

July/August, 1989



The BEGONIAN

American Begonia Society

Founded January 1932 by Herbert P. Dyckman

Aims and Purposes

To stimulate and promote interest in begonias and other shade-loving plants.

To encourage the introduction and development of new types of these plants.

To standardize the nomenclature of begonias.

To gather and publish information 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.

To bring into friendly contact all who love and grow begonias.

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Cover Photos:

Front - In honor of the 1989 National Convention in tuberous begonia country, our cover features this stunning shot of the yellow flower of a tuberous cultivar. Photographer is Sue Hessel of New York.

Back - B. 'Orange Rubra', grown and photographed by Mary Bucholtz of Florida.

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<p>August 3-6: ABS National Convention "Begonias by the Bay" San Francisco, California</p>

SLATE OF OFFICERS PRESENTED



The Nominating Committee (John Ingles, Jr., Houston Knight, and Joy Porter) has submitted the following slate of officers for the year 1989-1990:

President: Michael Ludwig

Lemon Grove, CA; San Miguel Branch

* 1st Vice-President, 1988-9

* Judging Dept. Director, 1988-

* Show Entries Chair, 1987-8

* Awards Chairman, 1987-9

1st Vice-President: Jeannette Gilbertson

Vista CA; Palomar Branch

* Secretary, 1985-88

2nd Vice-President: Joan Coulat

Sacramento, CA; Sacramento Branch

* Plant Sale Chair, 1989 Convention

3rd Vice-President: John Howell

San Antonio, TX; Alamo Branch

* Incumbent

Secretary: Ingeborg Foo

Vista, CA; Palomar Branch

* Incumbent

Treasurer: Eleanor Calkins

Escondido, CA; Palomar Branch

* Incumbent

Please vote! A lot of dedication and hard work are required of an ABS officer, and these fine people have agreed to put in the time and effort needed. It's all volunteer labor. Your vote will be a vote of confidence and encouragement for them in the year ahead.

Quick! Check your mailing label!

If the numbers in the upper left-hand corner read 7/89 or 8/89 your membership is about to expire. Please renew right away - we want you, need you, love you, and don't want to lose you!

Attention, Branch Officers!

The Branch Directory will appear in the next issue. Please update your Branch listing. Send changes to editor Tamsin Boardman, Box 249, Roanoke, TX 76262.

Convention News

San Francisco Branch is making plans for fascinating things to do during the weekend of August 3-6. An extra special delight will be tours of member's gardens Thursday afternoon. A Judging School is scheduled for Thursday morning, and a special Seed Fund listing will be available.

Banquet speaker Saturday night will be Hugh McLauchlan, vice-president of the Scottish Begonia Society (and we apologize for mis-spelling his name in the last issue), who will tell us about growing begonias in Scotland and about begonia projects at the Glasgow Botanic Gardens.

BEGONIAS BY THE BAY

From *The Indoor Garden*, bulletin of the Indoor Gardening Society of America, Inc., comes this article on fragrant begonias, reprinted with permission of editor Sharon Zentz. Thanks to Phyllis Bates for calling it to our attention.

FRAGRANT BEGONIAS

by James Sciotto

The prospect of growing houseplants that are everblooming, fragrant, and of very easy culture is possible, and it is with fragrance in mind that we may take a whole different, second look at begonias. The fragrance of begonias can be compared to color or sound frequency as not everyone can smell them. Some sounds or colors exist in frequency ranges so extreme that only those with more acute hearing or color perception can hear or see them. This same analogy can be applied to fragrance, so if you cannot smell a begonia it is not necessarily scentless; in fact, it may be very powerfully scented but out of one's range of olfactory perception. This may explain why some scentless species such as *B. dregei* will carry over a fragrant trait in a cross with a fragrant begonia.

Most begonias are fragrant from sunrise until about 6 P.M., when the bees are out pollinating flowers. Temperature, time of day, and humidity all play an important part in a begonia's fragrance.

So far, I have detected about four different categories of scents in begonias: rose, candy, honey, and spice. Often the scents are in combinations of two or more.

When selecting cultivars to grow, it would be wise to choose plants that are most likely to perform in your conditions. Several bloomers are reliable only if reasonable culture has been provided until the

time for flowering. However, improper culture or sometimes even day length can cause all of the buds to drop, and then you will have to wait until the following year to try again. If the plant is free-flowering, improper culture can be redeemed much sooner, and if the plant is everblooming, improper culture can be redeemed on the next growth. It is for this reason that ever-bloomers should be preferred by the beginning grower while seasonal plants are left to the more experienced grower. Nearly all of the following cultivars demand humidity above 40%; however, some will perform much better than others in conditions of lower humidity. Lighting and watering often vary greatly with the cultivar. The following are cultivars I recommend for fragrance.

DWARF CANES

B. 'Lenore Olivier' (Kusler) - This *B. dichroa* hybrid really performs. It is compact, ever-blooming, and sturdy, thus rendering it a very good light garden subject. Its fragrance is like rose and candy. It prefers over one-thousand foot candles of light. A good beginner's choice.

B. 'Ionic' (Kartuz) - This hybrid performs well. It has long, wavy, apple green leaves and large clusters of everblooming coral flowers. Its drawback is that its scent can only be detected when you put your nose in the flower.

B. 'Mandarin' (syn. B. 'Mandarin Orange') (Kartuz) - Compact, everblooming with orange flowers against dark, spotted, glossy foliage. Its scent is also weak.

between waterings because of its semi-tuberous habit.

SHRUB-LIKE

B. 'Kristy' (Lee) - This one is a compact with large, silver-spotted dark satin-finish leaves. It is everblooming and very richly scented like candy.

B. venosa - An upright, felt-leaved species that has a spicy fragrance. This species tolerates low humidity better than most others.

B. 'Dale Kramer' (Worley) - This one is a more difficult subject, but its foliage is beautiful. It flowers in the spring with large, candy-rose flowers held high above the foliage.

B. minor (syn. *B. nitida odorata* var. *alba*) - Upright and nearly everblooming with strongly rose scented flowers.

TALL CANES

B. 'Tea Rose' - A bushy shrub that blooms with fragrant rose scented flowers.

B. 'Lana' (Lee) - This one has very showy, silver-splashed foliage. It is free flowering with a strong candy-like fragrance.

TRAILING-SCANDENT

B. 'Honeysuckle' (Logee's) - This one is everblooming with medium pink flowers against apple green foliage. Its scent is more like rose and candy. It will grow to four feet, and it prefers over one thousand foot candles of light. A vigorous grower that is a good beginner's choice for a window or sunroom.

B. solananthera - This Brazilian species is noted for its powerful, spicy, sweet fragrance that reminds me of plum blossoms, and almost anyone can smell it. It blooms profusely in mid-winter with red centered, white flowers against heart-shaped apple green foliage. Although seasonal, it is a dependable bloomer.

B. 'Martha Floro' (Kusler) - This hybrid of B. 'Lenore Olivier' with *B. lubbersii* is also an everbloomer with dark shiny foliage and large pink flowers. It is a strong grower and is a good beginner's choice. It has a very strong honey fragrance that can be noticed a couple of feet away which is from its parent *B. lubbersii*. Some people cannot bear to put their noses to it, while others cannot smell anything at all. I have yet to find someone who is a happy medium.

B. 'Sweet Dreams' (Woodriff) - A new Woodriff cross of B. 'Honeysuckle' x *B. solananthera*. It is free-flowering and will grow to make a big basket plant. It has richly fragrant pink flowers.

B. 'Echo' (Woodriff) - This one is a cross of *B. minor* x *B. echinosepala*. It is richly fragrant and everblooming. A good beginner's choice.

RHIZOMATOUS TYPES

B. 'Lubbergei' - This Japanese hybrid is a cross of *B. lubbersii* x *B. dregei*. Some growers claim that this one is a difficult subject; however, its unusual dark maple leaf foliage, everblooming habit, and rich honey fragrance make it worth the try. My own plant seems to do its very best under fluorescent light culture with some drying

None are recommended for beginners as most require controlled day length, temperature, high humidity and epiphytic culture to flower well.

B. herbacea - A miniature Brazilian species that does well in a terrarium and planted in long fiber sphagnum moss. Everblooming with sweetly scented flowers.

B. attenuata - Also sweetly scented.

B. decora - Another sweetly scented miniature.

REX TYPES

B. 'It' (Woodriff) - A most interesting hybrid of *B. (Rex) 'President Carnot'* x *B. socotrana*. It is a vigorous grower that has retained *B. socotrana's* incredibly long sprays of male flowers. It has silver-spotted, apple green foliage and is everblooming with a candy-rose fragrance. A good beginner's choice.

B. 'Woodriff's Tricolor' - A beautiful rex that has both rex-type coloration and candy-rose scented flowers. A big grower.

B. 'Curly Fireflush' - This one has candy-rose scented flowers and is a very hairy plant. It has red and green rex color.

TUBEROUS TYPES

There are several richly fragrant tuberous types; however, their temperature range is much too narrow for most houseplant growers. Perhaps future hybrids will be heat tolerant, fragrant, compact, and everblooming.*

For year-round scent, try a few fragrant begonias.



Note: Both Howard Siebold and Leslie Woodriff have hybridized fragrant tuberous begonias that are easier to grow under varying conditions. Some of these have become available commercially since this article was written in 1987.

The Indoor Gardening Society of America, Inc.

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Dues \$15 a year **INDOOR GARDEN** issued 6
times yearly. Seed exchange, round robins,
cultural guides, slide library.

REGIONS ELECT OFFICERS

Eastern Region

New officers for Eastern Region, ABS are:

Director: Maxine Zinman

Vice-Director: Tim Last

Secretary: Mary Bucholtz

Treasurer: Barbara Berg

Frank Green will serve as Membership Secretary. Dues are \$5 annually, and may be sent to Frank at Richardson Road, Fitchburg, MA 01420.

Kit Jeans Mounger will edit the newsletter, which will appear monthly (the first edition is out, full of interesting information and illustrated with Kit's charming artwork). Articles about begonias and news of branches and members are requested. Kit's address is 7438 S. Leewynn Dr., Sarasota, FL 34240.

Southwest Region

Southwest Region installed new officers at their annual Get-Together in May (see page 143 for a report on the Get-Together). Serving through May 1991 will be:

Director: Don Miller

Vice-Director: Gene Salisbury

Secretary: Ann Fletcher

Treasurer: Martha Curry

Past Director: Kay Tucker

National Director: Merrill Calvert

Trustee: Joy Porter

Trustee: Nancy Rentfro

Committee chairs are:

Convention: Melba Schultz

Editor: Maurice Amey

Historian: Barbara Hamilton

Membership: Marie Harrell

SWR dues are \$7 individual, \$10 family, and \$25 commercial, and include a subscription to the monthly Begonia Leaflet. Dues may be sent to Marie Harrell at Rt. 3, Box 689, Elgin, TX 78621.

PAY ATTENTION TO PESTICIDES YOU BUY

by Mike Moeller

We're so used to toxic chemicals that we sometimes forget their power to damage and destroy. Think how many pesticides you keep in your garage, storage shed, and kitchen cupboards. A typical collection might include an all-purpose insecticide for the garden, a herbicide for weed control, and special treatments for snails, roses, or pecan trees. Don't forget ant and roach sprays, outdoor foggers, and your pet's flea shampoo.

