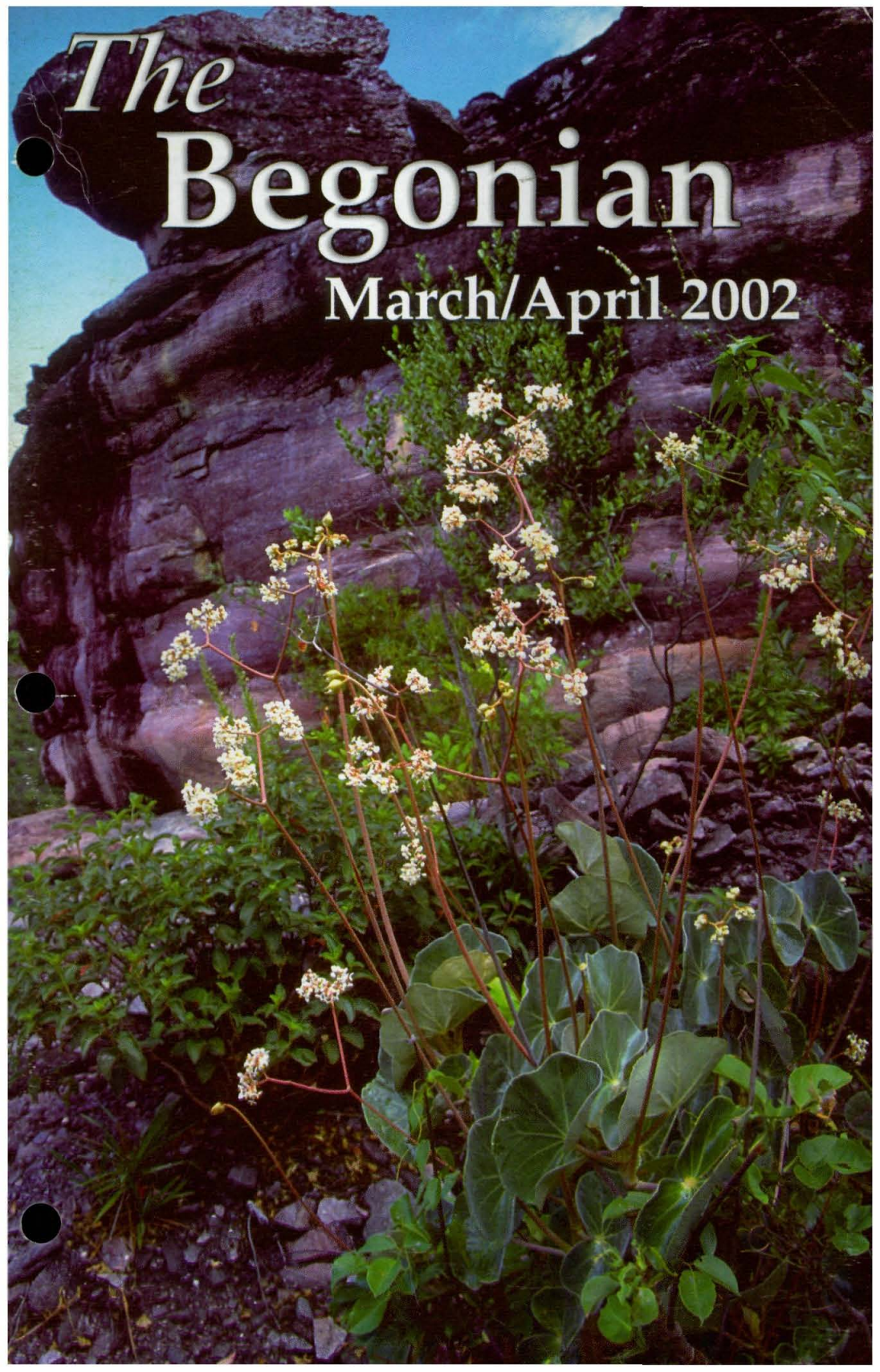


The

Begonian

March/April 2002



The **Begonian**

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Publication of the American Begonia Society

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 that will be mailed to all members of the society.

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

The Begonian is published bimonthly by the American Begonia Society, Inc. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the society, its officers, or the editor. Contents, except where labeled otherwise, may be reprinted without limitation, provided credit is given to "The Begonian, magazine of the American Begonia Society."

