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The BEGONIAN



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

COVER PICTURE — BEGONIA REX 'JOE BOND'

By Gordon Lepisto, *St. Paul, Minn.*

Growing the begonia rex cultivars has been a marvelous adventure for me. Even more stimulating is the developing of new plants with all their vibrant colors, fascinating leaf patterns and textures. Serious plant breeding requires patience and careful research, but actual hybridizing methods are relatively easy. Transferring pollen from one flower to another requires no skill. I strive to develop rex begonias of strong growth and easy propagation. But many rex plants I develop and grow demand warm sheltered conditions and extreme humidity to bring out their best or even to survive.

The rex begonia on the cover, *B. 'Joe Bond'* (*B. versicolor* x Rex Cv. *B. 'John Blais'*) is a medium leaved plant, requiring more than average humidity. (I grow under 90% humidity.) The rex was named for a friend in Panama who grows over 1,000 varieties of begonias outdoors, as well as a large number of gesneriads. His climate lends itself well to begonia culture.

I crossed *B. versicolor* with *B. 'John Blais'* a number of years ago after many unsuccessful attempts. The resulting seedlings are all rex begonias, some resemble *B. versicolor*, others do not. No matter what

a rex is crossed with, the end result is always more rex begonias. Some of the successful named begonia cultivars from the same group as *B. 'Joe Bond'* are: *B. 'Millie Thompson'*; *B. 'Barbara Neptune'*; and *B. 'Mae Blanton'*.

I grow *B. 'Joe Bond'* in a coarse bark mixture always under high humidity, as I do the species *B. versicolor*. It is a very strong grower, propagates easily but shows little of its *B. versicolor* parent, other than the covering of fine red hair on the entire leaf and petiole. Other rex plants from this cross show more of *B. versicolor* traits such as low growing and similar leaf coloring. As I have said, all seem to require more than average humidity.

I have yet to hear how *B. 'Joe Bond'* will stand up to the different outdoor climates of Panama or California and natural light greenhouse conditions. In my controlled environment under fluorescent lights, it is a dependable, beautiful, strong growing rex.

PUBLICATION NOTICE

All material for publication — articles, notices, photographs — should be sent to the Editor, preferably five weeks before date of publication. Deadline is the first of the month preceding month of publication.

AIMS AND PURPOSES OF THE AMERICAN BEGONIA SOCIETY

The purpose of this Society shall be:

TO stimulate and promote interest in *Begonia* and other shade-loving plants;

TO encourage the introduction and development of new types of these plants;

TO standardize the nomenclature of *Begonia*;

TO gather and publish information in regard to kinds, propagation and culture of *Begonia* 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 *Begonia*.

TROPHY AND AWARD WINNERS ABS CONVENTION '75

The following trophies and awards were won by exhibitors at the 1975 American Begonia Society Show in Goleta, September 5-7, 1975. The Tallying Committee consisted of: Thelma O'Reilly and Margaret Lee.

EVA KENWORTHY GRAY AWARD:

Dr. John Doorenbos

HERBERT P. DYCKMAN SERVICE AWARD:

Mae Blanton

ALFRED D. ROBINSON MEDAL:

No Entries

AMERICAN BEGONIA SOCIETY PERPETUAL AWARD FOR BEST BEGONIA IN SHOW:

Exhibitor: Jean Pasko

Exhibit: *B. 'Cathedral'*

ABS SWEEPSTAKES TROPHY (Grower with most blue ribbons in the Begonia Divisions.):

Exhibitor: Ernest and Metta Thomsen
Most blue and red ribbons

CULTURAL AWARDS — 90 points or better:

Joe Ronto: *B. 'Hazel's Front Porch'* — 90 points

Jean Pasko: *B. foliosa* — 94 points

B. 'Cathedral' — 92 points

B. 'Frances Fickewirth' — 91 points

Mabel Corwin: *B. 'Purple Petticoats'* — 95 points

Esther Passet: *B. 'GH #30 (German)'* — 90 points

Gene and Nettie Daniels: *B. 'Paulana'* — 92 points

DIVISION A — EDNA KORTS PERPETUAL TROPHY FOR BEST CANE BEGONIA:

Exhibitor: Joe Ronto

Exhibit: *B. 'Hazel's Front Porch'*

DIVISION B — HELEN BAILEY MEMORIAL PERPETUAL TROPHY FOR BEST SHRUB-LIKE BEGONIA:

Exhibitor: Jean Pasko

Exhibit: *B. foliosa*

DIVISION C — ABS BEST THICKSTEMMED BEGONIA TROPHY:

Exhibitor: Jean Pasko

Exhibit: *B. 'Richard Robinson'*

DIVISION E — JOHN R. WILLIAMS MEMORIAL PERPETUAL TROPHY FOR BEST RHIZOMATOUS BEGONIA:

Exhibitor: Jean Pasko

Exhibit: *B. 'Cathedral'*

DIVISION F — GONDA HARTWELL CHALLENGE TROPHY FOR BEST REX BEGONIA:

Exhibitor: Mabel Corwin

Exhibit: *B. 'Purple Petticoats'*

DIVISION G — ABS BEST SEMI-TUBEROUS OR TUBEROUS SPECIES TROPHY:

Exhibitor: Gene and Nettie Daniels

Exhibit: *B. sutherlandii*

PALOS VERDES BEGONIA FARM CHALLENGE TROPHY FOR BEST TUBEROUS BEGONIA:

Exhibitor: Hazel Snodgrass

Exhibit: Unnamed hybrid

DIVISION I — SAN GABRIEL VALLEY PERPETUAL TROPHY FOR BEST BEGONIA GROWN IN A CONTAINED ATMOSPHERE:

Exhibitor: Esther Passet

Exhibit: *B. 'GH #30 (German)'*

DIVISION K — WILLIAM L. TAYLOR PERPETUAL TROPHY FOR BEST HANGING CONTAINER BEGONIA (BASKET):

Exhibitor: Gene and Nettie Daniels

Exhibit: *B. 'Paulana'*

DIVISION L — ABS BEST NOVEL GROWN BEGONIA TROPHY:

Exhibitor: Margaret Ireton

Exhibit: *B. 'Tamo'*

DIVISION P — THEODOSIA BURR SHEPHERD BRANCH PERPETUAL TROPHY FOR BEST BEGONIA GROWN BY A NOVICE GROWER:

Exhibitor: Jean Pasko

Exhibit: *B. 'Frances Fickewirth'*

DIVISION Q — ABS BEST ENTRY IN STUDENT DIVISION TROPHY:

Exhibitor: Renee Burgess

Exhibit: Planter

DIVISION S — ABS BEST BEGONIA PHOTOGRAPH TROPHY:

Exhibitor: Mildred Thompson

Exhibit: *B. rajab*

DIVISION T — ABS BEST PLANTER TROPHY:

Exhibitor: Oakley Murphy

DIVISION U — ABS BEST MINIATURE GARDEN TROPHY:

Exhibitor: Fred and Diane Burgess

DIVISION V — FERNS — ARTHUR STRANDBURG PERPETUAL TROPHY FOR BEST FERN:

Exhibitor: Ernest and Metta Thomsen

Exhibit: Adiantum fern

DIVISION W — ABS BEST SHADE PLANT TROPHY (other than *Begonia*):

Exhibitor: Gale Thomsen

Exhibit: Bonsai tree

DIVISION X — ABS BEST ARRANGEMENT OR CORSAGE TROPHY:

Exhibitor: Hazel Snodgrass

Exhibit: Miniature arrangement

DIVISION Y — TROPHY FOR INDOOR ROOM SETTING USING LIVE PLANT MATERIALS:

Exhibitor: Fred and Diane Burgess

No trophies were awarded in Divisions D, H, J, K (wall pocket), M, N, O, R, nor for branch exhibits.

More information about the Show and Convention will appear in the next issues of the *Begonian*.

CALENDAR

October 24 — Redondo Area Branch 6:30 p.m. at Dana School, 135th Street and Aviation Blvd., Hawthorne, Calif. Our 26th Birthday and Past Presidents Potluck Dinner. (Bring your own table service.) Speaker: Doug Frost. Visitors Welcome. Refreshments. Door Prizes. Plant Table.

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A NICE WAY TO INTRODUCE BEGONIAS

By Phyllis Wright, *Seattle*

The Seattle Branch of A.B.S. held its 21st annual show at the North Gate Shopping Mall, July 31st thru August 3rd.

The individual garden plots of begonias and related shade plants filled the center walk way of the mall. There was a large plant table, a well manned education table, a large horticulture display. The club display was made up of all types of begonias, many of them late introductions we have acquired from commercial growers.

For many years the club has given a trophy for the best plant grown from the Kelly Seed Fund. This year it was won by Janeen Lynch a novice grower, with her plant of *B. schmidtiana*. The plant was grown under fluorescent lights for about six months, then moved to a west window where it receives filtered sun. It is a beautiful symmetrical plant, loaded with bloom.

Thousands of plant lovers visited the show in this new location where we were able to introduce begonias in all of their beauty to the public.



AMERICAN BEGONIA SOCIETY BOOKLETS

Point Scoring System for Judging Begonias\$1.25

A Suggested Guide to Classification of Begonias for Show Purposes\$1.50

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1852 31st Street
San Diego, CA 92102

CONSTITUTION CHANGES

The following changes to the Constitution and ByLaws of the ABS were approved by the membership attending the annual meeting of the ABS at Goleta on September 6, 1975. You are requested to cast your vote to approve or disapprove on the inserted card. The cards must be received before November 5, 1975. The reasons for the changes are shown as notes after each proposed change. The words crossed out are to be deleted and the words in Italics are to be added:

IT IS PROPOSED THAT:

ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS, Section 3 of the CONSTITUTION be changed to read:

Section 3. The following officers shall be elected biennially in August by ballot: President, First Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. Each member of the Society is entitled to one vote. All officers shall serve for two years and be installed at the appropriate Annual Meeting. *No elected officer named in this section may succeed himself in the same position.* (NOTE: This addition does not affect Branch National Directors covered in Section 4.)

ARTICLE VIII. FUNDS, Section 4 of the CONSTITUTION be changed to read:

Section 4. The fiscal year shall ~~start on September first~~ *end July 31.*

(NOTE: This will allow sufficient time for the Treasurer to close the books and the Annual Auditing Committee to audit the accounting between the closing date and the annual meeting.)

ARTICLE X. RULES OF ORDER, Section 1 and throughout the CONSTITUTION be changed to read: Section 1. Roberts Rules of Order *Newly Revised* shall govern the conduct of all meetings and the decision of all questions not specifically covered by this Constitution and Bylaws. (NOTE: This is an up-date of our Constitution.)

ARTICLE I, Section 1 of the BY-LAWS be changed to read:

Section 1. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Society and of the Board of Directors; shall appoint the heads of the various Departments with the exception of the Editor; and shall have general supervision of the affairs of the Society. The President shall be an ex-officio member of all committees *excepting the nominating committee.*

(NOTE: See Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised, page 380.)

ARTICLE III, Section 2 of the BY-LAWS be changed to read:

Section 2. The Board of Directors shall meet at least four times a year and/or monthly on call of the President, or in his/her absence by the ~~President Elect~~ or First Vice President, the time and place to be published in the official publication.

(NOTE: This reference to "President Elect" was inadvertently missed last year when all other such references were deleted. The Society no longer has such an office.)



REXES IN TEXAS

By Yvonne Wells, *Mesquite, Texas*

In 1968 when I first started growing begonias, I tried growing rexes. They would do fine in the greenhouse during fall, winter and spring. Then the hot Texas summer would take them before my very eyes. I found the only way to succeed with them was in a closed container on the windowsill in the air-conditioned house. Needless to say, I didn't grow many because of limited space. Finally, I decided if I could grow species *Begonia*, which are just as demanding as rexes, in the greenhouse year round, I should be able to grow the rexes, too.

I have several friends here that had succeeded in growing rexes directly in the ground under the greenhouse bench. I thought, "Well, why not try it?" I dug about two feet of soil from the greenhouse floor under the west bench. I filled it with worm castings (peat moss that earthworms had been grown in), perlite, crushed oyster shell, and sheep manure worked in well. Plenty of sheep manure would be most beneficial. I planned on planting ferns in with the rexes so the crushed oyster shell would serve two purposes — lime for both fern and rex and along with the perlite would improve drainage.

First, I started the rex leaves in the house in closed containers and planted in my regular rooting medium: half perlite, half vermiculite. When they were big enough, I took them to the greenhouse. I put them in a shady place uncovered for about two days. Then I knocked them out of the containers and planted in the new bed, a row of ferns in the back, then the rex. The first year they did

fairly well but not as well as I had expected. I decided they weren't getting enough light to grow really well. So I had my husband install two four foot fluorescent lights with 40 watt tubes, suspended from the bench above. You should see them now. Even though most are young, some have leaves a foot long and just as wide. Since I think begonias like to be rootbound, I keep adding new little ferns and rex plants all the time. They all love it. I have beautiful specimen ferns, too. I realize they may not be as big as most growers have, but I'm satisfied.