Even the places we buy pesticides can lull us into overlooking their potential danger. We buy pesticides not just at nurseries and garden shops, but also in supermarkets, convenience stores, variety stores, and hardware stores, where they are displayed side by side with other commonplace but non-toxic products. Think how much less casually we'd approach pesticides if the law made us buy them at specially licensed "pesticide stores."

Read the label. To protect yourself and your family, read labels carefully. A pesticide label is a legal document that tells you what pests the chemical kills and what plants it is safe to treat. The label tells you how to mix, apply, store, and dispose of the pesticide. Labels also say how long you have to wait before it's safe to pick and eat treated crops. Any use inconsistent with label instructions is unsafe and illegal.

Of course, labels are useless if they peel off the container, so store pesticide containers as directed in a dry, secure place.

Follow label directions exactly when you mix a batch of pesticide from concentrate. Don't make the common mistake of assuming that double strength is better. Double strength is illegal, dangerous, and may harm your plants.

Like application strengths, waiting periods before harvest can differ from crop to crop. If a label says to allow a "three-day pre-harvest interval on beans," that means the chemical takes three days after spray-

ing before it breaks down chemically and your beans are safe to pick and eat. Don't assume the interval is the same on all crops. That same pesticide might break down in one day on asparagus and take 14 days on parsley. Check the label before you pick.

Routes of exposure. Properly used, pesticides can be valuable and efficient tools. But using them always involves a risk of exposure by three possible routes - by breathing their fumes, taking them in orally, and absorbing them through unprotected skin.

Everyone agrees that pesticides should be kept out of reach of children and pets, but pesticides within your reach can also be dangerous if you use the chemical but forget to wash your hands thoroughly before eating or smoking.

You're soaking in it. Absorption through the skin is greatest when you are wet with perspiration. When you're mixing or applying pesticides, minimize absorption by wearing long, non-porous gloves and clothing that covers your arms and legs. If chemicals splash into your eyes, flush them with water for 15 minutes and get medical attention immediately.

If your clothes get contaminated, take them off as soon as possible and wash your skin with soap and water. Wash contaminated clothing separately, twice, in strong detergent before you wear it again.

A sniff in time. Pesticide exposure through breathing increases in closed spaces. For this reason, always apply pesticide sprays and dusts under well-ventilated conditions. Even outdoors, take the precaution of wearing nose, mouth, and eye protection when spraying or dusting pesticides over large areas.

Mike Moeller is deputy commissioner of the Texas Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 12847, Austin, TX 78711.



another plea to be careful with pesticides comes from the B-Line, newsletter of the Alfred D. Robinson Branch:

"...This past week I've seen a couple of bees in my broccoli flowers, and I have found one lone ladybug. My wild bird population has decreased alarmingly, and I'm sure this sad decline is due to extensive use of pesticides which do not distinguish between the good and bad critters. The more good animals we lose the more undesirables we'll get, because they seem to have the ability to grow defenses against poisons. I'd hate to see this lovely earth overrun with cockroaches and rats..."

IN THE NEWS...

Watch for the August issue of **American Horticulturist**, magazine of the American Horticultural Society, for an article on historic adobe gardens of Monterey, California, by **K. Mose Fadeem**. Mose has another article scheduled for publication in the September/October issue of **Fine Gardening**; it will be about his own vine sanctuary, "Mulchdown."

Interesting QUOTE:

"A NEW FERTILIZER - I learned of something new and will pass it along. After boiling potatoes for dinner take the water in which they boiled, dilute it a little and put on your Rex Begonias. How they will grow! It is also good for other plants." - from Par's Floral Magazine, 1892, quoted in Homestead Hints, ed. Donald J. Berg, Ten Speed Press, Berkeley, CA 1986.

Joan Coulat, Plant Sale Chair for the 1989 ABS National Convention "Begonias by the Bay," wishes to thank the following contributors to the plant sale:

Debi Best
Margaret Sperry Davenport
Joyce Davi
Jackie Davis
Bonita E. Doan
Don Englund
K. Mose Fadeem
Leslie Hatfield
Carol & Peter Notaras
Irene Nuss
Ray Peterson
Barbara R. Philip
Mimi Schramm
Margaret & Rudolf Ziesenhenn

Branches:
Alfred D. Robinson
Garden Grove
Jacksonville
Miami
Sacramento
San Francisco
San Miguel
Westchester

Southwest Region

Fascinating, Unusual: Thick-stemmed Begonias

by Esther Nagelberg

Of late I have become interested in the growing of thick-stemmed begonias. Although they do not generally make an especially "pretty" appearance, I find their very oddness unique.

Even when the plants are very young the stems are thick and branching is rare. They require lots of room, as they can become quite tall. Although sunlight is necessary for growth and as much leaf growth as possible, here in South Florida where the sun is intense they are best shaded.

Pinching can be done when the plants are quite young. Pruning is best done by taking out older stems and allowing new stems to develop.

Propagation is by seed for species and vegetative cuttings for cultivars. Leaves can be bare-leaved or hairy, and vary in size. An interesting sub-group is labeled trunk-like, non-ramified, because the foliage usually appears only at the top of a thick stem, giving a tree-like appearance.

As a group, thick-stemmed begonias are small in number as compared to rhizomatous, cane, or shrub-like begonias. It is possible to find a few at most begonia sales. Do look for them!

Among those I have grown and am growing are:

medium sized, bare-leaved:

B. 'Emma Watson'

medium sized, hairy-leaved:

B. 'Tamo'

B. malabarica

B. ulmifolia

trunk-like, non-ramified:

B. 'Snow Peaks'

B. lindleyana

B. serioconeura

B. wollnyi

Esther Nagelberg is editor of the newsletter for the Palm Beaches Branch (where her article first appeared February, 1989). Her address is 6306 Emerald Sky Lane, Lake Worth, FL 33463.



STORK REPORT

Anna Michel Ludwig, daughter of Sharon and Michael Ludwig, arrived April 19, weighing 7 lbs., 13 oz. Brother Christopher Michael (one of our youngest members at almost 2) is delighted.

18. *Begonia* x 'Comte de Lesseps'

This fine hybrid, named after the engineer of the Suez Canal, may be the same as Lemoine's cross of 1889 of *B. albo-picta* with *B. olbia* and originally called *B. x argenteo-guttata*. The leaves are less narrow than the preceding hybrid, slightly over 6 inches long and 4 inches across and marked with quite large silver spots, which become more prominent as the leaf ages. The flowers, produced from the leaf axils in racemes, are pale red and quite sizeable. Although the leaves are so large, this does not seem a particularly rapid grower and is not so easy in cultivation as 'corolicta.' The stems break naturally, early and make a pleasantly shaped bushy plant.

After receiving Members at Large Newsletter #12, Julia Broadhurst, England, sent me the above article. She wrote: "I found the reference to *Begonia* 'Comte de Lesseps,' taken some years ago from a library book. I believe it was The Rochford Book of House Plants by Thomas Rochford."

I was thrilled and rather shocked because I have this book - but have not looked at it in many years. The book is co-authored by Richard Gorer. Four beautiful color paintings, by the well-known artist Cynthia Newsome-Taylor include a grouping of *B. masoniana* and three *B. rex* cultivars.

Note the spelling of 'Comte' instead of "Compte," which is correct for the title "Count" in French. So, correct the spelling on your plant label.

I feel that the authors' supposition about possible parentage is incorrect because of leaf substance and flower color. I agree with Rudy Ziesenhenné that one parent is *B. dichroa*. See what fun research is? Think of what members at large can discover if all of us get hot on the trail for begonia information to solve begonia puzzles.

Margaret Coats writes that she was interested in the background of this cultivar because *B. 'Juanita's Jewel'*, a Dorothy Caviness cultivar, appears to be identical to *B. 'Comte de Lesseps.'* As both plants are

new to my collection and still small, I cannot assess the differences. How about you? Let us hear your opinions. I can relate that *B. 'Juanita's Jewel'* is a prolific bloomer. It has not stopped since I received it as a rooted cutting, and cold, and wet, it is still blooming - a lovely soft orange color in December.

Members at Large Director Thelma O'Reilly has asked that the above article be reprinted from the MAL Newsletter #13, and hopes to receive information on the begonias mentioned. Her address is 10942 Sunray Place, La Mesa, CA 92041.

from the Sacramento Branch Begonia Leaf editor Paul Tsamtsis

Nomenclature for November was on *B. 'Comte de Lesseps,'* a very unusual plant in that it is very old, but is not listed in most of the American source books on begonias. It is an attractive and easy to grow cane-like begonia. In Europe, where it originated, it is commonly grown in the house. Joan Coulat did some detective work and found out that the West Coast reintroduction of this plant happened when Rudy Ziesenhenné visited Europe in the 1960's and saw the plant growing. Rudy learned that it had been hybridized in France in the 1890's and that one parent was most likely *B. dichroa*. A friend of his, Maurice Mason, sent him cuttings and he has had it ever since.

It grows better in the house than in greenhouses. Debbie Best of San Leandro grew it successfully for over three months in her office. Rudy reports that it starts blooming in February with large clusters of soft red flowers and continues on through the fall. This plant is not to be confused with *B. 'Madame de Lesseps,'* another plant hybridized during the same time period.



IN MEMORY

Gladys Hill, long time member of East Bay Branch, died in February. Gladys and her husband Garnet served as refreshment committee for branch meetings until ill health made it impossible for them to attend. They are sorely missed.

Helen Antonelli died in December. She was the wife of Pat Antonelli and mother of Skip Antonelli of Antonelli Bros. Begonia Gardens in Santa Cruz Long time customers will remember her friendliness.

"February was a sad month this year for Southern California begonia growers. Our dear friend **Bea Sutton** joined the Master Creator.

I first met Bea seven years ago. I didn't know a thing about begonias and certainly didn't realize that Bea would become a good friend and wonderful inspiration. I was unaware also until the show closed that the following day she would be hospitalized for surgery.

It's good to think of those days early in our friendship. When I went to visit her after the surgery, she was chipper -and working. On every visit she was lively and enthusiastic about her plants, and she sent me home with my first cuttings and instructions on how to start begonias. She opened up a whole new world to me!

Bea was born in Chicago, Illinois on October 31, 1928. It always delighted her that she was a Halloween baby. She never met a stranger. Ask her about a plant that was giving you trouble and she would work out the answer. She gave freely of her knowledge to everyone. She was a popular speaker at Southern California plant clubs, not only for begonias but any associated plants. Her home club was Whittier Branch. Many of us will remember always her laughter, her friendliness, her enthusiasm.

Bea was a widow for 24 years. She raised her two children, Dawn and Greg, singlehandedly. She had achieved the

dream of her life in the summer of '88 when she sold her home in Los Alamitos and moved to the property she had bought in Vista. The nursery was then under construction. Even as she was moving in, the early warnings of pain and physical disability had become evident. She was permanently hospitalized in January.

Her children want her to be remembered as whole and hearty and full of life. Her nursery, "The Plant Merchants," is going on under Dawn's direction. When friends visit the nursery and talk about Bea, "it is as though mother is still with us." As it thrives, it will be another memorial to Bea."

-Phyllis Grothe, Whittier Begonia Society

San Francisco Branch member and past president **Alfred Stettler** died in March at his home in Sonoma, California. Active in several horticultural societies, he was an international flower show judge and authority on roses.

Mr. Stettler was a longtime city employee; he was known as the "Father" of San Francisco's Hall of Flowers, a display and exhibition building he envisioned and campaigned for (now known as the San Francisco County Fair Building).