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Cover

Front: In past issues we've seen *B. venosa* in cultivation. Here we see it growing in its natural habitat. See the article by **Jacques Jangoux** on page 46.

Back: Don't you love the name as well as the begonia? It's *B. 'Black Coffee'* hybridized by **Bill O'Geary** of Florida. It has also been grown under several other names including *B. 'Green Velvet'*. **Joyce Pridgen** grew and exhibited it in the 2001 Miami Begonia Show where she photographed it for us.

In This Issue

Begonias and Their Culture

In this issue we have articles about a number of specific begonias of all types reflecting the diversity of both begonias and our writer's interests. We also have articles about the general care of our begonias from careful grooming by **Wanda Macnair** to artistic arrangement by **Brad Thompson**. It's all enough to brighten the dreary days of winter as we all wait eagerly for spring.

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Quick!

Check your mailing label.
If it reads
200205 or 200206, your
membership is about to
expire. Please renew! We
don't want to lose you.

President's Message

With a new year many folks make resolutions. If I did it would have to include either moving and getting more space, or disposing of my too many plants for the space I have. But, I don't make resolutions. I do, at the start of each year, as the old Gospel song says, "count your many blessings." So let me share my list with you.

I am grateful for ABS, its members and our wonderful publications topped by the *Begonian*. I've just paged through my collection of them which is now complete from 1943. What a treasure house of information. So very many members now deceased, have continued to live on through what they shared in our magazine. (One definition of a magazine - a place for storage of ammunition. The *Begonian* certainly qualifies!) And along with the magazine I'm grateful for our wonderful and talented editor and those who preceded her over the many years.

Then another list of "blessings." We have a great branch here to be a member of, made so by our local members. I'm grateful for an active Southwest Region organization and the *Begonia Leaflet* newsletter it shares with its members. And not to be forgotten is the *Members at Large Newsletter*, which is always a treat to read when it arrives. The branch newsletters are also a treasure house.

My begonia library is also a blessing. Numbering several dozen publications I'm never at a loss to learn more and new things. I'm always grateful to those who have and/or continue to add to the knowledge of begonias.

At a more personal level I appreciate my own good health, at least it's good most of the time. I enjoy my home and where I live - again most of the time (don't care

much for winter though). Then there is fur and feathers - three cats and three chickens. Yes, I do live in a condo, but the neighbors think my pet chickens are cute and don't complain!

Oh, and yet one more thing, I'm grateful for all of my begonias. They're not show stoppers because I cram so many together. For the most part though they are healthy and growing.

So now on to some notes about ABS. When you read this the winter board meeting in West Palm Beach will be history. Those attending will, I'm certain, have had a memorable, pleasant experience. And, then we have our convention to look forward to in Houston. So I will return to the scene of the crime, for my first total convention experience was in Houston in 1997. I say total because I did briefly visit the Santa Cruz and Sacramento Conventions in years gone by. For me, you need to be there all of the time to get the full value and flavor of all there is to learn and enjoy.

One last note, in the January/February issue of the *Begonian*, Freda mentioned she has some great pictures that need articles. Selfishly, I want to see those pictures. So everybody, consider writing about those plants so we can all see those pictures.

In friendship,
Morris Mueller

Letters to the Editor

Coming: A New Branch!

The update on starting a new branch in Delaware Valley -- the constitution and by-laws will be submitted shortly. Hopefully, we will be able to make an announcement at the March 2002 Philadelphia Flower

Show that our new charter was approved. We have great meeting facilities, Meadowbrot Farm, to welcome new members.

I would appreciate your giving the upcoming Delaware Valley Branch some exposure in the March issue of the *Begonian*.

I started the Delaware Valley Chapter of Hobby Greenhouse ten years ago with a small number of interested gardeners, and now we have over 60 members. It is very gratifying! Once again I have to begin locating new members - this time for the American Begonia Society.

Bernie Wiener
229 Ellis Road
Havertown PA 19083
610-446-2160

Bernie, we all anxiously and eagerly await the birth of a new chapter! Incidentally, Hobby Greenhouse whose exchange ad appears on page 63 has a great quarterly journal that often prints begonia articles thanks to such contributing members as Greg Sytch and Bernie Wiener.

Editor's Notes...