I don't have a cooler or fan of any kind so I have to rely on my big oak trees and the vines growing alongside the greenhouse for shade and cooling. If it gets extremely hot, I add shading and it helps tremendously. It's amazing what a little extra light in the right place will do. They have beautiful color and grow very full, too. The only extra fertilizing I do is to sprinkle a little sheep manure over the soil in the spring. This gives the plants the extra boost they need for spring and summer.

I hope telling of my experience will help someone who has had problems growing rexes. They are a joy and all who see them love them. It will make you feel very proud of your hard work.

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FOUR BEGONIA DRAWINGS

Flowers have long been a source of inspiration to the artist and craftsman. Begonias are an artistic challenge as well. These four drawings are part of a series done by Karen L. Fuller, Fairhaven, New York, who is a college trained artist. She wrote, "As an artist, I have found the nearly endless variety of begonia leaf forms to be particularly interesting as subject matter." Using sepia ink and crowquill pen, she draws directly from live plants or from photographs which she has taken in gardens and conservatories. The results emphasize line and form. The original drawings are 8½ x 11".

B. 'Black Falcon' is a rhizomatous hybrid whose parentage is *B. kenworthyae* X *B. heracleifolia* var. *sunderbruchii*. Mrs. H. E. Dillard of Overland, Kansas was the hybridizer. She introduced it from her greenhouse in 1960. It is valued as an attractive plant which maintains small size in the northern states but reportedly reaches medium size when grown in the southern latitudes of the U.S. The dark star-shaped leaves have a taffeta sheen with silver gray markings outlining the veins. It blooms with small pink flowers in fall and winter.

B. 'Florence Carrell' displays salmon-pink flower clusters. Although the young plant may have somewhat upright branches, it matures to a scandent form and assumes a grace-

ful habit which makes a lovely basket. The light green leaves are ovate and waxy. Elsie Frey of Santa Barbara, California crossed *B. limmingheana* with *B. incarnata* in 1949. She named it for Florence Carrell who was Seed Fund Director at that time.

B. 'Alleryi' is a cross between *B. metallica* and *B. gigantea*, which obviously shows its relationship to *B. metallica*. It grows upright to 3 or more feet, is bushy and hirsute. The coarsely-toothed leaves are bright green with purple veins showing on the underside. Flowers are blush pink with a striking deeper-pink beard. This hybrid has been in cultivation since its introduction by Allery Aubert in 1905.

B. 'Spaulding' is especially well suited to living room or office since it tolerates those typical light and humidity conditions. It is an especially bushy, small rhizomatous plant. The rounded leaves are shaded from grass to mossy green with oxblood undersurfaces. There is a pale spot at the leaf sinus. The leaves are eyelashed. Clusters of salmon-pink blooms appear in late winter to spring on rosy peduncles rising well over the foliage. It was developed by Louise Schwerdtfeger in 1952 and carries ABS registration #39. This cross between *B. bowerae* and *B. hydrocotylifolia* was named for Stanley Spaulding, ABS past president.

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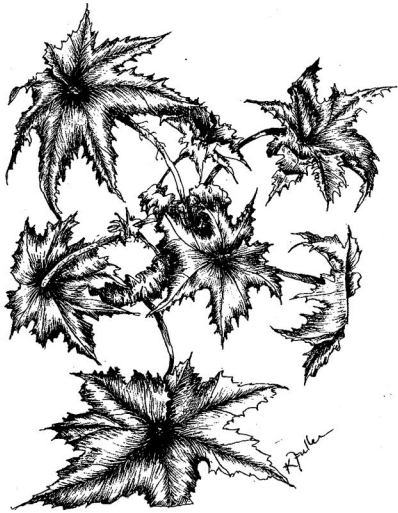
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HORTITHERAPY

The State of Florida's Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services conducts an unique program for the inmates of their Union Correctional Institution. In a greenhouse, part of the institution, inmates grow over 1,000 different tropical and subtropical plants. In addition they grow 55,000 landscape plants in containers.

In May of 1975, the Union Correctional Institution presented its Fifteenth Annual Flower Show. It consisted of hundreds of exhibits in these divisions: bromeliads, specimen house plants, impatiens, coleus, cacti, landscape plants, kalanchoe with classes for plants in wood, hanging baskets, and landscape plants as well.

Mr. M. B. Jordan, head of Ornamental Horticulture, reports: "We do not grow plants, but "train" prison inmates in every phase of Ornamental Horticulture. We have 50 men assigned to us. We use every plant we produce since we do landscaping on prison properties and keep office plants in over 100 offices. There is no greater thrill than to see an inmate become interested in

growing plants. Every plant we grow came to us as a gift. We have about 100 different rex begonias. Each month our boys anxiously await the *Begonian*, our most popular magazine."

After successfully completing 2000 hours of training and all lesson plans, the Inmate Trainee is awarded a State Department of Education approved Vocational Certificate which is acceptable training credentials to most reputable nurseries. During the past fifteen years, one hundred fifty-nine students have left the program and have been employed by nurserymen; some as managers, some as crew leaders and some as laborers. Several have advanced to ownership of their own businesses. Less than ten percent have returned to prison.

At the present time, there is need for cuttings of rex crosses. Any reader who wishes to send cuttings should address them to:

Mr. M. B. Jordan
HRS Division of Correction
Union Correctional Institution
P. O. Box 221
Raiford, Fla. 32083

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ORNAMENTAL HORTICULTURAL THERAPY

By William A. Anderson, *Raiford, Florida*



Begonia 'Suncana'. The measurements of this begonia are: 14 feet in circumference, 7 feet 4 inches in diameter, and 5 feet tall from the base of the container.

Three years ago if you asked me the difference between a begonia and a geranium I would have asked; what is a begonia? Then again, three years ago I was sitting in a county jail awaiting trial on a felony charge. What did I care about plants? I was on my way to prison.

Bitterness and fear were my first reactions to prison. The first two months of incarceration were filled with hate. Being caged and always told what to do and when to do it bore down on me. I was at the point of open rebellion when word came

that I was to be transferred to another institution.