He will be sorely missed.

Bob Moore, founder and secretary of Pinellas County Branch and president of Tampa Bay Branch, died May 2. Born in Turtle Creek, Pennsylvania, Bob moved to Florida in 1975. Active in many facets of horticulture, he was also president of the Florida West Coast Bromeliad Society and active in the St. Petersburg Garden Club.

Bob promoted the first judged show for Pinellas County Branch, which was held May 12-14, and was responsible for the branch doing two television programs on begonias in the past year.

Risa Young wrote, "Our branch is still in shock. Bob did so much for us and horticulture in general...Bob was one of a kind in his enthusiasm for plants and helping people, and it is so sad that he died so young when he had so much to offer."

Convention 88! reports...

CHUCK ANDERSON ON PHOTOGRAPHING BEGONIAS

by Dorothy Patrick

Chuck Anderson, former ABS president and former co-editor (with his wife Karen Bartholomew) of the **Begonian**, classifies himself as an "intermediate amateur photographer," not a professional. But if you've been an ABS member for a long time and you read the photo credits in the **Begonian**, you know he's a super amateur.

Chuck recommended four pieces of hardware as basic equipment:

1. a 35 mm. Single Lens Reflex (SLR) camera,
2. a 50 or 55 mm macro lens, a lens that will allow you to focus up close to your plant,
3. a cable release, which screws into the camera's shutter button, thus eliminating movement of the camera when you take the picture,
4. a tripod, extremely important for holding the camera absolutely still.

Optional equipment suggested was:

1. an electronic flash, for shooting in places where there is not enough available light for the film you are using,
2. background cards, available in a variety of colors in most camera shops. They are colored on both sides and reusable.

Chuck showed us slides of begonias, most of which were shot in the macro mode. There were examples of what to do and what not to do, with the members present participating in the "diagnosis" and recommended "treatment" of each slide. Remember now, we were learning about begonia photography, much of it done in the macro mode - not sunsets, mountains, sports, etc.

The key to successful begonia photography is: simplicity. Fill up the frame with plant, or bloom cluster, or a branch of leaves, or just leaves (in minute detail). Block out the background (with the aforementioned cards), and anything else not essential. Compose your shot with your full attention on what you see in the viewfinder, not with what you see with your eyes away from the camera.

Photographing begonias at a show truly presents a challenge. A shot of the entire room usually gives you people milling about, and no detail of the individual plants. If you want this to set the scene, that's okay. Just go on from there with close-up shots of the plants that really catch your eye. Remember that show plants may not be moved

from the position they are in. Try looking at a plant from different angles: from below, above, or at plant level; get close; stand a card behind the plants; move the entry card and ribbon out of sight (and put them back when you're through); look at the plant horizontally to get closer; ask someone to help out by holding the tablecloth forward to block out a distracting carpet; and be sure there are no fallen leaves or blooms visible in your finder.

In addition to very careful focusing, there is also the matter of the setting on your camera. Large numbers on your f-stop ring give you greater depth of field, while smaller numbers blur the background and the foreground, leaving the center sharp. So sometimes you can use this to show only what you want.

If you are shooting with available light, be sure you check the meter of your camera to determine that you have enough light for a closed down shutter. If you are using a flash, try not to aim it directly at the plant; try bouncing light off the ceiling, or have someone hold a white card up over the plant for the light to bounce off.

To get good photographs of flower beds of multi-colored semps, stand

back and get down low to encompass the whole bed and its colors.

If taking a picture of plants sitting and hanging on a deck or porch, look at the scene carefully. Remove clutter (such as the water hose, empty pots, etc.); sweep up fallen leaves and blossoms - anything that distracts from the beauty of the scene. Once again, look at the scene carefully through the camera view finder, for the camera will photograph everything in view. You might also set plants on tables, even if they don't ordinarily sit there, so that you get more of a plant picture and less of the back wall. Chuck mentioned a problem that might come up with this type of scene: a lath cover. Wait for a cloudy day, or climb up and cover the lath with sheets. Otherwise you will have a striped picture! You will also, if you want sharp focus on the entire scene, need to "stop down:" go to a larger f-stop number for greater depth of field.

One slide discussed was of a begonia in a conservatory. The plant was in shadows, and the slide underexposed. Chuck suggested using a white card to reflect sunlight onto the plant, giving it more light. Until you become familiar with this technique, you need to fiddle around with the placement of the card to reflect the light where you want it. Someone in the audience suggested the

use of a silver metallic or aluminum foil card, but a beginner would have better luck with a white card, which diffuses the light more evenly. A flash could also have been used.

In a setting where the begonias are large, close together, and similar in leaf size, color, and texture, Chuck suggested either getting very close to the one plant or standing on something to shoot it looking down. We all laughed when he said to go ahead and shoot it if you felt you had to, but it would probably never make the cover of the **Begonian**.

Several slides illustrated the fact that you have to be willing to spend the time to try different approaches to obtain a "just right" shot of a specific begonia from your, or a friend's, collection. One plant was a beauty, and Chuck and Karen had tried setting it on a gravel walk, with the greenhouse for a back drop, but results weren't quite good. So they tried going into the greenhouse, and setting the plant on a square of white sheet. Not only was the contrast of the very dark leaves and the stark whiteness too great, but they picked up another problem: the greenish sunshield on the glass of the greenhouse caused a blue-green cast to the slide.

Chuck warned that if you are using a flash close to the background of your begonia you could get a sharp shadow, which is dis-

tracting. Also, in a grouping of begonias, watch carefully for the taller ones casting shadows on the others. You can rearrange, and/or use supplemental light - moving it from place to place.

An excellent picture doesn't just happen. Pay very close attention to what you are doing, and consider all of the points mentioned. Develop an eye for show grooming, especially for macro plant photography. The closer you are to the begonia, the less forgiving the lens is of a brown-tipped leaf, a faded bloom, etc.

Chuck suggests using low (64) ASA slide film. The higher the ASA number the less available light you need, but anything over 200 ASA is grainy and less sharp.

Bracketing is one way to get a better picture: shoot first at the f-stop shown by the camera meter, then at 1 f-stop less, then at 1 f-stop more. Most amateurs are only satisfied with 1/3 of the shots they take; you can try for the perfect shot by bracketing.

Slide film is less expensive for experimentation, and you can always have a print made of a slide you like. (There was a difference of opinion here, with some of the audience opting for print film because they like the color of developed print film better than the color of a print made from a slide).

Try different brands of film, and different ASA's. Then choose what works best for you. Ektachrome,



B. 'Splotches'

photo by Chuck Anderson

by the way, is slide film with a cool, bluish color.

Chuck uses Kodak T-Max 400 ASA for black and white prints. Try using a roll of it occasionally on your begonias. Send good photographs to the **Begonian** editor for use in the magazine (converting color prints to black and white is very expensive and results are not always satisfactory, so black and white photos are in demand).

When shooting black and white, think black and white! Remember that dark green or dark blue comes out black or dark grey; red comes out black. So if you are looking at a brilliant rex,

with a deep red and grey patterned leaf - what comes out is a fairly uniform dark grey leaf.

Keep records of how you shoot - film used, light, f-stop, etc. - don't depend on your memory!

Keep your camera ready and your eyes open wherever you travel. The talk ended with a slide Chuck took in Holland of an old battered bike leaning against a garbage can, from which a begonia was growing!

The hour passed too quickly, and it was truly an educational and enjoyable experience for all us camera bugs.

“SHOOT” YOUR BEGONIAS, PLEASE!

In many parts of the country, begonias are at their prettiest outside in the summer. While yours are looking particularly gorgeous, pull out the camera (or persuade a photographer friend to do so), take a picture to show us how you use begonias in your landscape, and send it to the **Begonian**, Box 249, Roanoke, TX 76262. Either slides or prints may be used.

The word “landscape” is used rather loosely here, and does not refer only to landed estates - a shot of a lath house, patio, windowsill garden, window box, or balcony will be welcome. If summer is the worst time of year for your plants, send us an outdoor shot from which ever season is best for your area.

Our March-April issue next year will feature begonias in our members' gardens, and we hope there will be lots of creative ideas to stimulate interest in outdoor begonia gardening.

BOOK REVIEW

Phyllis Bates reviews

Once Upon A Windowsill: A History of Indoor Plants

by Tovah Martin

Timber Press, Portland, Oregon. 1988.

Hard cover, 8 1/2" x 11", 304 pages, 70 drawings

\$29.95 + \$3.00 shipping. Add tax where applicable.

Order from Timber Press

9999 S.W. Wilshire

Portland, OR 97225

or Logee's Book Shop

55 North Street

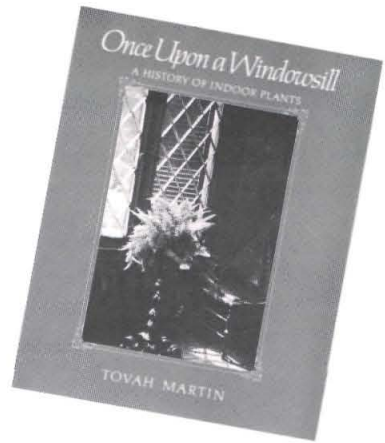
Danielson, CT 06239

Tovah Martin sums up her history of home indoor gardening: "Two generations ago, our ancestors had the ingenuity and foresight to invite plants into their homes. It was an idea of earth-shattering horticultural importance..." She describes the path by which plants moved from the field to the windowsill. The many black and white illustrations taken from various publications of the Victorian era recreate impressions of those times.

Begonia growers and all other tropical and semi-tropical plant growers, whether indoor or out, do owe an enormous debt to the Victorians who explored, studied, experimented, and embraced plants and plant growing with a passion. Today we certainly accept plants as a part of our indoor environment, but that was not so before the Victorian era.

The New England colonists, like their counterparts in Great Britain, concerned themselves with the necessities of life. The Puritan ethic and harsh economic realities left little space and time for ornamental horticulture, even if there had been such an activity.

The early Victorian era was a time of change, movement away from the Puritan



influence, technological development, movement of people from farms to cities, and fascination with new ideas and items brought by explorers. Each of these forces contributed to the little begonia in the parlor and subsequently to the wealth of plants incorporated into our homes today. Tovah tells of plant explorers and inventions, and she also relates the changes in attitude of society that made plant growing an acceptable and desirable activity. The idea that beautiful things should be a part of everyday life was an important force.

Cultivation of plants indoors became possible as houses changed. The establishment of the parlor itself and later the incorporation of suitable areas for plants in home construction were developments of these times.

The first begonias were introduced into the home in 1856. By 1881 begonias were on the list of tropical foliage plants commonly grown in the home. The most popular ones were the many cultivars of *Begonia rex*. The formation of cultivars kept begonias in the limelight long after the fad for other plants had dimmed.

The influences of the period on horticulture were long lasting and widespread, and the present resurgence of interest in Victoriana brings a need to look at the original period. Anyone who is interested in begonias as a hobby will find this well written background history fascinating.





BEAT THE HEAT!!!

Sizzling? Scorching? Plants stressed out? Try:

1. **Shade:** under a tree, an overhang, a large umbrella. Be creative: lath strips, tarps, sheets, gunny sacks, cheesecloth, benches, tables - anything to break the sun's attack. Keep plants away from hot reflected light: windows, brick walls.