When I started this issue, I think I had one photo and one article on hand... but I didn't despair and sure enough articles began to come in. I think I received five items in one day. In only a couple of cases did I have to wring articles with my flowing tears! And I did have to throw in a couple of articles myself ... *beware* if you don't want to hear more about my plants and growing struggles, get an article in to me. I have no stockpile for coming issues so I must urge you again to look at your plants and if you have one that you haven't seen written up, write an article for me. Or tell us about your growing practices. It

doesn't have to be long; it doesn't have to be a manuscript - some of the best in this issue were handwritten; what is important are your experiences to share with other ABS members. If you have someone in your branch who is really a great grower, interview them for their practices. Or interview the winner of a Division or Show Award at your next branch show. Interviews are amazingly easy to do - just ask a question and scribble down the answer!

Letters to the Editor are also always welcome. Tell me about what you would like to see or what articles you really like. Feedback for either the editor or the writers and photographers is really difficult to come by. Particularly if you are new to the Society, let us know your needs and what you like. These notes are longer than they should be because the Letters column was short!

Dianna Wilkerson says she has received no "Quick Tips" either. Jot those down and mail or email them to her. Her address is on the bottom of page 78.

I know that many of you felt the relief and pleasure I did in seeing the work of our new printer in the last issue. The printer is in Oklahoma City and **Ann Salisbury** and I are now mailing the issues from Tonkawa. **Arlene Ingles** does the labels and mails replacement issues so she is still the one to whom you should address your subscription and/or membership problems.

~FH

Corrections

Page 209, November/December 2001, left column, line 11, the correct name is *B. urticae*.

Page 188, September/October 2001, left column, the correct name is **M. Sosef**. Apologies!

Begonia venosa in the Chapada Diamantina, Bahia, Brazil

Text and Cover Photo by Jacques Jangoux

I went on vacation in July 2001 with my wife and my five and a half year old little girl in the Chapada Diamantina mountain range in western Bahia State in Brazil (My older son, 19, isn't interested in nature. His interests are his computer, the internet, his rock group -- he plays the guitar -- and NBA basketball).

The region, about an hour from Salvador by small plane, owes its name to the fact that it is rich in diamonds; some hand mining is still done, although the use of machines has been prohibited as the region is now a National Park. Chapada means a plateau covered with low vegetation. During a first walk my wife spotted a few sterile plants of a begonia. Later, on a long walk alone, I found a beautiful flowering plant of it growing in full sun in sandy debris among rocks.

I even saw one growing next to a cactus, but it was in an inaccessible place and I didn't have a lens long enough to get a good photograph of it. Actually there seemed to have been 2 species growing together. On the return from a long hike, when I was already tired, I noticed that one plant had both peltate-orbicular and cordate-orbicular leaves, on different stems. I found it strange but, as I was tired, I didn't take a picture.

I collected young plants, not knowing that they were different; now that they are growing, I have plants with each type of leaf, the peltate ones being glabrous, the cordate being stellate-tomentose. Looking in *Begoniaceae* by Lyman B. Smith et al. (Smithsonian Contributions to Botany,

number 60), I found that the peltate form is probably *B. umbraculifera*; the other form shown in the cover photograph is most probably *B. venosa*. So the plant with the two types of leaves [not photographed] was two plants growing together!

My young plants initially grew well, then some had burn spots on their leaves, some died, and the ones that survived stopped growing or are growing very slowly. I don't know what the problem is as the amount of sun they receive is the same as before and where they grow in nature the sun is very strong. Here in Belem I am close to the Equator, though. Maybe someone watered them in full sun? Some are still alive, and I am fighting hard for them not to die.

Now, written a few days later, there is good news. Lately, I have given them less sun and more water, and they seem to have improved. Even in their dry habitat they probably get underground humidity from under the rocks.

For those of you with a computer, here are a couple of URLs on the region: <http://www.hoteldelencois.com/> and <http://www.lentur.com.br/>

Jacques Jangoux has long contributed great photographs of begonias in their natural settings in Brazil to the Begonian. We are fortunate that his professional photographer's eye will not let him pass up begonias! He lives and works in Belem, Brazil. You may contact him by email at jangoux@interconnect.com.br or you may write to him at Rua Dos Caripunas 2360 Apto 1602, 66033-230 Belem, Para, Brasil.

Its Not Just for Show

by Wanda Macnair

Judges are always admonishing exhibitors to groom their plants better. It seems as though the most negative comments made are about damaged leaves or other aspects of grooming which includes clean pots, clean plants, removal of yellowing and damaged leaves, (even trimming the edges of damaged leaves), removal of debris on top of the soil, etc. Really there is no excuse for exhibitors to wait until the last minutes to look over their plants for possibilities for shaping and grooming although some plants may require last-minute touch-ups due to damage in transit.

