flight has no more than eight members, including the Round Robin Director and the Research Director. Each flight member contributes a letter to his robin, using light weight paper and holding the letter no longer than five days—even a shorter time if possible — so the flight won't take seven months to get around. When it returns, he removes his old letter and adds a new one.

All robin members should be members of the American Begonia Society. If you wish to join a robin, send me your name. If you are interested in a specialty robin, name it. As enough members are lined up for that subject, we will speed the new robin on its flight.

—MRS. CARRIE E. KAREGEANNES,
Round Robin Director,
3916 Lake Boulevard,
Annandale, Virginia, 22003.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

BY MURRAY D. MORRISON

*Member of the
Knickerbocker Branch A.B.S.*

It is my purpose, my duty, and my desire to give the best and most accurate answers to begonia growers in this area who have troubles. If I do not know the answer, I shall contact those I believe do know, and the readers and I will all learn from the question.

This section will prove of greatest value if your questions are sincere, not merely attempts to stump the writers. If you know the answer to an important problem, pose the question yourself and write the reply under it; then send it on to me. None of us knows so much that he cannot learn more. Remember, too, that no problem is a "silly" problem, so do not think your question is too silly to be submitted.

If space does not permit a reply in *The Begonian*, a personal letter will be sent.

The following questions are those most frequently asked at the International Flower Show in New York.

Question: What is the best medium in which to root cuttings?

Answer: There is no "best" medium just as there is no "only" medium. There are four popular media used—water, sand, vermiculite, and perlite—and there are growers who swear by each. Try them all, and the one that works best for you is your "right" one.

I use vermiculite, which gives me almost 100 per cent success. Two methods: 1) I fill a tray about 1½ inch deep with vermiculite, keep it constantly moist, set the cuttings, and place the tray under fluorescent lights. 2) I fill a plastic pot with vermiculite, soak it and drain it well, then place it into a plastic bag; set the cuttings into the vermiculite, tie the top end of the bag securely with a rubber band, and place it under lights or a naturally lighted area. Cuttings generally root in two to six weeks.

Question: Which exposure is best for begonias?

Answer: As most begonias require good light but not direct sunlight for too long a spell, I find an east window best, west second. However, a south window, with the sunlight controlled, can be just as good as east. For myself—I find the very best exposure to be fluorescent lights!

Question: How often should begonias be watered?

Answer: An oft-asked question that never loses its value! With very few exceptions, begonias do not want to be watered until they indicate that they have used up much of their previous watering. Touch the top of the soil; if it feels wet, leave it alone; if it is on the dry side, water. It is impossible to state a fixed number of waterings per week, as weather, home heating, etc., have varying influence on the rate of water consumption of house plants.

If you have a problem in begonia growing, submit your question. It will be answered by someone who is familiar with conditions in the area where *you* live.

—MURRAY D. MORRISON,
2109 Matthews Avenue,
The Bronx,
New York, 10462

BEGONIA MAPHIL . . .

(Continued from Page 229)

pottery container, is twenty inches in diameter and twenty inches in height.

Under the fluorescent lights, the leaves turn a dark chocolate color with a chartreuse overcast. In my east window, the leaves are lighter in color and some of them show the characteristic light brown markings on light yellowish-tan leaves. In my greenhouse, the leaves turn quite light, with distinct dark markings.

Leaves root readily in vermiculite. This plant divides easily when removed from a pot.

Everyone should grow Begonia 'Maphil' because, in my opinion, it is one of the easiest to grow and the most delightful one in my collection.

RESEARCH REPORT



Robert L. Shatzer

Your Research Department can be only as good as you help to make it. Therefore, I begin my year as your Research Director by earnestly asking each of you for your help, cooperation, and suggestions.

First of all, I need to know what projects you want this department to work on. Secondly, I hope that you will contribute any information and help that you can to the new projects that are beginning in this issue.

One important thing that I will try to add to *The Begonian* is an article on a feature begonia each month, giving all pertinent information known about each plant, including culture and propagation experience notes. Then, in later issues, I will publish any additional information that is brought to the attention of this department.

This month *Begonia nitida* is featured.

Please send your suggestion for a begonia that you think should be researched and featured, giving as much information as you can about your choice.

A second project is to determine if specific begonias are extinct or if they are in present cultivation. Heading the list to be researched are *B. veitchii*, *B. rosaeiflora*, *B. clarkei*, *B. cinnabarina*-syn. *B. aurantiaca*. If you have any information concerning the

existence of these species, please send it to me so that all members may be informed about them. Also, any begonia, species or cultivar, that you believe should be placed on this list will be added at your request.

I would like to remind you again that only with your help will I be able to make your Research Department function in a manner that will be a service to the entire membership.

Please send suggestions or information to:

—ROBERT L. SHATZER,
Research Director,
Box 126,
Albright, W. Va.,
26519.

NEW HYBRIDS . . .