2. **Water:** on the ground around your plants, on trees, on shrubs, on neighboring pot plants, on walls, on shade coverings (see 1). Place plants next to water if possible (a garden pond, a birdbath). If your climate is very dry, misting your begonias' leaves *very lightly* will help. Don't let the soil dry out - don't, however, keep roots soggy; this will only stress your plants further. In extreme heat, place ice cubes in the pots; they'll cool the root ball as they melt.

3. **Air:** circulate the air as much as possible. Greenhouses *must* have vents; an evaporative cooler is better. Fans help. If your climate is humid, place plants far enough apart for air to move between them (if your climate is dry, group plants together to raise humidity). Try placing ice in front of the fan, or between the plants and prevailing winds. Outdoors, hanging baskets will catch more breezes than plants on the ground; indoors, the floor is usually the coolest place.

4. **Pots:** use clay. They release moisture, stay cooler.

5. **Feeding:** cut back; there's not much growth under stress. Use weak solutions, frequently, rather than strong, occasional feedings. Don't use manure; it heats up your mix. Don't add time release pellets - heat hastens their dissolution, might cause a damaging burst of fertilizer. (Pellets that have been in for a while won't hurt; they've already released most of their feed).

6. **Anti-dessicants:** commercially available anti-dessicants are useful in hot, dry climates, especially when there are hot, drying winds. One coating lasts about

COMING EVENTS

August 3-6: **ABS National Convention, "Begonias by the Bay," at the Clarion Hotel, San Francisco.**

August 19-20: 4th Annual Cactus & Succulent Show, Los Angeles State & County Arboretum, Arcadia, CA, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days.

August 25-27: San Francisco Branch participates in the Tanforan Flower Show with display and educational exhibit. There will be a sale booth in the concession area.

August 26 & 27: Palomar Branch annual sale and judged show, "Festival of Foliage and Flowers" at Quail Gardens, 230 Quail Gardens Dr., Encinitas, CA. Hours are 1-5 p.m. Sat., 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Sunday. Admission free. Contact Eleanor Calkins at (619) 746-4743 for more information.

September 9-10: Sacramento Branch Show, "Begonias - Jewels of the Rain Forest." Planned are educational exhibits showing the dangers rainforests face from population pressures and demands made by developed nations on their resources.

September 15-17: Potomac Branch Begonia Show at U.S. Botanic Garden.

three months. Hair spray (believe it or not) may work just as well.

While the heat is searing, make a note of those begonias that seem to thrive regardless. You'll want to treasure these, and share them with your neighbors.

If plants defoliate, don't give up and throw them away. Some begonias respond to stress with this form of dormancy; they might perk up in the fall.



In many parts of the country, summer is when begonias are at their peak. It's tempting to increase your collection with cuttings, so we've gathered a collection of propagating tips from newsletters all around the country - adapt to your area!

Making Cuttings

Cuttings are best taken about 4-6 hours after the parent plant has been abundantly watered. Cuttings should be fat with water - not wilted, or partly dry.

When you prune a plant, don't just chop it: look! Look for a node with a fresh bud - they're easy to see. Usually where a leaf occurs, or has been, a little pink new growth about the size of a grain or rice will be started. It's pink, or red, like the tip of a rolled-up leaf, and is very fragile. Choose one that is pointing outward - away from the center of the parent plant. Shape your plant by cutting the stem about 1/2" to 1" above the fresh bud. Handle the cutting very carefully. It, too, has fresh buds, and this "trash" is a treasure to another ABS member.

From the January 1987 issue of Begonias, Begorra, newsletter of the Orange County Branch, edited by Lorra Almstedt.

Tips on Propagating Begonias

by Barbara & Howard Berg

Most begonias can be propagated easily if a few simple rules are followed. The materials required are inexpensive.

PROPAGATING MEDIA Use the ready-mixed potting media available in plant stores, such as Jiffy Mix, Sure-Fire Mix, Pro Mix, and Redi-Earth; mix your own of perlite, vermiculite and peat or sphagnum moss; or use sand, sphagnum moss, perlite, or vermiculite alone. A little experimentation will help you find the one which works best for your conditions. We use sphagnum moss (long fiber, not milled) for some tender begonias, or a prepared mix for most varieties and species.

CONTAINERS The important requirement of your propagating equipment is that it be able to hold the media and cutting comfortably, provide the needed moisture and drainage, and hold humidity in its environment as necessary for more tender varieties. Sweater boxes, pots with plastic covers, or Wardian-type cases are all appropriate.

CUTTINGS With a few exceptions most begonias will propagate from any type cutting. The most important exceptions are that canes and semperflorens are not satisfactorily rooted from leaf cuttings. Semps are most successfully propagated from well-branched stem cuttings. If you do not use branched cuttings you will end up with a "totem pole" which will never be a satisfactory plant.

STEM CUTTINGS Using clean scissors or a knife cut about three to six inches of stem or branch of your plant depending on its growth habit. Remove flowers, buds, and any lower leaves which would be in the rooting medium. Dip the stem in rooting hormone (Rootone) and insert from one-half to two inches into the damp (not wet) medium. You may or may not need to cover the cuttings, depending on conditions in the area in which your plants are grown.

RHIZOME CUTTINGS Rhizomes are modified root stems of varying sizes. With a clean knife cut the rhizome in pieces with one or more leaves, dip in rooting hormone and place the pieces at a slant in the medium. In some cases rhizomes with no leaves can be laid flat on the mix and rooting will occur. Some plants can be divided with rooted rhizomes cut from the parent plants and potted directly. With all rhizomes be careful not to overwater, as this will cause the rhizome to rot.

MALLET CUTTINGS Mallet cuttings are taken from the plant to include a leaf or branch and a portion of the main stem on each side of the cutting. Dip the cuttings in rooting hormone and insert in the medium with the leaf or branch upright. Canes and branching begonias propagate very satisfactorily using this type of cutting.

LEAF CUTTINGS Using single leaves with a short stem (an inch or less) dip the stem end in rooting hormone and insert the tip into the medium. Larger leaves can be trimmed to smaller size to make them easier to handle. Rex begonia leaves can be cut in multiple places across the leaf veins and laid flat on the medium to produce plantlets at each cut.

WEDGE CUTTINGS Leaves can be cut into wedge-shaped pieces with the center of each wedge having a sizeable vein, dipped in the rooting hormone, and inserted at an angle into the medium. Rexes are rooted commercially in this manner and with a minimum of care it is almost fool-proof.

POTTING THE NEW PLANT When the new plants appear and have an adequate root growth, transplant them to an appropriate size pot. Over-potting will rapidly kill your plants. A 2 to 3 inch pot will most probably be adequate and re-potting will be necessary in about six weeks or so. Pot the plant in successively larger pots (move up one inch in pot diameter at a time) each time the root ball is the full shape of the pot, or until the plant is the size which makes both you and it comfortable.

Barbara and Howard Berg live at 16 Highview Terrace, New Canaan, CT 06840. Barbara is editor of the Krickerbocker News, from which publication this article was pirated.

Begonia beginners might like to write the Book Store Manager and order the May, 1980 **Begonian** for the article by Elda Haring on propagating. It's terrific!

Having Problems Propagating?

by Wanda Macnair

Do you have difficulty propagating cuttings? One mistake often made is that of trying to start cuttings in too large a container. It is best to begin with a smaller pot unless you are starting directly in a flat or a propagation box. The reason for the difficulty could be that, once the roots form, they take oxygen from the air spaces surrounding the soil particles in the planting medium. If a larger pot is used, the soil will remain too moist for a longer period of time and squeeze out the air, and, hence, the oxygen. The cuttings could either rot or grow more slowly. For the same reason, many cuttings are lost in closed propagation containers because they are too WET. The only real moisture a plant needs UNTIL it roots is enough water vapor around the leaves to prevent too much loss of moisture from transpiration. Hence, the motto for propagating is: MOIST, NOT WET.

If you have a number of cuttings, try putting half in 2" pots and half in 4" pots, and keep records. You may find that the cuttings in the 4" pots (if they don't rot) will grow more slowly. On the other hand, once I found myself in the predicament of being given a cutting of B. 'Lucerna,' in Maine, with no pots available other than a 5" standard, with the only soil available from a pile of decayed cow manure, unsterilized at that. Surprisingly, that plant, started in August, was a tall healthy plant with beautiful blooms in mid-October. Remember, there are very few absolutes in the field of horticulture.

Convention Chair for 1988, Wanda Macnair lives at 177 Hancock St., Cambridge, MA 02139. Her article first appeared in The Buxtonian, edited by Judy Calvert.

Starting Leaf Cuttings

by Billie Asmussen

I have resurrected the paper towel method of propagation that was in the **Begonian** many years ago. For us the "Brawny" towels, plain white, seem to work best. Take 3 or 4 sheets and fold them to fit a show box (this gives 6 or 8 layers). Wet them - let the towels absorb as much water as they will, then pour off the excess. Cut your leaves and stand them so the stem touches the towel - the leaf stands against the side of the shoe box. Put on a clear lid which has ventilation holes, and put the box in a bright spot. We keep ours under lights on a stand. Check the box every day and if bad spots appear on the leaves cut them away. If the towelling shows signs of mold, replace it with new. Roots usually appear in 10 days to 2 weeks - sometimes longer. Once roots appear we put the leaves in the prop box, or their own pots - leave the section of towelling the roots have grown into on the roots and plant it, too. It's a really fun way to root leaves, as you can see the roots as they begin, and can watch for rotting and cut it away. This is a good way to do "hard-to-root" rhizomatous leaves.

Billie and her husband, hybridizer Don Asmussen, live at 3938 Lamont, Corpus Christi, TX 78415. The article first appeared in the Southwest Region newsletter of November, 1984.

Getting Results with Wedges

by Houston Knight

Remember the time when our yield from leaf wedges was at best 10% to 20%? With the method now being used, if we don't get 95% yield, something is radically wrong. Reason? We have learned to feed our cuttings, same as if they had roots. How? Foliar feeding. The wedges are spritzed with quick-release fertilizers. Recipe for fertilizer: in a quart of tap water,

put 1/2 teaspoon of urea (20-0-0), 1/8 teaspoon of superphosphate (0-20-0), and 1/8 teaspoon of potassium sulfate (0-0-50). The key word here is quick release. This gives the wedge a full meal of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, and helps it get through the shock of being born (getting cut all to pieces).

Whittier Branch vice-president Houston Knight wrote this in the December, 1988 branch newsletter. The article which follows appeared in May. Houston's address is 13455 Hadley St., Whittier, CA 90601.

Growing in Oasis in a Tray with Cover

The use of oasis for plant propagation is a new, failure-proof method of starting new plants. The way it happens, the growing juices (in a leaf wedge) form a corm about the size of a "BB" down in the oasis hole. This corm will sometimes form 6-9 plant leads, and, in a few weeks, this makes a massive, multi-lead plant. BUT! (Isn't there always a BUT!) A person has to do four things in a row to make it happen (can you do four things in a row?):

1. Use bottom heat (or a warmed greenhouse). For the new plant to JUMP out at you, the soil temperature must be kept at 80 degrees *minimum*. That's day and night!

2. Use some real light - about 100 footcandles - that's about 95%-98% shade cloth, or under a thickly leafed tree. Artificial light will just maintain life, but we're asking plantlets to "jump out" at you!

3. Use 100% humidity. This is obtained easily with the clear plastic dome on a 10-20 tray that holds the oasis.

4. Fertilize! How does one fertilize a plant that has no roots? Watch my lips (pen)!! Foliar feed water dissolved fertilizer onto the green leaf wedge. Just spray it one time a week with something like 15-45-5. Remember, it only takes a "smidgen." Use one ounce in a quart of water and spray only until the leaf is damp.