Most growers and judges know this, but constant attention to shaping and grooming will keep our plants healthier and more attractive for US to enjoy.

Years ago I was admonished not to prune plants in the Barkley Collection that were looking sick and spindly. This was so they could produce seed which they were very slow to do. Later, I was encouraged to follow my inclination to prune and shape. Lo and behold, the pruned plants became more bushy and healthy and were more inclined to provide seed for the seed fund.

The sooner we prune a languishing stem or remove spent leaves or spent blossoms which are not producing seed, the sooner the plant will use its energy for new, healthier growth. A more symmetrical and bushy plant will have the capacity for more bloom to enjoy at home. THEN, we want to try to collect seed from the species to share with the seed fund.

It is this new growth which provides a more beautiful specimen which can be appreciated at home. Of course, growers such as **Joyce Pridgen**, winner of so many

awards, and many others have a schedule to prune and shape plants for a show. I'll bet that anytime anyone visits the Pridgen growing area, they would see lovely plants.

At times when visiting friends, they want me to see their plants and I feel so badly for them because the plants often are out of shape, so this advice is for all plants.

In the past a few growers who are trying to help out by bringing as many plants as possible, have brought in plants which need drastic care before entering them -- even re-potting. I am not one to talk, but these plants should be cared for year-round and would win even more ribbons with more steady care.

If pots are kept clean and debris removed from the top of the soil with even a little fresh soil added, they will afford us much more pleasure at home. Then the last-minute grooming is not such a time-consuming task. If fresh soil is added, it should be watered in. If dry soil is added, it may just float away when the plant is watered.

In the fall and winter, plants tend to grow a little less, but if they are in warm rooms with less light, they tend to become leggy, and the leaf nodes are farther apart. Some experienced growers decide that this is the time to prune drastically. The result may be less watering required, more shapely plants, and more space between plants for air circulation.

The healthiest cuttings taken during these sessions may be propagated to share with your branch or friends. Remember, the best way to get someone else addicted to begonias is to give them a few plants.

The Macnairs never have enough good light in the winter and are required to cut down to a certain degree. That is how we got into terrarium growing in the first place. Begonias requiring more humidity from an enclosed environment also require less light to thrive.

Terrarium plants also need care as well. They may be neglected and not watered for months, but they will not be as attractive without a certain amount of care. Remember that leaves touching the side of the container need to be removed, or the plant needs a new, larger container. When removing these leaves, they should definitely be propagated and shared in some way with other begonia growers.

If you care for your plants and prune and groom them year-round, I assure you

that they will be more pleasurable on a day-to-day basis. Doing so will see to it that those judges will have to make other types of remarks about our plants.

Timely advice for us as the round of 2002 shows is about to begin. Wanda Macnair and her husband Richard are members of Buxton Branch. Wanda writes a column, "A Passion for Plants" for the Lincoln County News in Maine and both are involved with the New England Spring Flower Show on the Amateur Horticulture and Nomenclature Committees. Recently, they were voted to receive a gold medal from the Massachusetts's Horticultural Society for their longtime service for the work on the flower show to be presented on January 23, 2002. Of course, the Macnairs also received ABS' Herbert P. Dyckman Award in 2001. You may write to Wanda at the address shown on page 78.

Call for ABS Awards 2002

by Michael Ludwig

The Houston banquet, June 1st, will be the time and place for the presentation of the American Begonia Society's four prestigious awards. These honors are presented to recognize outstanding service and achievements above the ordinary on a national level. YOU, the members, are responsible to make the nominations. Please sit down right now and write up your nominations and send them to me. YOUR NOMINATION places the name on the ballot that goes out to the committee for voting. The nomination must contain the name of the award, the recipient and reasons that make them or the plant eligible for the award.

There are many worthy members that are possible winners for these awards. Some have become less active but should be honored with one of these awards. If you have nominated someone in the past

and they have not won, consider nominating them again. The committee may only award a single recipient in each award each year. Often it is very difficult to choose a winner among the many high quality nominees.