Union Correctional Institution and the notorious 'Rock' loomed up before me. Stories abound in prison and those I heard about U. C. I. scared me. I did know, however, that at U. C. I. there was a vocational training program in ornamental horticulture. I had always liked nature and figured that I would try to get into this program. Then I could be close to nature in this otherwise hostile environment.

That was a little over two years ago. Since that time thanks to my work supervisors, Mr. Mark B. Jordan and Mr. Stanley Crawford, I have learned the difference between a begonia and a geranium. Indeed, I have learned to tell the difference between, and call by name, over 100

rex begonias, 25 or so cane stem types and many of the fibrous rooted and rhizomatous begonias.

In this program I have learned the value of keeping records and sticking to schedules. The records kept on pest control, environmental conditions, and fertilizer applications are invaluable aids in the production of ornamental horticultural plants. They also make the scheduling of pest control and fertilization an easier operation.

I have also been taught the cultural requirements of the begonias as well as the requirements for over 1,200 other types of plants. I have learned how to regulate the temperature, light, and water to meet the needs of the plants we grow here. Through experimentation and research I have learned that some plants in the same family, even though similar in many respects, differ a great deal in their general requirements. In rex begonias, for example, some require more light and water than others, and some require a heavier soil than most. There seems to be no end to the differing requirements in just the begonias themselves.

The propagation of begonias and other types of plants is also covered in the training here. I have learned the propagation techniques for the types of begonias and other plants we have. I have learned, for example, that the mist system is by far one of the best means of propagation for asexual or vegetative propagation, and that some plants respond better in pure builders sand rather than in the peat/perlite mixture used for begonias.

Perhaps the most valuable things I

have learned here are not what I learned about plants but rather what I have learned about myself and others. The plants themselves have taught me patience and given me a deeper respect for nature and life. I have found a peace-of-mind working with plants that I have never had before. I have learned to live and work with other people respecting their views and opinions instead of always wanting my own way. Most importantly I have found self-respect, a quality I never possessed.

What does my future hold now? Upon my release I plan to go on to a university and major in ornamental horticulture. I have completed two years of college while I have been here and still continue at the Junior College level. I have also bought several hundred dollars worth of books and other reading materials and spend much of my time out of the greenhouse studying. One of my most prized editions is the 'EXOTICA II'.

I know it will be difficult when I get out because of my felony conviction. I feel, however, that if I can learn to be the best in my field it may be a little easier. I have a whole new life ahead of me.

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RESEARCH REPORT

M. Carleton L'Hommedieu, *Research Director*

This is the final report for the year 1974-1975. The last report was in the June, 1975 issue of the *Begonian*. Since then the following donations have been received:

ABS Seed Fund 6 months, Feb.-July	\$129.69
Long Island Branch 4 months, May-August	40.00
Monterey Bay Area Branch	50.00
Redondo Area Branch	15.00
Edna Stewart — Pittsburgh Branch	100.00
Mr. & Mrs. Ben Sendic, In Memory of Midge Grasheim	10.00
Miami Branch	25.00
Mr. & Mrs. R. Ziesenhenne, a memorial donation for Gertrude Windsor	10.00

During the past year, grants amounting to \$2,050.00 have been awarded to the following:

Dr. Fred Barkley — \$250.00 to aid him to search certain species in the region of Pericutin, on his way to Honduras University. Dr. Barkley's search was successful and he intends to work with these species while at the University.

Rutgers University — \$600.00 to continue the research study on the initiation of bud growth on leaf stem cuttings. The study has been conducted by Fred Davies, research student.

New York Botanical Garden Library — \$1,200.00 for the student's time and the xeroxing all material pertinent to the *Begonia*.

This leaves a balance in the Fund of \$555.09 as of August 22, 1975.

The project at Rutgers University will be finished by September 1st and Mr. Davies will give a complete report which will be published in the *Begonian*.

The project at the New York Botanical Garden Library of compiling all the material for the Hybrid and Cultivar Catalog, has been progressing satisfactorily. The Nomenclature Director, Mr. Rudolf Ziesenhenne, requested that this project be referred to the Research Director. Mrs. Ann Council, the student working on the project, is very interested in her work and will continue on it this next year. She has been following up on citations shown in *Index Kewensis* and the *Gray Herbarium Index* and then checking each volume of a journal title from 1941 to the present, picking up on any other peripheral *Begonia* articles. Her work is very time consuming. It should be of great value to all of our members when all information relating to the *Begonia* is brought together for ready reference.

CULTURE OF BEGONIA: ITS RELATIONSHIP TO HORTICULTURAL CLASSIFICATION

By Mildred Thompson, *Southampton, N.Y.*

Reprinted from the *Twiglette* — Hampton Branch Newsletter

Horticultural classification is the very basis of learning more about our begonias and how to grow them. Classification is a system of arranging begonias into related groups. It is important for the grower and the hobbyist as well as the botanist and taxonomist to be concerned with the classification of the genus *Begonia*.

To fully enjoy the hobby of growing *Begonia*, most growers find that they want to know many things about their begonias. The grower wants to know exactly how to grow his begonias satisfactorily to their maximum potential according to the limitations of the growing space available. To accomplish this it is important to know how each begonia will look at maturity. As the begonias are developing most growers find that knowing more about the background of each begonia enhances the beauty and/or interesting characteristics of the begonia. For the species it is interesting to know some of the following information: where it was first discovered; date of first publication of the description; the botanist who first described the species; and other information that has been gathered through the years. For the hybrid it is equally interesting and informative to have the following information: the name of the person who developed the hybrid; the date that it was developed; the begonias involved in the parentage; and other facts published in various sources. Those growers who want to grow and study their begonias will

want to know more about classifications, for from this, everything else evolves.

There are two types of classification systems used in the study of *Begonia*: botanical classification and horticultural classification. Botanical classification is actually taxonomy or systematic botany. This type of classification can only be determined by the botanical taxonomists or specially trained individuals, who study details of the flowers primarily, because these remain consistent regardless of growing environment. The color of flowers vary as well as the shape and size of the various parts of the plants according to growing environment. In botanical classification the family *Begoniaceae* is divided into genera. The genus *Begonia* is divided into sections in which the species of the genus *Begonia* are placed. There are further subdivisions which are optional: subspecies, variety, forma, and clone. Botanical classification is important to the botany of *Begonia* from which hobbyist horticulturalists benefit either directly or indirectly. Horticultural classification is the grouping of species and hybrids of *Begonia* with similar characteristics and similar cultural requirements. These classifications indicate what the plants will look like at maturity and how one can grow them by knowing the group to which they belong. The horticultural classification system can be used by the grower.