TIPS FOR BEGONIA BEGINNERS

by Dorothy Patrick

Summering Out

If you have moved your begonias out of doors for the summer, I hope they thrive and add enjoyment to the season!

Just as you protect your skin with sunscreen, give a thought to protecting your begonias from (1) too much sun, and (2) too much heat.

You can take care of the sun problem by pulling plants deeper into the shade of a tree, or the porch, if they show signs of sunburning.

Sunburn can be a problem indoors, too. If begonias are on a windowsill inside your home, remember that the summer sun, shining through glass, can burn if the plant is too close to the window. Also, in the house, try to avoid placing plants directly in front of an air conditioner register, for this will dehydrate them.

Regardless of where they are placed for the summer, rotate your begonias occasionally so that they will grow more symmetrically. And, unless your goal is to set seed, pinch off spent blossoms.

Many begonias are tough, and can survive temperatures that are hotter than desirable. Your summer climate will determine how much of the following is pertinent to you. In a greenhouse, you should already have your shade cloth up, unless you have plenty of shade cast by trees. An evaporative cooler is an excellent investment for your greenhouse if you plan to leave your plants enclosed for the summer and your summers are hot. You can also help, in the hottest part of the day - not by putting water on an already wet plant - but by spraying the outside of the greenhouse, the walkway, and the interior walls with a water hose.

The same suggestion works for begonias out of doors: spray the grass, sidewalks, porch or patio walls, to cool down the entire environment. Another thing I used to do in sizzling hot Dallas was to spray the foliage of all the trees and shrubs in the surrounding area. It helped.

When watering your begonias, try to do it in the cool of the morning, or in late afternoon. That way, there is less chance of any drops of water on the foliage causing burn spots if the sun hits them.

Rhizomatous Leaf Cuttings

Have you ever put down a single rhizomatous leaf, still attached to its stem (petiole), and watched the miracle of it rooting and sending up a baby plant? In the years I have grown begonias this has never ceased to be an awe-inspiring marvel to me. If you have not tried it, here are some tips.

Be sure the rhizomatous begonias you are growing (and I hope it is an easy one!) has been watered recently. Choose a leaf - not an old ragged one, not a brand new one. Cut it from the plant, taking it off where the petiole is growing from the rhizome. If the leaf is over an inch or two across, use a small pair of scissors and cut around the outside of the leaf, leaving a piece about the shape and size of a half dollar still attached to its stem, which can be cut down to a length of 1 to 1 1/2 inches. Your rooting container should be ready, but if it isn't, stand the stem of the cutting in a shallow glass of cool water.

There are many containers you can use, but I am going to recommend a pair of clear plastic (throw-away type) glasses, 3-4 inches tall. Use a heated ice pick, and put 4 or 5 holes in the bottom of one of the

glasses. Into that glass, put a mixture of 1/2 perlite and 1/2 vermiculite. You can slowly pour water into the mix, letting it drain out the puncture holes. Or you can set the glass into a shallow dish of water, letting it absorb water through the holes until the mix is wet. Regardless of how you wet it, let it drain until it is just moist, not sappy. With a pencil you can make a hole in the mix, about as deep as three quarters of the length of the stem of your cutting. Then set the stem into the hole, and gently press the mix around it. Keep the leaf portion above the mix, not in, nor touching it. Put a plant label in the mix, along the outer inside edge of the glass. Even if you don't know the name of the plant, put a tag in it, noting the date you set it, and either where the parent plant was obtained or a general description of the leaf (I preferred plant tags that could be written on in pencil). Now, place the other clear plastic glass upside down on top of the bottom one, and use tape to fasten it in place. You have created a mini-greenhouse, or rooting chamber. Place it in a bright place, out of direct sunlight, A north window works well.

How long the cutting takes to root depends on many things, but it will probably be 2 to 5 weeks, and could be even longer. The advantage of using the glasses I recommend is that you will be able to see the roots as they grow, even before the new little plantlet forms.

After about 1 to 1 1/2 weeks undo the tape and check the dampness of the rooting mix. If it feels very dry, water from the bottom, letting it drain thoroughly before recovering it. After it is well rooted, and has a sturdy little plantlet growing next to the stem of the cutting, you can harden it off by gradually propping open the cover (the top glass). Then leave the cover of for several days.

To pot up, put some of your potting soil in the bottom third of a small pot, and gently lift your rooted cutting out of its rooting glass. Set it tenderly into the waiting pot.

Add more soil, a little at a time, until all the roots are covered, but the new little plant is above the soil level. Now, very gently, trickle water on the top of the soil. This will move the soil down to fill in all around the roots. You will probably need to add a little more soil, and water it in. Transplant shock can be reduced by using 1 drop of Super Thrive in a gallon of water for the final watering.

The original leaf you rooted from can be left on if it is still in good shape. If it doesn't look good, cut it off at soil level. If you see any indication of limpness in the newly transplanted plant, you might need to cover it again until it gets its feet under it (so to speak). Then after a few days you can gradually start removing the cover again.

If this is your first time to root a rhizomatous leaf, I guarantee it will give you a new appreciation of the miraculous bounty of God's nature.

Dorothy Patrick's begonias battle heat, wind, and salt spray along the lower Texas coast. Dorothy's address is P.O. Box 2515, South Padre Island, TX 78597.



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Southwest Region Get-Together: WOW!

"Begonia Trails" led to Addison, Texas, the first weekend in May as Southwest Region members held our 11th annual Get-Together. Southwestern decorations accented a warm welcome to three days of beautiful begonias, informative seminars, a lavish sale, hard work behind the scenes, and, most important, lots of friendly contact with other begonia nuts.

Seminars were varied, instructive, and practical. Cultural topics covered in workshops were shaping and staking, and propagation. Clyde Butler, a pesticide technician, gave suggestions on managing pests and diseases in begonias. Panels of experts handled question-and-answer sessions for beginners and on identification. The identification panel might have been called "stump the experts," for members brought plants they had been unable to identify and panel and audience tried to help - sometimes successfully, sometimes not.

The plant sale opened Saturday morning at 11, and the first hours must have been pandemonium. A room jam-packed with begonias looked bare by mid-afternoon.

The show was beautiful. There were 181 magnificent entries, some from non-members, and the judges must have had a hard time deliberating. Thirty begonia entries received point scores of 90 or above.

Top winner was Don Miller, who took Best of Show with his B. 'Tiny Gem' and Sweepstakes with 19 blue ribbons; his mixed terrarium, which earned 98 points, won as Best Artistic Display.

Merle and Max Gotcher won the Thompson "Showing is Sharing" award with 45 entries, many of which won blue ribbons. Tom Keepin's B. U062 was Best

Species in Show, and John Howell's B. 'Weltonensis' was Best Old Begonia in Show (it was hybridized in 1860). An exciting winner was a new introduction created by Dorothy Caviness and grown by Don Miller, B. 'Kathlynn Calvert', which won as Best Southwest Region hybrid; this lovely cane-like begonia has a swirled leaf.



Best of Show: Don Miller's B. 'Tiny Gem'
Photo by Eleanor Calkins

In the artistic divisions, Charles McGough took top honors in arts and crafts with his watercolor, "Amazon Lady," and Virginia Kettler won the photographic division trophy with her collection of begonia photographs.

At the Saturday night banquet Judging Chair Glennis Crouch announced the show winners, and then was herself cheered as the 1989 winner of the Mae Blanton Service Award.

Sunday, members toured the begonia collection at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden, went on to George Fix' home for lunch and more begonias, and finished at North Haven Gardens nursery, where they looked for any begonias they might have missed.

A highlight was having Astro Begonia Study Group of Houston, TX, receive a charter as an ABS Branch.



ABS President Arlene Davis presents Astro Branch President Tom Keepin with the branch charter. Photo by Eleanor Calkins

One of the nicest things about begonia lovers is their friendliness and cooperation. Those who worked to put on "Begonia Trails" represented all parts of the country. President Arlene Davis, Past President Margaret Lee, Treasurer Eleanor Calkins, and Business Manager/Membership Chair John Ingles came from California. Four workers came from Massachusetts: Convention Advisor Wanda Macnair and husband Richard, and Joy and John Porter, all arriving early and lending helping hands. Eastern Region Director Maxine Zinman flew in from Virginia, and Vice-Director Tim Last from New York, and both worked as judges. Erich Steiniger, president of the Greater Cincinnati Branch, came with wife Miriam, who served as registration chair. Janet Welsh from Pennsylvania, Mary McClelland from Nebraska, and Mary Bucholtz from Florida helped as judges; Alethea and Lori Thomas came from New York, and Nancy Rentfro from Arizona.

With all that out-of-state talent, there was still plenty for the "locals" to do. Chairman Don Miller put together a winning team. Marie Harrell and Ann and George

Fletcher ran a top-notch plant sale, Pam Lee (a new member just a few months ago!) masterminded the Begonia Boutique. Tom Keepin as placement chair produced a lovely show, June Davis ran classification (how did she stay so calm in all that confusion?), Glennis Crouch oversaw the judges, and Kay Tucker served as show chair. Martha and Maurice Curry provided generously in the Hospitality Room (sponsored this year by the Mae Blanton Branch). Anita Ruthenberg did a superb job with pre-registration. Dorothy Patrick lined up terrific seminars. Bruce Boardman conducted a hilarious tour (Hollywood may be calling). George Fix presided over a lively banquet Saturday night, and opened his lovely home and garden for the tour luncheon on Sunday; George was also very generous with cuttings.

And then there was Maurice Amey, who besides the decorations did the program, all the designs for the printed materials, the banquet, and, oh, yes, found time to enter the show and win 18 ribbons (6 blues) and a cultural award.

Even though these people were the ones who accepted the responsibility for the Get-Together committees, it seems unfair not to list everyone who attended, because everyone pitched in. Teamwork is exciting.

There may somewhere have been an old malcontent who didn't enjoy any part of the Get-Together, but he was nowhere in evidence. The rest of us had a grand time, and are looking forward to next year, when our Get-Together goes national, and we host the 1990 ABS Convention in San Antonio. We'll hope to see you there!



SHOW RESULTS AROUND THE COUNTRY

New England Spring Flower Show:

Thompson Award, **Corliss Engle** of Buxton Branch, for *B. versicolor*. Corliss also took Sweepstakes. **Gabriella Clayman** and **Laura Farnsworth** took blue ribbons & trophies, and **Buxton Branch** won an award for their display.



from left to right: Corliss Engle, Evi Loeb, Millie & Ed Thompson. Photo courtesy of Massachusetts Horticultural Society.

Passage (an international flower show): **Corliss Engle** and **Gabriella Clayman** won awards. Corliss' *B. versicolor* again won Best of Show.

New York Flower Show: Knickerbocker Branch member **Tim Last** took Best in Class for his *B. 'Silver Jewell'* and won the Thompson Award, a silver bowl; his Begonias '*Boomer*' and *suffruticosa* took blue ribbons. Other winners included **Jack Golding**, **Sue Hessel**, and **Phil Seiden**.

Mabel Corwin's *B. tomentosa/se-mantacea* took Best In Show at the *Palomar Branch show* in August, 1988. Photo by Phyllis Bates

Metropolitan Miami Flower Show:

Alma Crawford won an Award of Merit for her *B. 'Charles Jaros'* and **Ray Pinter** won the Miami Begonia Society Award for *B. masoniana*. Other Miami Branch members "in the blues" were **Edythe Ropeik**, **Charles Jaros**, and **Ralph Beaudry**.