I must receive your nominations by **April 13, 2002**. Please mail all nominations to

Michael Ludwig,
Awards chairman
6040 Upland St.
San Diego, Ca 92114-1933

Award Criteria:

The **Herbert P. Dyckman Award for Service** is presented to a member who has rendered long-term or very outstanding service for ABS above and beyond the normal duties of a member or officer.

The Eva Kenworthy Gray Award

is given for one of two reasons:

1. contributing something of a spiritual value toward cementing goodwill and harmony among members; and/or
2. contributing original material toward helping the rank and file members further their study of begonias.

The **Alfred D. Robinson Medal of Honor** is for a begonia cultivar that has been released for at least five years and no more than fifteen. This hybrid must be registered with the Nomenclature Department and widely distributed, and the originator of the begonia must be a member of ABS.

The **Rudolf Ziesenhenné Award** is presented to the current or retired editor of the *Begonian* for the following reasons:

1. For the outstanding use of contributions of members and others in the *Begonian* to execute the Aims and Purposes of the American Begonia Society.
- AND
2. For leading and strengthening the membership in their study of Begonias through the excellence of editorship.

These awards may be received only once. The ADR Medal is presented to a cultivar and may be won more than once by a hybridizer

Past recipients of these awards:

Herbert P. Dyckman Award

- | | |
|------|---------------------------|
| 1995 | Ann Salisbury |
| 1996 | Carol Notaras |
| 1998 | Eleanor Calkins |
| 1999 | Gene Salisbury |
| 2000 | Mary Sakamoto |
| 2001 | Richard and Wanda Macnair |

Eva Kenworthy Gray Award

- | | |
|------|------------------------|
| 1995 | Mae Blanton |
| 1996 | Kit Jeans Mounger |
| 1997 | Joan Coulat |
| 1998 | Gene and Ann Salisbury |
| 1999 | Mary Bucholtz |
| 2000 | Freda Holley |
| 2001 | Brad Thompson |

A.D. Robinson Medal

- | | |
|------|------------------------|
| 1995 | B. 'Silvermist' |
| 1996 | B. 'Sweet Diane' |
| 2000 | B. 'Mary Sakamoto' |
| 2001 | B. 'Little Miss Mummy' |

Ziesenhenné Award

- | | |
|------|-------------------------|
| 2001 | Edgar and Phyllis Bates |
|------|-------------------------|

A complete list of past winners may be obtained from me at the above address.

Coming Soon: A Revitalized SOS (Save Our Species) Project

We are very fortunate that **Rekha Morris** has agreed to take on the Save Our Species Project and is already at work to bring members a newsletter.

As you will recall, the Save Our Species project is one in which we as ABS members agree to adopt a species and do our best to assure that it keeps being cultivated both by caring for it ourselves and by reproducing it through propagation and, if possible, by setting and saving its seed. Rehka will have more to say about it in coming issues and in the newsletter. You may contact Dr. Rehka Morris at 318 Woodland Cir., Pendleton, SC 19670 or by email at shivavana@juno.com

New Cultivars

Official International Registration 984-985 Gene Salisbury, Nomenclature Director

Applications to register *Begonia* cultivars may be obtained from Gene Salisbury, P.O. Box 52, Tonkawa, OK 74653. Forms must be typed or printed in ink and accompanied by a \$2 check payable to the American Begonia Society. Clear photos for publication in the *Begonian*, drawings and dried specimens are requested. ABS is the International Registration Authority for Begonia cultivar names. In the listing of cultivar parents below, the female (seed) parent is given first.

Begonia 'Callie Rose'

No. 984 Begonia (B. Unnamed Cultivar [from seed from Howard Siebold] x B. Unnamed Cultivar [from seed from Howard Siebold]) 'Callie Rose'

This Tuberhybrida grows to 15" in height. Its leaves are forest green with light green veins and are up to 9 1/2" x 5". They are scalloped and sparsely hairy with 7 main veins. Petioles are 3 1/2" in length with hairs and are light green in color.

Stipules are 1/4" in length by 1/4" and are also light green in color. Hairs are prominent on petiole and underside of veins.

Flower tepals are light pink, but darker on the undersides. Ovaries are light green. Male flowers are 5" with about 45 petals. Females are 3 3/4" with 5 tepals. The many clusters consist of 1 male and 2 female flowers on a flower peduncle of up to 9". Blooms are from midseason to frost. Flowers are light pink rose form with creamy white centers.