Horticultural classification concern-

ing begonias is not a new concept. Charles Chevalier in *Les Begonias*, published in 1938 (in French), and Karl Fotsch in *Die Begonien*, published in 1939 (in German), were probably the first to group begonias for the horticulturalists. Many of their ideas of grouping are evident in the *A. B. S. Classifications for Show Purposes* and in the *Thompson Begonia Guide*.

The horticultural classification system presented in the *Thompson Begonia Guide* is primarily based on the outline found in the *American Begonia Society Classification for Show Purposes* published in 1969. However, the main consideration in the classification system in the *Thompson Begonia Guide* was not to group begonias for displays or shows but rather to group begonias with similar cultural requirements and similar characteristics. Revisions were made in the American Begonia Society's system, forming new groups, and using definitive terms in an effort to avoid varying interpretations of descriptive words. These revisions were made only after much study and discussion with other hobbyist horticulturalists and professional people who specialize in the study and growing of *Begonia*.

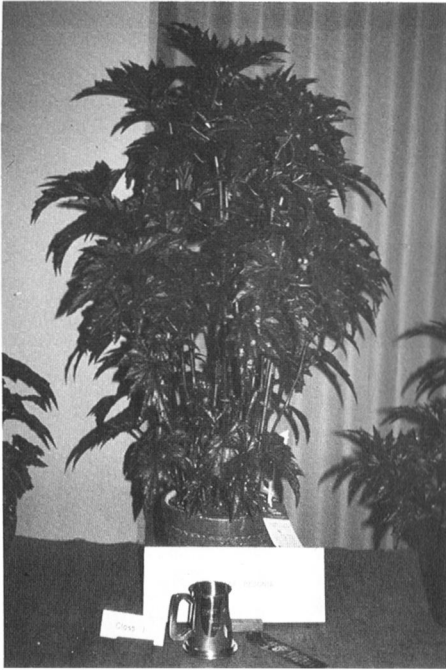
All horticultural classification systems are arbitrary and the one proposed in the *Thompson Begonia Guide* will also be arbitrary. The plants in the family *Begoniaceae* are very diversified and in many cases it is difficult to group them satisfactorily. Begonias which have characteristics of several groups must be placed in the group which share their dominant characteristic, while others which do not appear to belong in

any particular grouping must be placed with the group that are most similar. The horticultural classification system proposed along with descriptions and diagrams of the groups may be found on pages CS-1 through SC-16 of the *Thompson Begonia Guide*, Vol. I.

* * *

CANE-LIKE begonias have erect bamboo-like stems with nodes that are usually swollen. The internodes are spaced evenly and are relatively long. Begonias in this division are generally floriferous and their inflorescences are usually pendulous. Some are everblooming while others are seasonal bloomers and a very few are sporadic bloomers. This division is further subdivided into three main groups: Superba type, Mallet type, and all others. The Superba type has leaves which are either lobed or cleft with undulate margins. The leaves are silver splashed. The dominant characteristic of the Mallet type is the mahogany-red foliage which usually has red hairs. All other cane-like begonias are further subdivided according to their height at maturity: low, under 2 ft.; intermediate, 2 ft. to 4 ft.; tall, over 4 ft. Leaves of most begonias in this group are without major leaf incisions.

SHRUB-LIKE begonias are bushy, producing shoots at the base. Stems are either erect or semi-erect and they are flexuous either slightly or markedly. The height of the plants vary from under 6 inches to well over 8 ft. Most begonias in this division are seasonal bloomers, although some are ever-bloomers, and still others are intermittent or sporadic bloomers. This division is further subdivi-



B. 'Sophie Cecile'
A trophy-winning cane type.

vided into three main groups: bare leaved, hairy leaved, and distinctive foliage. Begonias are considered bare leaved when the surface of the leaves are glabrous (free from hairs) or sparsely hairy. These are further subdivided according to their average leaf size at maturity with the small leaved being further subdivided: those that are everblooming and those that are not. Hairy leaved begonias are those that have hairs on the surface of the leaves regardless of the type of hairiness. Exceptions are those that are sparsely hairy, which belong in the bare leaved group. These are also subdivided according to leaf size at maturity. The felted leaved are grouped together regardless of leaf size. Those with distinctive foliage are grouped together because of their distinctive

foliage. In most cases begonias with distinctive foliage require special culture, and this is one of the main reasons for separating them. This group is further subdivided into three groups: those with unusual surface and/or unusual coloring; those with *listida*-like characteristics; those with very low and compact growth.

THICK STEMMED begonias have thick stems which are apparent at an early stage. The thick stems of different types have different degrees of thickness, some having nodes which are swollen while others in other varieties do not. Most thick stemmed begonias do not readily branch. Begonias in this group are grown mostly by collectors and hybridizers because in most cases they are not beautiful but very interesting. These are further subdivided into four main groups: bare leaved, hairy leaved, trunk-like and thickset. The bare leaved and hairy leaved are subdivided much like the Shrub-like group according to average leaf size at maturity. Trunk-like, non-ramified are those that have very thick stems with short internodes. This type rarely branches but occasionally a shoot will appear at the base of the plant. Thickset are those that have short thick stems which form a ball-like appearance.

SEMPERFLORENS CHARACTERISTICS division has begonias which are easily grown having semperflorens characteristics. They are subdivided into two main groups: species and hybrids. The species group is further subdivided into two groups: *semperflorens* type, those which usually are taller growing; and *schmidtiana* type, those which are usually

lower growing. The hybrid group is actually the *Semperflorens Cultorum* group commonly called "wax begonias". Begonias in this group have succulent stems with leaves that are ovate, glossy, and smooth. All begonias in the *Semperflorens Cultorum* group are everblooming. This group is further subdivided according to the type of leaves and flowers.

RHIZOMATOUS begonias all have rhizomes: some rhizomes creep; others grow erect; still others grow at the surface of the soil or below. Most rhizomatous begonias are seasonal bloomers with blooming season occurring between mid-winter and spring. The inflorescences vary in size: some are embedded in the foliage; some rise just above the foliage; others rise well above the foliage, in some cases several feet. The rhizomatous group is divided into seven main groups as follows: small leaved, generally under 3" at maturity; medium leaved, generally 3" - 6" at maturity; large leaved, generally 6" - 12" at maturity; giant leaved, generally over 12" at maturity; rhizome with erect stem; rhizome jointed at or below the surface of the soil; and those with distinctive foliage. The small leaved, medium leaved, large leaved, and giant leaved all have rhizomes which creep along the surface of the soil or slightly above. Those with rhizomes that creep and those with erect rhizomes are further subdivided according to their leaf margins: entire/subentire, lobed, cleft, parted, compound leaved, crested margin and spiral leaved. (See *The Thompson Begonia Guide* page SC-10.) Those with distinctive foliage are subdivided as follows: pustular type; unusual surface and/

or unusual coloring which are further subdivided according to average leaf size at maturity; and unusual shape and/or unusual habit of growth.