Barkley Branch Show: **Archie Butler** swept the honors with Best of Show, Sweepstakes, and 6 Division winners in a large show of 237 entries. Extra special was **Diane & Don Horne's** educational exhibit, which the Branch hopes to preserve and re-use.



SPOTLIGHT ON:

Begonia serratipetala

by Mary Weinberg

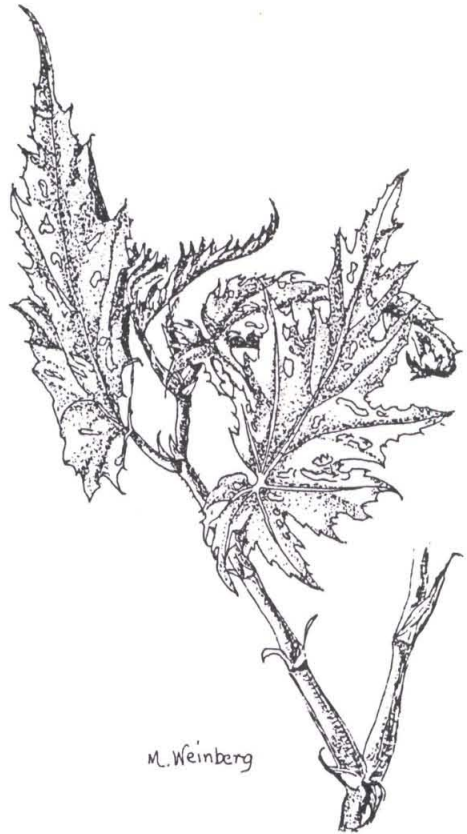
Shrub-like *B. serratipetala* was first collected by Dr. Rudolf Schlechter in 1909 in Northeastern New Guinea. He found it growing in humus in a forest near Danip at an elevation of 250 feet. It is in the section Petermannia and has 44 chromosomes.

The original description of *B. serratipetala* by Dr. Irmscher was in German and Latin. It was later translated by Rudolf Ziesenhenné in the October, 1974 issue of the **Begonian**.

Exotica III describes New Guinea as one of the most mountainous regions in the world, with a nearly impenetrable central chain. The climate, except at high elevations, is warm continuously and has heavy tropical rains.

My first *B. serratipetala* was kept in a small humidity chamber made from a large green plastic plant tray. A wooden frame was placed over the top (15" high) to hold a plastic tent in place. The tray was filled with gravel and charcoal, and water was kept just below the surface of the gravel; this caused a great deal of humidity within the chamber.

B. serratipetala was kept in this environment for about two years, blooming in the second year. Flowers are rose-pink.



The following spring I moved her outside to the summer greenhouse, and for a time she appeared to do well. As summer progressed, she began to lose leaves and droop. I later sold this plant and bought another, which I plan to keep in a humidity chamber along with other plants that will benefit from the high humidity generated.

CULTURE:

Light: *B. serratipetala* likes sun light, but no more than six hours in the morning or late afternoon as midday sun can burn leaves. If grown in a light garden, give it a bright situation.

Temperature and Humidity: This begonia likes warm conditions, provided the humidity is high. Dry air with warm temperatures will turn the leaves brown. If a high humidity cannot be supplied, I suggest terrarium culture.

Growing Medium: A mix containing humusy material such as peat or sphagnum is recommended; also include perlite for good drainage.

Water: Water when the top of the growing medium is dry to the touch. Do not let it become so dry that the leaves wilt, as this will eventually cause it to lose its foliage.

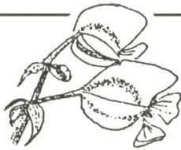
Potting: As this begonia branches readily it makes an excellent basket plant; if you can provide the high humidity required you will certainly produce a show stopper. If potted

in a plastic or clay pot it can be kept quite bushy by regular pinching of stem tips.

Fertilizer: It is recommended that this begonia be fertilized frequently during the growing season to support the plant's growth of numerous branches.

Reprinted with the author's permission from the Chicago Begonian, October, 1984.

Artist/writer/begonia grower Mary Weinberg lives at 1527 W. Highland Ave, Chicago, IL 60660.



QUESTION BOX

Mae Blanton
ABS Horticultural Correspondent

Question: I bought a plant in a hanging basket and have found out that it is *B. convolvulacea*. It is growing well and seems healthy but it has funny, clear white crystals or salt-like things on the back of the leaves. What's wrong with it and what should I do about it? TEXAS

Answer: There is nothing wrong with your plant. This is a natural occurrence with a number of begonias, as well as other species such as impatiens. The crystals form during periods of humidity and may even turn dark as they age, but they are not harmful. Leave them alone.

Question: What are "soil mealy-bugs" and how do you get rid of them? ILLINOIS

Answer: "Soil mealy-bugs" are mealy bugs that have located at the base of a plant and multiply where they are harder to reach. They are very difficult to eradicate. I would rather dispose of the infected plant quickly than risk spreading the infestation. Some growers have used systemics but I will not use them because I like to put my fingers in the growing medium to test it for moisture, and systemics can be absorbed through the skin. Do be very careful if you try them. When using systemics or any insecticide, follow the instructions on the label carefully.

Question: The soil my seedlings are growing in is turning green. What can I do to correct it? GEORGIA

Answer: Do not feed seedlings from the top. The fertilizer reacts with the growing medium, causing algae to grow on the surface under strong light. You might try watering once with a little vinegar in the water, one Tablespoon to a quart of water, or you can water lightly with a fungicide solution. I would try mulching the seedlings with 1/4" fine vermiculite until you can transplant. Sometimes the colored plant food dyes the perlite in the growing mix, but this causes no harm and needs no attention. Unless the green looks like moss growing, or mold, ignore it.

Is something about your begonias' growth puzzling you? Write:

Mae Blanton
118 Wildoak
Lake Dallas, TX 75065

*for advice. Questions of general interest will appear in the **Begonian**.*



CONSERVATION NEWS

RAINFORESTS and Your Tax Money

by Jacques Jangoux

Developing tropical countries, especially Malaysia and Brazil, argue that the rich countries contribute much more to the greenhouse effect by burning fossil fuels than developing ones do by deforestation and burning of the forest. They are probably right, but the two problems are intimately linked, as forests absorb the carbon dioxide produced by the combustion of fossil fuels. *We will boost our credibility among third world countries if we link our fight to preserve the rainforests to the fight to reduce fossil fuel emissions in the developed world.*

It has been suggested in Brazil that a tax be levied by the United Nations on the production of carbon dioxide by all countries. The proceeds would be applied to conservation in the Amazon (it could be extended, of course, to all tropical rainforest regions).

Foreign money (such as World Bank Loans, etc.) should be directed to projects that promote both social progress and conservation, which should not be considered as antagonistic and incompatible. Conservation must not go against the legitimate aspirations for a better life of people who, very often, live at the very limit of survival. Foreign money - it may be your tax money - could go to training and paying forestry police and National Park rangers. Some money should go to education, so that rural people in tropical countries would learn to become productive in a modern sense, such as farming adapted to tropical conditions, forest management, tourism, etc., instead of being inefficient and predatory. Money should also be spent on the study and divulgation of practical solutions

to conservation problems and associate social problems such as agroforestry (agricultural systems that imitate the structure, both spatially and in species diversity, of natural forestry, thus being ecologically balanced; these systems can be described as a mixture of useful species which complement each other), logging methods that allow regeneration of the forest, ecological tourism, etc. *And of course, money should be spent on large scale reforestation, especially with native species, and on recuperation of degraded tropical land.*

Thus some of your tax money may help save rainforests, preserving life on Earth and saving species of plants and animals from extinction, including begonias.

Guest columnist Jacques Jangoux is a Belgian photographer/writer with a background in botany. His address is Rua dos Timbiras 1375, Apto. 1001, Batista Campos, 66.000 Belém, Pará, Brazil.



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SPECIES OF BEGONIA IN CULTIVATION

by W. Scott Hoover
Co-Director, ABS Conservation Department

The question occurred to me several weeks ago: just how many species of *Begonia* are in cultivation and what are the numbers from each continent? After some research through available literature, I was able to answer this question with a reasonable degree of accuracy (see Table).

First, I determined approximately how many species were described from each of three geographical areas where the *Begonia* family is found - Asia, Africa, and the Neotropics. I discovered, predictably, that more species are described from those geographical regions having greater areas of tropical rainforest: Latin America - 5,000,000 square kilometers with about 610 species; Asia - 3,600,000 sq. km. with 539 species; and Africa - 1,500,000 sq. km. with 165 species.

Upon acquiring this information, I proceeded to determine the number of species that had been introduced to cultivation. The results of this research were quite interesting, since I was under the impression that there were roughly equal numbers of species, or equal percentages of species, introduced from each continent. Research proved that this impression was clearly false. Many more species of *Begonia* (about 210) have been introduced from Latin America than from Africa (33) or Asia (64). Of the Latin American described species, about 43% are introduced to cultivation, while from Africa about 20% of described species are in cultivation. Asiatic species are represented by only a meager 12% in cultivation.

Continent	Known Species ¹	Cultivated ²	%
Asia	539	64	12
Africa	165	33	20
L. America	610	210	43

¹Based on: Barkley, F. A. "Begoniaceae: The Genera, Sections and Known Sections of Each." The Buxtonian (1) 4: 1-20. Massachusetts: 1972. Smith, Lyman et al. Begoniaceae. Smithsonian Contributions to Botany 60. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1986. Part II: Annotated Species List, 135-278.

²Based on: Thompson, M. L. and E. J. The Thompson Begonia Guide. 2nd ed., Vol. II. New York: privately printed, 1976. _____ Begonias: The Complete Reference Guide. New York: New York Times Books. 1981. _____ Begonias: 1984 Update. New York: privately printed, 1984.

For the genus as a whole, approximately 25% of the described species of *Begonia* are in cultivation, leaving 75% of the genus still uncollected horticulturally. This means that all of our existing cultivars are based on approximately 1/4 of the species in the genus. This figure is an estimation and based only on Thompson's work (1976, 1981). There are likely quite a number of species in cultivation since 1981, especially in Rudolf Ziesenhenné's collection. It must be remembered too that certain species have been introduced to cultivation, perhaps even listed in the seed

fund, but have been lost in cultivation and never re-introduced.

It is also clear from this research that the disparate horticultural representation of Asiatic species redefines the ABS' principal conservation objectives in terms of field collecting. There are simply many more species remaining to be introduced from Asia than from the other continents. Though the expense is greater than working in Latin America, benefits certainly warrant the additional cost.

At last year's ABS National Convention in Boston, Martin Johnson and I discussed the long-term conservation objectives of the ABS and decided that Southeast Asia was the least collected continental area for *Begonia*. We agreed that the next expeditionary thrust for field collecting should concentrate on this region. These data confirm our intuition.

We are not just speaking of a one-shot deal, but of covering Southeast Asian countries over a period of several years, in the same way I have covered Latin America for the last 10 years. The first trip is planned for western Malaysia and Thailand in January/February 1990. Fifty-four species are described from this area, with only six of these in cultivation. From my past work I believe I can collect about 20 new species for cultivation.