Opposite is B. 'Callie Rose' and above left is the flower of B. 'Callie Rose'. Right above are the flowers of B. 'Beauregard' and the plant of B. 'Beauregard' is to the right.



This vigorous plant produces flowers that are slightly fragrant. Its long slender peduncles make the plant especially suitable for growing as a pendula. This plant originated from two seedlings that germinated from seed supplied by **Howard Siebold** and has been propagated exclusively by tissue culture.

It was developed by **R.M. Hatcher**, 4 Sheahan Crescent, Ottawa, ON Canada K24H 8M2, in 1996 and first bloomed in 1997. It has been produced over 4 years by tissue culture. It has been tested by **Lindy Ranger** and **Line Bellemere** of Rideau Hall Greenhouse, 1 Sussex Dr., Ottawa, ON Kia OA1. Registered November 27, 2001.

Begonia 'Beauregard'

No. 985 *Begonia* (*B.* 'Helene Jaros' X *B. bowerae* var. *roseiflora*) 'Beauregard'

This hybrid has a creeping rhizome and is small in size. Its leaves are small, round with a cordate base, cleft, toothed margin, ciliate and the surface is smooth with 6 main veins. Petioles are 8 inches, red, with white sparse hairs. Stipules are 0.5 inches long and 0.5 inches wide, white to reddish with a few white hairs.

Flower tepals are round and pinkish white with a red spot in the center. The female ovary is red. The male flower is 0.7 inches in diameter and the female 0.8 inches. Both male and female flowers have 2 tepals. There are many flower clusters of about 3 inches in diameter. The flower peduncle is 10 inches. It blooms from February to the end of June.

This plant is easy to grow and bloom and is recommended for beginners. The black leaves are numerous, covering the soil and the rhizome with a clear point at the insertion of the petiole. The cleft incisions at the margin turn lightly on a side, giving a screwed appearance. The bloom is particularly unique. The ovary is a shin-

ing red and the stamens golden yellow. It is a colorful begonia.

Mrs. Dominique Permingeat, Place du Temple 26270, Lorient, France, developed this plant in 1994. It first bloomed in 1995 and was first distributed in 2001. It has been recommended for registration by **Patrick Rose**, Conservatoire du Begonia, 1700 Rochefort, France and by **Cheryl Lenert**, 13014 Chaville, Cypress, TX 77429, USA. It is available from Le Jardin de Rochevieuille, L'UBAC 07360 Saint Fortunat France. It was registered on November 27, 2001.

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Begonias on the Internet

by Sandy Boyd

In a recent issue of the Begonian I wrote about using the internet to learn more about every aspect of begonias. The begonias@yahoo.com has almost 100 members who trade information via email on hybridizing, plant identification, watering, soil mixes, and pests, to name a few. One of the primary reasons this email group is so successful is because many of the top growers and hybridizers are active participants and share their extensive knowledge with the rest of us. Pictures of begonias are one of my favorite aspects of the emails that come along. If you haven't joined the group yet, the information will be at the end of this article.

To go to the Yahoo web site directly enter <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Begonia> where you can read every email ever written by the members and view every photo that has been posted. Click on messages in the left hand column. The most recent messages will appear. If there is a symbol of a paperclip in bold at the end of the subject, a photo is attached. Click on the paperclip and the message will appear. At the end of the message is an attachment box. Click on download and in seconds a beautiful begonia photo will appear. Some spectacular ones have been sent by **Tim Anderson**, **Paul Tsamtsis**, and **Mike Flaherty**. The log of email messages is listed by the month and year, and as you will note, the number of email messages has increased dramatically over the years. Now I am going to list a few message numbers that you can access by entering the number in the box near the bottom of the screen. These numbers will access messages with some spectacular photos of begonias that I'm sure you will enjoy. I download all the pictures of the photos to an on-line download file that's avail-

able through my service provider America On Line. It doesn't fill my harddrive and I have access to them whenever I am on line. Check and see if your provider has the same service.

Tim Anderson said recently that he has learned more about begonia growing through the internet group than from all the books he had read. I think that says a lot about the type of information you will glean.

The begonia group on Yahoo is not the only web site you will want to visit. A spectacular one is called the World of Begonias. It is a map of the world with all the countries in the world where begonias are found. It is very easy to get around in the site. You can click on a country and find beautiful photos of begonias with details on where each species was found. Check this one out. The web site address is <http://wwbrg.michel.com//au> and one other web site you will enjoy is hosted by **Brad Thompson**. It has several very informative articles on begonia cultivation plus a listing and description of the begonias he has hybridized. It is not a commercial site. The web address for Brad's Begonia World is <http://members.aol.com/Btbegonias/index.html>

These addresses may be cumbersome but you can book mark them for future use.