REX CULTORUM begonias are all hybrids which are primarily placed in this group because of their ornamental foliage representing many colors and metallic sheens in numerous varieties and patterns. Most Rex Cultorum begonias are rhizomatous but there are some which are not. The use of semituberous and tuberous begonias during hybridization resulted in Rex Cultorum begonias which are not truly rhizomatous. The Rex Cultorum division is subdivided into four main groups as follows: small leaved, average mature leaf size under 3"; medium leaved, average mature leaf size 3" - 6"; large leaved, average mature leaf size over 6"; upright stemmed. The first three groups are those with creeping rhizomes. The fourth group represents two types: those with erect rhizomes; and those that are upright and branching. All are subdivided into two groups: spiral and non-spiral.

TUBEROUS: Begonias placed in this division do not all have formations which are truly tuberous but are placed in this group for obvious reasons. There are six main groups: semituberous, tuberous species and first generation hybrids, *Tuberhybrida*, *Hiemalis*, *Cheimantha*, and bulbous. Semituberous are those that have a tuber-like formation that is irregular and appears as a thickening of the stem at soil level which tapers to the upper portion of the stem. These are bushy during active growing season. Tuberous species and



B. 'Rudy'
A thick-stemmed variety.

first generation hybrids are begonias which have tubers of various sizes. They bloom in the summer and are dormant in the winter. These are further subdivided according to height: low growing and tall growing. Tuber-hybrida begonias are all the tuberous hybrids. Hiemalis begonias are those that originated by various crossing Andean species with *B. socotrana*. They are winter blooming. All are floriferous. This group is further subdivided: Rieger-elator type and all others. Cheimantha group is made up of those which originated with the crosses of *B. socotrana* and *B. dregei*. These are winter blooming with flowers which are single. The leaves are circular. Bulbous begonias are those which have bulbs or bulbous formations beneath the surface of the soil.

TRAILING - SCANDENT begonias are placed in this group because the plants have vine-like stems that trail and/or climb. These are not separated in the division because several have the tendency to do both depending on growing environment. This is subdivided into two groups: species and hybrids.

* * *

If we know the horticultural classifications of our begonias, we have the basic facts of how the plant will look and how to grow it. Very often many of us purchase very small plants from commercial growers, at branch plant sales tables, and from friends. We also acquire new begonias as leaves or cuttings from other begonia enthusiasts from various parts of the country and in a few cases from other countries. When a plant is obtained in any of these ways, it is very difficult to determine what the plant will look like at maturity and what space it will need in the growing environment. Will it need six square inches or one fourth of your garden room or greenhouse? It is also difficult in many cases to determine what type of begonia it will be and in which group it belongs. We may be uncertain because it is not large enough to indicate any of its cultural needs. Does it require terrarium care? Does it need to be staked? Should it be in a hanging container? Should it be in a sunny location, semi-shady location, or in the shade?

The very first step to finding the answers to "how the plant will look and how to grow it" is horticultural classification. Consulting the alphabetical listing of horticultural classification.
(Continued on Page 257)

ROUND ROBIN NOTES

Ed. note: This issue contains the last of the Round Robin Columns written by Mae Blanton, who has been Round Robin Director for three years. We thank Mae for her efforts in reporting items from the Robin flights to the readers. She has been prompt, accurate and interesting . . . qualities which we have much admired.

We join the entire membership in congratulating her as the recipient of the Herbert P. Dyckman Award for service in 1975.

Belonging to the Robins is such a SPECIAL way of sharing — sharing your experiences in growing, sharing friendship, sharing of yourself. Join in now for rich rewards!!

Dora Hale of California found her *B. decora* lost its leaves but when she moved it to a shaded window it began showing some growth. She's found *B. ficicola* does not like the lights on the plant stand so she feels that *B. decora* is another shy one.

Harriet Seastedt, Florida, found leaves of *B. 'Fuscomaculata'* are always slow rooting. She tried the damp paper towel method in a plastic shoe box, and had a crisp, well-rooted leaf in two weeks. Planted in mix, it formed a tiny plantlet in four weeks.

Nina Karl, New York, had a word of caution on the use of the Shell Pest Strip: quite a few of her plant friends have used it by cutting pieces of it for bowls, etc., and some of them developed with skin rashes. She suggests not touching it. If it is going under lights, check it often, as the heat from lights can melt it.

Bob Hamm, Texas, feels that *B. Sumatran species* hort. (from Seed Fund) does not like strong light near center of lights. It has to be under other plants unless in a terrarium.

Barbara Neptune of California uses styrofoam glasses for potting. Also, those clear plastic, low (about 4") drinking glasses. Burn holes in bottoms with hot ice pick and you're in business. They look great, root condition and water needs can be seen at a glance. Barbara had a huge problem with getting the right color and pattern in her rexes until she quit fertilizing. She finally figured that high nitrogen brings out the green. She finds that planted in a soil mix with no fertilizer, her rexes have their identity clearly showing, from the first.

Orby Clemence, Michigan, is using rain water on ten of his plants and tap water on ten others. The rain watered plants have grown $\frac{1}{2}$ " to $\frac{3}{4}$ " more than the tap watered plants. For planting seeds he recommended using a sponge — well washed with HOT water — put in a saucer or pan with about $\frac{1}{2}$ " of water (keep water at $\frac{1}{2}$ " at all times in pan). Put pan in plastic box, crack lid about $\frac{1}{8}$ " just to get some fresh air.

Pam Braun, Tennessee, told of a number of hints she picked up from an expert at a meeting. Most plants such as gesneriads and begonias have relatively short life. If you want to keep your plants in top condition, you should be prepared to start over every three years or so. The way to have a bushy, well-formed plant is to do a lot of pinching and pruning,

especially with the cane-type begonias. A good rule of thumb is to never allow more than three good sets of leaves to form before pinching again. Go over every plant about three times per growing season, pinching out soft growing tips, which causes side branching and shoots from the bottom. Remember that flowers come from new growth. You can use a continuous fertilization program if you use a light soil and a fertilizer that will not burn. If you care to foliar feed, use a fish emulsion as some other fertilizers leave residues. A mix of one tablespoon chlorine bleach to a gallon water will help control nematodes and other soil insects. If your plants show abnormal top growth and show no evidence of insect damage, check your roots, you could have nematodes, soil mealy bugs, or root rot. A good tip is to mix a fungicide in with your soil when starting new cuttings or seedlings.