Benefits from Asian expeditions would be tremendous. Adding to the scientific data is one; perhaps an unknown begonia would prove to have medicinal properties - we know that some of the Asian species are used for food. More scientific data could help encourage preservation of the endangered rain forests where our begonia species are most likely to be found, which in turn would preserve other plants, animals, and native ways of life. We might discover new ways begonias grow in the wilds, which would help us grow begonias well at home. Introducing species to cultivation would help preserve the species them-

selves, and give ABS members exciting new finds to grow. Hybridizers would have new combinations made possible. Begonia shows would have new possibilities for show stoppers.

But first we have to find the plants.

Let's muster our financial resources again, and get going.

Donations to the Asian expeditions may be sent to ABS Treasurer Eleanor Calkins at 910 Fern St., Escondido CA 92027. Make checks payable to the American Begonia Society, and specify that the donation is to the Conservation Committee, Asian expeditions. Contributions are tax deductible if you itemize.

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Judges' Corner, continued:

hybridizer's permission to show. The award is given to a plant scoring at least 85 points. The scale for these plants is different from the ordinary scales used for judging: 25 points for culture and grooming, and 75 points for distinctiveness of the new hybrid. A special team of judges judge these divisions.

A branch may decide to have other special awards. These awards and why they are given should be spelled out in the schedule. This information is for the exhibitors and the judges.

JUDGES' CORNER

Michael Ludwig, Judging Department Director

Announcements:

1. A **Judges' School** will be held in San Francisco during the National Convention. It is scheduled for Thursday morning, August 3. If you are interested in attending, please send your name to me at 7007 Mt. Vernon Ave., Lemon Grove CA 92045 and I will contact you.
2. Also scheduled for the Convention is a **Judges' Meeting**, Friday, August 4 at 4 p.m.
3. The booklet **Guidelines for National Conventions and Annual Shows**, by Thelma O'Reilly, can be ordered through the Judging Department. Cost is \$2.50 (or \$2 each for orders of 5 or more).

The Rewards

It is the privilege of a judge to reward the growing efforts of an exhibitor. Using point scales, a plant is judged according to its merits and then compared to others in the same class. When all is added up we judges have the following awards at our finger tips.

Ribbons are the first line of awards. They are normally blue, red, and white for first, second, and third. Blue is awarded for the highest scoring plant in the class, with a 90 point minimum; red is above 80, and white above 75. In competitive judging, only one of each is given in each class if the exhibits are worthy. It is possible for all exhibitors to have scores above 90, but the top scoring plants are given the ribbons. Many shows also offer an honorable mention ribbon. The reason for giving this ribbon should be stated in the show schedule; it is usually given if there is an additional plant that scores very highly. It may also be given to a plant which is extremely well grown for the variety and is seldom seen in shows. For this reason, it is important that the reason for giving the honorable mention ribbon be spelled out.

A Divisional Trophy is given to the best plant in a division. The first place ribbon winners are looked at and the plant with the highest score above a minimum of 93 wins. There are times when a division has blue ribbon winners but none of the winners scored 93 points; in that case, no trophy is awarded.

The ribbons and trophies are awarded by the team of judges judging those classes and divisions. If a branch uses ABS judges and judging practices they may request American Begonia Society Cultural Certificates. *Ten of these certificates are available per show when the following information is sent to the ABS Judges Chairman: name of the judges, schedule for the show, and the point scores of the winning plants along with their names and those of their owners. Cultural Certificates are also awarded by the judges judging that class or division.*

Best of Show and Best of Design are point scored by all judges judging a show, and points are added and then divided by the number of judges to reach an average. The plant with the largest score wins.

Sweepstakes Award is given to the exhibitor with the most blue ribbon plants. If there is a tie, the new course suggests you count division trophies won. If a tie remains, count red ribbons, then white. This allows the important divisional trophies to enter into this decision. Sweepstakes is awarded by the show's judging staff after looking through the entries book. Also awarded after consulting the entries book would be the Showing is Sharing Award, if this is given at the show. It is awarded to the exhibitor with the most exhibits in the show.

At National Conventions the ABS Hybrid of Distinction is awarded in the New Introduction Divisions, amateur and commercial. It is a certificate awarded to the hybridizer of the plant. If the exhibitor did not hybridize the plant, it is proper to ask the

(continued, page 150)

CLAYTON M. KELLY SEED FUND

July-August 1989

Diana H. Gould, Seed Fund Director

The Seed Fund is a service to ABS members only. It is a privilege of your membership.

All packets of species seed are \$1 each, and all packets of hybrid seed are 50c each, and a pamphlet on growing begonias from seed is 25c.

All orders must be accompanied by check or money order payable ONLY in U.S. funds, and made payable to the CLAYTON M. KELLY SEED FUND.

Mailing costs to U.S., Canada, or Mexico are: 1 to 12 packets of seeds, 45 c; 13 to 24 packets of seeds, 60 c; 25 to 36 packets of seeds, \$1.05 .

Foreign mailing costs are: 1 to 12 packets of seeds, \$1.20; 13 to 24 packets of seeds, \$2; 24 to 36 packets of seeds, \$3.

Two sets of planter dishes with free instructions in one mailer costs 62 cents. The cost of mailing 2 sets of planter dishes and 1 to 12 packets of seeds in one mailer is 75 cents, whereas the cost of mailing 2 sets of planter dishes and 13 to 24 packets of seeds in one mailer is 92 cents, and the cost of mailing 2 sets of planter dishes and 25 to 36 packets of seeds in one mailer is \$1.27.

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PLEASE ADD 6 1/2 % SALES TAX
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Ms. Diana H. Gould
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WANT LIST

Seed: Tested, donated seed, especially of species. Write for list of criteria for donations.

Photos: Many begonias are uncommon or rare, and most of us never have the opportunity to see them. A surprising number of begonias do not have pictures in any of our begonia books. The Seed Fund is soliciting photos of plants grown from SF offerings and from donated seed.

Data: germination times, growth habits, etc., of seed you have grown from SF offerings, and of seeds you are donating.

The Seed Fund will offer a special **1989 Convention Listing** of all available seeds at the San Francisco Convention August 3-6. The Convention Listing will be mailed out to all fulfilled July-August orders. All seed from the Convention Listing must be ordered on the Convention Listing sheet. Please print your name and address on this sheet, and affix your check, payable ONLY in U.S.

funds. All Convention orders will be mailed out immediately following the Convention. There will be no seed at the Convention.

The Seed Fund would like to thank **Roberto Brin, Laverne Carpenter, Jackie Davis, Evie McDuff, Lynda Goldsmith, Jan Goodwin, and Kevin Handreck** for their most generous donations to this issue's selections.

NOTES ON THE SEEDS LISTED:

Germination times for this issue's selections have a variable of 6 to 31 days.

The Seed Fund would like to apologize for the lack of information on several selections. Little data is available on rare and uncommon plants. Therefore, member-supplied data, based on personal experiences, accompanied by photos, is so very important to all of us. PLEASE SHARE.

Unless otherwise noted, the seeds have not been offered in the last three years. Synonyms appear in parenthesis.

This issue's cane selections include *B. salicifolia*, an intermediate (over 2 ft.) cane with white flowers in winter (last offered M-J '88) and *B. lubbersii*, a low

growing (under 2 ft.) cane with fragrant intermittent white flowers which has not been offered during the last 3 years; both are from Brazil.

Our thick-stemmed selections are *B. dichotoma*, (*sulcata/Sauria sulcata/Wagneria dichotoma/sucrensis*) from Colombia and Venezuela, and *B. sarcophylla* (*sartori/lobulata/cubana*) from Mexico. Both have large, bare leaves with moderate white flowers during the late winter and early spring.

The trailing-scandent selections are *B. solananthera* (last offered J-F '88) from Brazil and B.U064 from the Philippines. The former has profusely fragrant white flowers with red centers during the winter and spring, while the latter is small-leaved with pale pink flowers.

The shrub selections include *B. subacida* (*acida/ecuadoriensis/brasiliensis*), last offered M-A '86. It is compact with distinctive foliage and moderate white flowers in late winter and early spring; and two small, bare-leaved types, *B. dominicalis* (*suaveolens*), from the Lesser Antilles, with greenish-white flowers and *B. incarnata* (*insignis/martiana/ciliata/aucebifolia/subpeltat/papillosa*) from Mexico, with profusely fragrant rose-pink flowers, last offered M-J '88). *B. sanguinea*, last offered N-D

'87, and B. U029 ('Mystique'), offered M-A '87, are both medium, bare-leaved plants with moderate white flowers in spring. B. U057 has large bare leaves with moderate white flowers in the fall and winter. B. U133 is from Colombia. B. U105 has small green leaves, large clusters of white flowers, and makes a good basket plant.

B. U151 is our only semperflorens selection for this issue. It is from Peru, was previously offered in S-O '86, and resembles B. U008 and *B. subvillosa*.

This issue's rhizomatous selections: *B. pinetorum* (*glandulosa/nigrovenia/tuerckheimii/dayi/hidalgensis*), from Mexico and Guatemala, medium-leaved with profuse pink flowers in late winter; *B. thiemei* (*macdougalli* var. *purpurea/purpurea*) from Mexico, with giant compound leaves with moderate greenish-white flowers, also in late winter; B. U121 from Panama; B. U174 from Trinidad; B. U193, from Panama's rainforests, with large dark green leaves and red reverse with pink flowers, last offered M-J '86.

The "unknown" selections for this issue include B. U147 from Ecuador, B. U163 from Venezuela, and B. U160. I am sorry that I cannot offer any data for these selections.

Our hybrid selections for this issue all come from Australia, and MUST be ordered by their respective numbers.

AUSTRALIAN HYBRIDS

#1. Large spiral rhiz. x self. Margins hairy & heavily fluted levls. green w/ brown markings. Profuse pink flowers.

#2. B. 'Mam' x #1: 'Mam' is possibly an unregistered Australian cultivar with glossy green lvs, heavily marked with brown.

#3. B. 'Riolea' x B. 'Bokit'. 'Riolea' is a *bowerae* hybrid w/ green/brown lvs & eyelash margins, pink flowers.

#4. B. 'Nora Bedson' x B. 'Bokit'

#5. B. 'Bokit' x B. "Warben Bend" (silver frosty appearance over green/grey lvs w/ pink flowers).

#6. B. 'Riolea' x B. 'Bardon Hills' (small star-shaped, green/brown lvs w/ hairy margins, dense foliage).

#7. B. 'Bokit' x B. 'Nora Bedson': reverse of #4.

#8 B. 'Nora Bedson' x B. *carolineifolia*.

#9. Rex cultivar (very large green lvs, smothered in tiny white spots w/ red hairs) x B. 'Bokit'

#10. B. 'Morning Mist' (silver on grey-green lvs, hairy margin) x #1.

#11. #1 x B. *ulmifolia*

#12. spiral x B. 'Universe'.



**CLAYTON M. KELLY
SEED FUND**

species seed
\$1 per packet

- B. dichotoma
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- B. incarnata
- B. lubbersii
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- B. sanguinea
- B. sarcophylla
- B. solananthera
- B. subacida
- B. thiemei
- B. U029
- B. U057
- B. U064
- B. U121
- B. U133
- B. U147
- B. U151
- B. U160
- B. U163
- B. U174
- B. U193
- B. U205

hybrid seed

50 c per packet

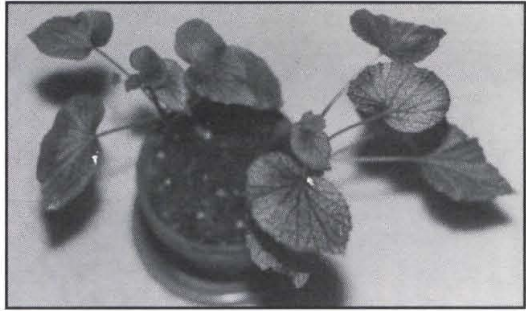
Australian hybrids are numbered consecutively from #1 through #12. Please use correct number when ordering these hybrids.