Why don't you join the group? You can be a "lurker" and just absorb knowledge and view pictures. Or you can be an active participant or just contribute or comment on an occasional basis. However you want to do it, you will learn more information about begonias than you every thought possible.

To join send an email to begonias@yahoo.com and in the subject line type in subscribe. That's all you have to do. If you have any problems subscribing, please just email me at samb4mail@aol.com.

Arranging Your Plants Artistically

by Brad Thompson

There are two main reasons for artistically arranging your plants in your growing space. One is the obvious, to make the arrangement pleasing to the eye. The other is to make the best use of your available space. Using artistic principles can accomplish both.

Having a limited growing area, I have to use what I have to the fullest. Of course, I know none of us ever has enough space. The principles I keep in mind are layering and the use of organic materials. While a flat bench full of plants can be pretty, it isn't the best use of the space.

Layering is simply having plants at various levels instead of on a flat plane. Even plants on benches and in beds can be layered. Layering, besides having a more natural pleasing look, allows you to fit more plants into the space. Placing down-turned pots randomly along a shelf to set plants on is one way of layering. You can fit nearly twice as many plants on a shelf this way than if they're all sitting flat next to each other. You should also have plants of varying heights. Plants along the back of a bench can be set on higher pots, blocks, or stumps. The total picture should be a stair stepping format with things lower in front and higher in back. Since this in itself is not random enough to look natural, add variety by randomly having some higher than the other plants on their level. To achieve the stair stepping look in my yard, most of my shelves are planks across cement blocks.

Also, make use of the wall behind your plants. This is valuable space. You can use wall pockets, brackets for holding pots, begonias mounted on boards covered with sphagnum moss, etc. All of these will add interest to the wall. A blank wall

usually detracts from the looks of the arrangement. Make sure to hang things on the wall at random levels to keep with the natural look. Shade house posts, tree trunks, and other uprights structured in your yard should also be taken advantage of. Attaching plants and pots to these will do nothing but enhance them. I make many of my wall pockets, brackets, and other accessories myself so they fit exactly my requirements. However you can easily find pre-made items that will work.

Very tall plants can even be set behind the bench with something under them to lift them to the correct height. Behind many of my shelves I use tall canes trained on trellises up against the wall as a backdrop. I also make use of begonias trained as standards in amongst shorter plants for accents. On the topic of begonias on boards, there are many begonias that will grow that way. There are some begonias that are epiphytic or semi-epiphytic in nature that work fine. Also, most rhizomatous begonias will grow fine that way. I have a *B. lyman-smithii* that has been growing on a sphagnum moss covered board for years. Simply cover a board with chicken wire, line with some moss, stick in a little potting mix and plant your begonias in it.

For attaching pots to walls and posts, you can fashion an easy pot holder from stiff wire. Gauge the length by wrapping around the pot size you're interested in with some extra. Take pliers and form the ends of the wire into loops then use nails or screws to fasten to the post or wall. I usually attach one side, then set the pot in to make sure I fasten the other side correctly.

They also now sell plastic bags that are about a foot and a half long for use as

wall pockets. They have handles at the top for hanging and openings in the sides for sticking plants into. If you fill all the holes and top with begonias, after they've grown out they completely hide the bag. I fill them with regular mix and just stick rhizome or cane cuttings into all the openings. They usually root and grow fine that way.

Don't forget the air space above your plants. This is valuable space for hanging baskets. If you don't have something to hang them from, run metal bars across the area suspended from the closest available beam or tree branch. I use cheap 3/4 inch electrical conduit. This works fine for plastic hanging baskets but heavier baskets may need a stronger support. Also, as with the other arrangements, don't hang all your baskets at the same level. Using extension wires, you can put the baskets at all levels from waist high to eye level or higher. You can fit at least twice as many baskets in an area this way plus again, they look more natural at varied levels.

You can make your own extension wires by using heavy gauge wire and putting a hook on both ends with pliers. Or you can also buy them ready-made. You can also use chain. To make your plants able to turn you can also use a swivel on the extension. You can find a type of swivel in the fishing department of your local department store.