Leslie Close of New York, invented a trick for propping up tall or floppy rhizomes or canes, when propagating them by cuttings. Fill the bottom of a sweater box with rooting medium and then tie four or five pieces of string around the entire box at 1-2" intervals. You can place the cuttings in the medium and they will rest (or flop) over the string. Then, cover the box with another turned upside down. You can tape the two together on one side.

June Morris, Texas, read you could use Q-tips dipped in cooking oil to kill scale or mealy bugs on begonias and ferns.

Margaret Van Buskirk, California, finally became so tired of washing plastic pots that she tossed them into

her automatic washer — a "regular" sized load — filled the machine to "full" (an oversized amount of water), used regular detergent with 1/4 cup Mr. Clean, ran them through a rinse cycle twice and the pots came out beautifully clean!!

Delores Kirk, Nebraska, has a sunpit in Iowa she had built when she lived there. (It's still her property.) It is 20' out of the ground. With the door left open and a \$25.00 electric heater, it stays above freezing all winter. Everything seems to grow wonderfully there. Things are on three levels: the floor, shelves and hanging plants. It gets terribly hot in the summer but plants that don't get taken out seem to get along fine. The roof is of fiberglass and she doesn't cover it in summer but nothing gets burned. Anything getting too much sun just gets moved down



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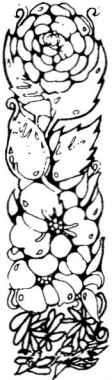
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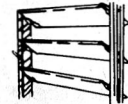


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a notch. She puts cuttings under the shelves and they seem to root better there than anywhere else. She also grows under lights in her home.

Yvonne Wells of Texas has tried *B. bradei* many, many times but not until she put it in a styrofoam cup of perlite did she get it to grow. She now has a small plant with several branches growing well.

Arline Peck, Rhode Island, grew a nice plant from a leaf of *B. bettinae* for a project. After taking it to the meeting, the whole plant died. She left it alone and now it is growing again. She finds the plant very touchy.

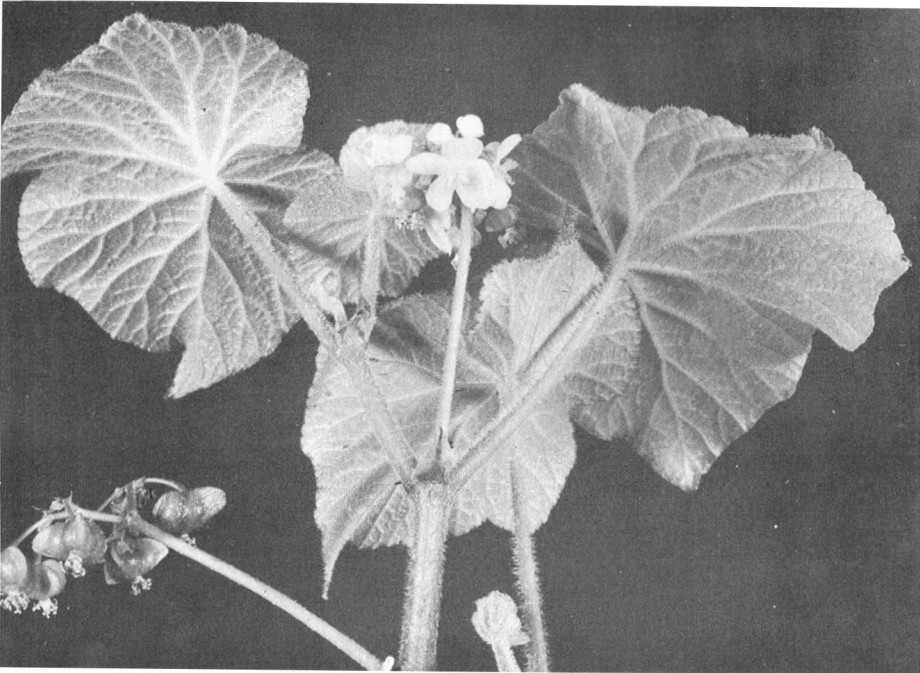
Jim Newbold, Florida, uses bleach bottles to make labels by cutting them into strips lengthwise in var-

ious lengths and widths. He uses a felt marker or breaks the glaze with 100 grit paper if he wishes to use a pencil to write on them.

Marvin Kahr, Iowa, suggests making hanging baskets out of bleach jugs. Cut jug in half or any size desired. They usually are blue or white. Attach clothesline for hangers. Use decals or contact paper or spray-paint them to dress them up, or you may dye them any color desired. Holes can be cut in side to simulate a strawberry jar planter. They are pretty on patio, porch, etc.

To join us, write:

Mrs. Debi Miller
Round Robin Director
919 Hickory View Circle
Camarillo, California 93010



Begonia robusta Blume

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- Ot 2 — *B. epipsila*: Brazil. Thick, polished leathery, oval, green leaves coated with red-brown wool underneath. Low grower to 1 ft., droops attractively. Showy ovaries on white flowers. per pkt. .50
- Ot 3 — *B. hypolipara*: Rhizomatous with thick, soft leaves, oval and entire. Fairly large white flowers in winter. per pkt. 1.00
- Ot 4 — *B. olsoniae*: syn. *vellozoana*: Brazil. Herbaceous. 8 to 10' tall, short stems. Leaves oblique, broadly ovate, palmately 8-veined, 4 to 5 inches long. Green above with a whitish zone on the veins, pale below and occasionally reddish. per pkt. .50
- Ot 5 — *B. robusta* Blume: Java. Sturdy, hairy plant, 3 to 4 ft. high. Bush grower with small crinkled leaves, red beneath, and red stems. Flowers pinkish white borne beneath the leaves (see picture).
per pkt. 1.00
- Ot 6 — *B. rufosericea*: Shrub-like. Narrow olive-green leaves, red on reverse, covered with red hairs giving a plush effect. Small white flowers with red hairs on outside of petals. per pkt. 1.00
- Ot 7 — *B. sulcata*: Columbia. Name means 'furrowed'. Brittle crinkled-leaved, dwarf with white flowers. Thick stems, medium sized leaves.
per pkt. 1.00
- Ot 8 — *B. tomentosa*: Shrub-like. Name means 'woolly'. Thick, juicy leaves of rich green with downy hair beneath. Pink-rimmed white flowers with short red whiskers. per pkt. .50
- Ot 9 — Species from Brazil — Unidentified. Cane type. Almost glabrous plant forms a stem 4 to 5 ft. with few or no branches. Leaves oval, very oblique, up to 10 in. long and 7 in. broad, serrulate-fimbriate on edge, but not lobed. Flowers in early spring, in big bunches, small, white or pinkish. per pkt. .50
- Ot 10 — Mixed rexes — This is a favorite. All kinds of rexes are available from these seeds which are collected from many rexes. Includes reds, creams, greens, spots, curls, ruffles, etc. All combinations.
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Correction: in the Seed Fund, September, 1975, *Kohleria lindeniana* should be identified as a *tree* gloxinia.