**ALL SELECTIONS
ARE IN EXTREMELY
LIMITED SUPPLY**

**A Note to Seed
Donors and Growers**

Since no two people will ever agree on absolutely everything, it

Grower Reports:



Alain Delavie says *B. dipetala* growth is very, very slow



Naomi Lynch writes that her *B. fischeri* is a very strong, robust grower which does well in full sun or shade, and is not susceptible to mildew. Blooms are pink, and the color intensifies in strong light.

should come as no surprise that among the ABS membership there are differences of opinion on begonia names.

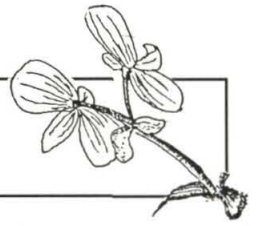
This arises in part because begonias vary considerably even within the same species growing in the same place in their native habitat. Differences within the same species may be quite dramatic in cultivation, where climate and cultural conditions are radically different.

As a practical matter, the best guide we have to the correct names of the begonia species is the Smithsonian Institution Press Begoniaceae. Every ABS Branch was sent a

copy of Begoniaceae when it was published in 1986; please consult it when submitting seed or writing about begonias (MAL members can check with the MAL Director). While the list is not perfect - research continues, and updates will be issued - this publication will be used as the authority for names of the begonia species when they are listed in the Seed Fund. Synonyms will be listed. This is the editor's decision - please don't blame the SF Director if the name you send in with your seed is changed. If you feel a name in Begoniaceae is wrong, please notify the Nomenclature Chair of your concerns.

ROUND ROBIN NOTES

Margaret Coats, Round Robin Director



Some of the Robin chairs report they are not receiving courtesy cards. After you have written your letter and are mailing the Robin on to the next person, please mail a card to your chairperson at the same time. This enables him/her to know where the Robin is at all times. THIS IS MOST IMPORTANT!

How about this neat idea! If you belong to a branch, you might want to take notes. The Pinellas County Branch has been exchanging cuttings with other branches and is looking for more branches that might like the idea of exchanging.

Mary Simon (OH) of one of the rhizomatous Robins, enjoys the begonias with fragrances. One she is enjoying right now is B. 'Rip Van Winkle'. Mary also enjoys the fragrance of hybrid roses when B. 'Ionic' is blooming. A word of caution came from Priscilla Beck (CT), and she admits *she should have known better*: "Don't spray dry begonias." She did, and had lots of leaf drop. (Think we all experience this lapse of memory at one time or another).

An interesting observation made by Chris Giordano (NY) about rhizomatous begonias is that a shallow container is more important than the type of container. The rhizomatous begonias she has in moss-lined wire baskets are beautiful, full plants provided the baskets are not too deep. Since the ones grown in deep baskets never seem to fill out well, she thinks that perhaps the plant's energy is being used to put out roots to fill the basket at the expense of top growth.

In answer to a question as to when she works over her rhizomatous begonias, Mabel Corwin (CSA) says she likes to do them (1) when new growth starts and (2) after bloom. When she has a large plant

that is several years old, she knocks it out of the pot and breaks it apart. All the old rhizomes are discarded and new plants are started with the new, young growth. Mabel thinks this should be done about every third year.

One of the members of a rhizomatous Robin was having problems with mealybugs and asked for help from the other members. Glennis Crouch (TX) told how she handled the problem on two separate occasions. The first time she spotted them was on a pot of semps. She lifted the plant from the pot and put a generous layer of a systemic on the bottom of the pot and replaced the plant. The plant was put in isolation, and after two weeks the mealybugs were gone. The second time she spotted them was on a large B. *masoniana*. Although she would not ordinarily put this plant outside, she did not want it in the greenhouse with her other plants, so outside it went to suffer the hot summer. Soon the mealybugs were gone, but her plant had gone completely dormant. After keeping check on it for more mealybugs, and finding none for several weeks, she put it back into the greenhouse. It is now a nice plant and blooming beautifully.

What constitutes an odd/rare/unusual begonia? This is a question brought up in all three of the robins on this subject. Here is an opinion given by Dan Haseltine (IL) : "A plant that has been around for centuries is new to us or rare because we have never heard of it before." He goes on to say that begonias are odd/rare/unusual to put up with nature and with us human beings. We put them in the most difficult places and expect too much from them and not enough from ourselves.

Mary Bucholtz (FL) explains the art of cutting back canes: leave the center taller than the outside so you have a cone shape.

This will produce a more symmetrical plant and also encourage growth from below the soil to hide canes which have lost lower leaves. Mary also encourages all to take the new judges' course when it is available. She feels it will give a different perspective on presenting a begonia for display, and make one more conscious of the care the begonia should receive. It also will improve one's growing habits, and make one more aware of the importance of cleanliness in the growing area.

With summer vacations coming up, Mary McClelland (NE) tells how she reads her plants for her plant sitter. Perhaps you can put some of her ideas to use. Before leaving, she goes out to the greenhouse and gives each plant a complete examination. Any that appear to be stressed are moved to her spot reserved for extra care plants. On these she leaves notes explaining the care she thinks each plant needs. Some she puts in terrariums under lights, where temperature is controlled. Plants that need more water, like the canes, are grouped as to size and placed with a saucer so they can be watered from the bottom. Written instructions are left as to their care (such as, "check back later to make sure no water is left in the saucers"). The rhizomatous begonias are placed out of the sun, so they won't require as much water, but instructions are left that, if dry, they are to be watered only from the bottom, and to use warm water.

In case you have been unsuccessful at finding adequate containers to use for terrariums, here's what Sydneyanna Kirksey (TX) uses. They are clear plastic salad-to-go containers, about 6 1/2" in diameter and 4 1/2" high. She uses a soldering iron to put four holes in the top for air circulation and four holes in the bottom for drainage and bottom watering. Not only does she grow in these, but propagates in them as well.

One member of a cane Robin was complaining that when she was ready to fertilize her plants she found some of them

very dry and was afraid to fertilize them. Rhodora Buss (IA), chairperson for this very interesting Robin, suggested that she might consider using two watering cans — one with plain water and the other containing fertilizer water. When she comes across a dry plant, put about half of the usual amount of water and then finish with the fertilizer water. Rhodora says it is true the plant doesn't get enough fertilizer this way, but some is better than none. She also cautions that if the plant is dry to the wilting stage, do not use the fertilizer at all.

Frances Hoffman (NY) has found that *Begonias carrieae*, *gehrtii*, and *paulensis* need to be re-propagated every couple of years. Under her growing conditions, the rhizomes grow fast and elongate over the rim of the pot. Sometimes the old end of the rhizomes are bare and have a tendency to dry up, making an ugly specimen. Mabel Corwin (CA) agrees with Frances about *B. carrieae* and thinks it best started over from seed. She says she cuts back the long rhizome and usually it will break near the center of the plant. Although she is not always successful, Mabel has started pieces of the rhizome by leaving the cuttings on the bench in the greenhouse for a couple of weeks, then putting it in the prop box.

Some growers are confused about *B. maculata* var. *wightii* suddenly being called simply *B. maculata*. Bob Hamm (CA) sends the following reason: "The note in the **Begonian** was that on *B. maculata* var *wightii*, the name is actually just *B. maculata*. This is technically true, but the problem you have is while botanically two plants may be the same, if they vary in appearance, growers want to know which form they have. This is the reason for variety names, which are for horticultural use."

Bits and Pieces:

When propagating, Frances Hoffman (NY) always makes it a point to take leaves from a plant only when the plant is growing vigorously. She found out the hard way that

even when a plant looks good in the fall, it is probably going into dormancy and will not root.

Charlotte Kuhnle (OR) has been using a new method of potting up seedlings. Instead of using two inch pots, she has gone to three inch pots with half an inch of perlite on the bottom. She also keeps the soil level somewhat lower. She found seedlings she has potted in this manner have made more rapid growth.

A bit of information Joan Campbell (MA) recently read and passes on: plants seem to take up phosphorus better if they are fertilized at the time of repotting.

Director Margaret Coats can admit you to the fun and educational world of the ABS Round Robins! Write to:

Margaret Coats
11203 Cedar Elm
San Antonio, TX 78230

and let her know what begonia topics you find most interesting.



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AROUND ABS

Notes from our Newsletters

It happened back in January at the Palomar Branch 13th anniversary party, held at a local Chinese restaurant. Speaker Houston Knight chided members who opted for forks instead of chopsticks: "Never miss an opportunity to recycle chopsticks as tools and plant sticks." This man's *always* thinking about his plants!

Did You Know?

Begonias from the Americas and Africa appear to be less closely related to each other than to the begonias of Asia. The question is, "Is Asia the place of origin?" There is no fossil history of begonias. -from the Palomar Planter, editor Ingeborg Foo.

In the Seattle Chatter, Larry Fullner suggested homemade sticky yellow strips which attract plant pests such as aphids, thrips, whiteflies, fungus gnats, and leaf miners.

"They are easy to make, using some bright yellow paint on a small flat surface. The sticky material used to coat the yellow surface can be cooking oil, petroleum oil, mineral oil, thick transmission oil, etc. Just be sure that the sticky stuff doesn't stick to you and yours. Hang high and low."

Names have been omitted to protect anyone from embarrassment, but this actually happened back in February. The program chair had lined up a great panel of speakers, but the member who was to demonstrate making a moss basket suffered a broken wrist. Two of the other panelists came down with flu, and the fourth couldn't come, either. It was the stuff of nightmares! But with a conjuring skill worthy of a magician, the program chair managed, at the last minute, to persuade two other members to give a program - and it was a good one, too.

How do we get publicity for branch activities? If the traditional methods (flyers, press releases) haven't produced outstanding results, the Orange County Branch newsletter has a suggestion: "Try this one, each in your own city. Cable TV has a message board for each city. Get the right form and write a message, and it will go on about 30 seconds every 9-10 minutes - FREE. Or, anyone know a skywriter, to get begonias to the level they deserve? Keep thinking!"

Beyond publicizing a specific event, here are a few more ideas for getting begonias and begonia-growing information before the public. If a magazine features begonias, write and thank them! If a gardening show host gets a question he can't answer about begonias, call and offer advice. If there is a locally produced radio or television program on gardening, offer to appear as a begonia expert. Put your name on the speakers' list at botanic gardens or for garden clubs. Offer to write a column for the local newspaper. Invite friends who like to garden to your branch meeting.

The amount of mis-information about begonias out there is amazing. One Dallas Area Branch member attended a garden-club sponsored seminar on judging begonias, and the out-of-state judge flown in as the expert didn't know a semp from a cane, and had never seen other types. A West Coast member was asked to speak to a garden club on "begonias - you know, tuberose;" the club requested that they be in bloom - in January. These are examples of encounters with otherwise knowledgeable plant people!

Guess who can correct all this confusion in the public mind? ABS members, that's who - and it will take all of us! Think about it, as you work with your "tuberose" and "angel-wings" and "those little pink bedding plants."

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