(Continued from Page 223)

gonia crossed with *B. dichroa* gave Mrs. Kusler the two distinguished plants, 'Lenore Olivier' and 'Laura Engelbert'. Then, by selfing *B. 'Lenore Olivier'* she produced the two Fleetham begonias, 'Jeanne' and 'Gigi'. These plants have the largest, darkest foliage I have ever seen on any begonia, but they also grow large clusters of beautiful white flowers.

Also on the new hybrid table were some new rhizomatous begonias shown by Ruby Budd. They were nice plants, well worth growing—sorry, I cannot tell you more about them. The rex has a lovely color, but I do not know where it was produced.

Mrs. Kusler received the Herbert Dyckman Award for the best new fibrous begonia, the Edna Korts Trophy for the best cane begonia, and the Glendale Branch Trophy for the best new hybrid in the show.

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NEWS FROM BRANCHES

Newsletters, publicity clippings, and pictures contributed by Branches of the American Begonia Society are placed in a separate book each year and, at convention time, are viewed by many visitors.

This past year, items for this Historian's Book were received from seventeen Branches: East Bay, Eastside, Foothill, Glendale, Inglewood, Knickerbocker, Louisiana Capital, Missouri, North Long Beach, Orange County, Sacramento, San Gabriel Valley, San Francisco, Seattle, Theodosia Burr Shepherd, Westchester, and Whittier.

We would like to receive news from all our Branches, and these items will be reported each month at the National Board meetings and placed in the History Book of the Society.

—RUTH PEASE
A.B.S. Historian
8101 Vicksburg Avenue
Los Angeles, Calif. 90045

TROPHY WINNERS . . .

(Continued from Page 225)

Jack Taylor Perpetual Trophy for the best hanging basket begonia—won by Ruth Pease for *B. 'd'Artagnon'*.

Sweepstakes Trophy, amateur division—won by Elmer and Ethel Reid.

Sweepstakes Trophy, novice division—won by A. N. Harrison.

Arthur Strandberg Trophy for the best fern in the amateur division—won by Betty Jo Miller for *Davallia Fijiensis* Major.

Dr. Drummond Trophy for the best fern in the novice division—won by A. N. Harrison for *Plumona*.

San Gabriel Branch Trophy—won by John G. Stel for a tropical display.

—BERT SLATTER,
Show Chairman.



NITIDA . . .

(Continued from Page 222)

written in German by the international authority, Dr. Irmscher, who does not list *nitida*, only as a synonym of *minor*."

Mr. Graf contacted Mr. Lyman B. Smith, Curator, Division of Phanerogams of the Smithsonian Institution and he replied with the following: ". . . Probably all their (New York Botanical Gardens) *Begonia nitida* is now filed under *B. minor* . . . I do not believe that *B. nitida* is a separate species and my guess is that if your specimens or photos do not agree with the *B. minor* shown in *Botanical Magazine*, plate 4046, it is because they are misidentified. I will have to have specimens to untangle this, but will try photos if that is all you have."

Where this jumble will lead or how to find a way out of this quandary will take time and more research. It is apparent, however, that a substantial dilemma does exist. Perhaps, with the cooperation of the members of the Society and the learned help of botanists, a solution can be reached, bringing order to this uncertainty.

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**WHERE IS THE
BRANCH DIRECTORY?**

The Branch Directory will be back soon—in January. It will be published only once every three months, so that these two pages can be used to better advantage in eight issues each year.

To be sure that your Branch is listed correctly next time, be sure that corrected names and addresses are sent to the Editor before December 1.

NEW BRANCH ORGANIZED

The American Begonia Society is proud to welcome a new member to the family—the Greater Baton Rouge Branch, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Its officers are: Mr. E. L. McAdams, president; Mrs. Don L. Wagner, vice-president; Mrs. J. R. Coxe, secretary-treasurer; Mr. Don L. Wagner, representative-director.

NOTICE TO BRANCHES

All Branches—Send names and addresses of your officers for 1966 to President Muriel Perz. When the list is complete, we will compile a roster which each officer will receive.

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CALENDAR

NOVEMBER 4—Whittier Branch: Twenty-first anniversary celebration. Charter members and past-presidents to be honored.

NOVEMBER 12—San Gabriel Valley Branch: Dr. Robert Atkinson, plant pathologist, author, and lecturer, will be guest speaker.

NOVEMBER 18—Foothill Branch: Howard Small will speak and show slides of his recent trip to Europe. Pot-luck dinner at 7 p.m. and meeting at 8 p.m.

NOVEMBER 26—Redondo Area Branch: Mrs. Alice Martin will demonstrate making beautiful Christmas decorations. Meeting at 8 p.m.

DECEMBER 4-5—Inglewood Branch: Christmas show and tea, featuring "Christmas Around the World." Open Saturday 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. and Sunday 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission \$1.00.

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