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REGISTRATION OF BEGONIA CULTIVARS

Note: The American Begonia Society is the International Registration Authority for cultivars of the genus *Begonia*. Information regarding registration may be obtained from ABS Nomenclature Director, Rudolf Ziesenhenné, 1130 N. Milpas St., Santa Barbara, CA 93103.

No. 470 — *Begonia* (*B. liebmannii* X *B. imperialis*) 'Muriel Day'

This rhizomatous begonia was developed in 1947 by Rudolf Ziesenhenné, address above, first bloomed and distributed in 1948, and first published in *Begonian*, XX: Apr. 1953, p. 73. Leaves are dark green, silver along nerves, hairy, rounded-ovate, tip acuminate, small lobed, $3\frac{1}{2}$ x $2\frac{1}{2}$ " ; margin toothed and ciliated; texture medium; 7-nerved; petioles 3" white hairy; stipules drying quickly. Flowers white, roundish, $\frac{3}{8}$ x $\frac{3}{8}$ " , on 3" stem, June-July. Registered June 4, 1975.

No. 471 — *Begonia* (*B. 'Reichenheimi'* X *B. macedougallii* Ziesenh.) 'McBride's Napoleon'

Developed by Rudolf Ziesenhenné, address above, in 1946, first bloomed and distributed in 1947, and first described in *Begonian* XIX: Apr. 1952, p. 75, this very rangey rhizomatous begonia has long stems and peduncles with shiny leaves, deeply lobed with lobes on lobes. Leaves are medium green, almost equal heart-shaped 8 deeply-lobed, 8 x $9\frac{1}{2}$ " ; margin lobed, double saw-toothed, ciliated; texture medium; 8-nerved; petioles 10" , thickly flecked red, long hairs; stipules triangular, keeled. Flowers white, inverted egg-shaped, $\frac{1}{2}$ " , March-April on 24" stem. Registered June 4, 1975.

No. 472 — *Begonia* (*B. bowerae* Ziesenh. X *B. liebmannii*) 'Zee Bowman'

Miniature leaves, silver and green, distinguish this rhizomatous plant from others. Originated by Rudolf Ziesenhenné, address above, in 1950, it first bloomed and was distributed in 1951; published *Begonian* XVIII: Dec. 1951, p. 270. Leaves are light green, silver between nerves, angular uneven heart-shaped, $2\frac{3}{4}$ x 2" ; margin large-toothed, ciliated; texture medium; 8-nerved; petioles 4" , red-streaked, hairy; stipules long-triangular, keeled. Flowers are white, pod red-spotted, obovate, $\frac{1}{2}$ x $\frac{1}{2}$ " , arranged in few-flowered cyme on 6" stem, spring to summer. Registered June 4, 1975.

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**No. 473 — Begonia (B. bowerae
Ziesenh. X B. liebmannii)
'Green Zee Bowman'**

This rhizomatous plant and leaves are identical with 'Zee Bowman' but without silver on the leaves which are medium green, angular uneven heart-shaped, 3 x 2"; toothed, ciliated margin; 8-nerved; petioles 3", red-streaked, hairy; stipules, long-triangular. Flowers white. Originated 1950, first bloomed and was distributed 1951 by Rudolf Ziesenhenne, address above. Registered June 4, 1975.

**No. 474 — Begonia (B. mazae
Ziesenh. X B. incarnata L. & O.)
'Luwalter'**

Somewhat like *B. incarnata* but with bronzy-green leaves which are red below, this bare-leaved, shrub-like plant, whose mature stem is 2', was developed by Rudolf Ziesenhenne, address above, in 1947. It first bloomed and was distributed in 1948, and was first published in *Begonian XVI*: Nov. 1949, p. 243. Leaves are unequal heart-shaped, 6 x 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ "; margin double-toothed; texture, thin, dull 9-nerved; petioles 4", green, red-streaked; stipules long, acuminate, quickly turning brown, remaining on the plant; plantlets appear on stems at times. Flowers deep rose outside, pale rose inside, oblong, 5/8", on 3" equally-divided cyme, April through June. Registered June 4, 1975.

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CULTURE

(Continued from Page 250)

fications in the *Thompson Begonia Guide* will remove the guess-work. For example: *B. 'Emerald Lacewing'* horticultural classification is: Rhizomatous, small leaved, cleft. This will indicate first that *B. 'Emerald Lacewing'* is rhizomatous, creeping type. If one has been growing begonias for a while, the usual methods of caring for rhizomatous begonias will be used, adjusting to the individual needs of the begonia which will be observed as the begonia grows. If one is just starting to grow begonias, a cultural handbook on begonias can be used to serve as a guide on the cultural needs of the rhizomatous group. The horticultural classification will also indicate the appearance and size of the begonia. In the above example it is indicated that *B. 'Emerald Lacewing'* is a rhizomatous creeping type begonia. From this and from information on culture, we know this begonia will eventually form a ball-like shape because of the creeping rhizomatous growth. Small leaved will indicate that the leaves at maturity will be under 3 inches and the chances are that it will never become a very large begonia. Cleft will inform one on the shape of the leaves. Horticultural classification need not be a statistical reference but rather a very vital tool in learning more about growing our begonias and how they should look at maturity.

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New York, NY 10022

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Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History
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Mrs. Patricia Hill, Secy.
1339 Mission Ridge Road, Santa Barbara, Ca. 93103

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3316 Porter Lane, Ventura, CA. 93003

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Mrs. Viva Musgrave, Secy.
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Miss Anne Rose, Secy.
14036 Ramona Drive, Whittier, Calif. 90608

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