Natural materials such as bricks, wood, rocks, stumps, branches, clay pots, or even old weathered wooden tables will enhance your plants. Stumps, blocks, and overturned pots can be used in amongst plants sitting on the ground to set pots on. Branches and bricks can be used along the front edges of plants sitting on the ground to give them the appearance of being in beds. Interesting stumps can be used as focal points of interest. Redwood bark or pebbles under plants on the ground will also enhance their natural look.

If you're growing begonias in beds, you can achieve the layered multilevel look also. It's fairly easy to make raised or multilevel beds using bricks or wood. I even make or use small tables and set them in the beds for added effect. I'm very big on thrift stores where you can buy old weathered furniture items. Since they're inexpensive, it doesn't matter that the elements will eventually destroy them outside. I even use chairs quite frequently, setting them in corners or special locations with begonias on them.

Another aspect to consider is lines. Nature doesn't have any straight lines. Anything you can do to soften the lines formed by benches and posts, etc. will only make things more natural in appearance. Round groupings and beds that curve will give a more natural look. The way my yard is arranged there are no straight lines you can look down and see everything. Even in my small space you have to go around corners to see everything.

Layering doesn't necessarily involve a total revamp of what you have now. Any current bench or growing area can be enhanced relatively quickly. I've rearranged collections at many people's houses in a couple hours for a totally new look, using just what they had already. If you have benches, make use of the space under, above, behind, and in front of them. There are actually many begonias that prefer growing under the benches.

Although it's impossible to say everything in an article, I hope I've given you ideas on how to enhance and make the best use of your growing area. As anyone who's visited my yard can attest, I make full use of every space without it looking crowded or cluttered using the principles I've outlined.

Talented Brad writes from 2436 W. Lomita Bl. #2. Lomita CA 90717 or email him at Btbeginias@aol.com.

Begonia U303

by Johanna Zinn

At the 1993 Convention in Miami, **Tamsin Boardman** gave a leaf of a plant labeled *B. U303* to **Barbara Nunes**. Barbara gave it to me for propagation. The only information available about the plant was that **Scott Hoover** collected it in Malaysia. Since then, I have talked to Scott at a convention, but, without his collection notes, he could only remember that it grew in a soil consisting of volcanic dust and humus. When I saw Freda's request for information about *B. U303* in the November/December 2001 *Begonian*, I decided to pass along what information I have obtained from growing it for several years.

B. U303 has a creeping habit. The stem is 0.3 cm. to 0.5 cm. in diameter. Older stems are light green, sometimes flushed light cranberry between the nodes with short fine hairs and with very small white pustular areas scattered along the length

of the stem. Newer growth is cranberry in color with longer hairs. Recently the stems, after creeping over and rooting in the me-



Above is **Mary Bucholtz**' photo showing a flower and below is **Johanna Zinn**'s photo of her terrarium grown *B. U303*. Opposite, is **Joy Porter**'s delightful drawing of this begonia.





dium for 2 cm. to 6 cm., have started growing upwards. This upward growth is new for my plants, but may be occurring because of crowding in the terrarium and the use of overhead lighting. The stipules are very persistent - even in the humidity of the terrarium. They are cranberry in color, drying to brown. The stipules are roughly triangular in shape with the average size measuring .6 cm. x .4 cm. Each stipule has a single or double bristle at the tip.

Petioles are variable in length. Most mature petioles are 6.5 cm. to 17 cm. There is a groove that runs the length of the petiole on the side that corresponds with the upper side of the leaf. This groove appears to align with the center vein at the point where the petiole attaches to the leaf blade. On some petioles there are two shallow grooves, one on each side of and running parallel to the deeper center groove. The petioles are covered with sparse fine white hairs that become longer and coarser at the leaf base. The petioles are light cranberry in color. Mature leaf blades are roughly shaped like an elongated triangle, 10 cm. to 12 cm. long, and 4.5 cm. to 5 cm. wide at the base. The front of the leaf blade is medium green with an olive green undertone. The larger veins are cranberry in color and raised; the smaller veins are green and even with the surface or slightly depressed. There is a slight puckering of the leaf between the veins. On the leaf surface there are scattered sparse very short fine beige hairs over the leaf surface with occasional short (.1 cm. or less) coarse white hairs. The backs of the leaves are light cranberry to medium green with raised cranberry veins covered with a moderate amount of short white coarse hairs. Leaf bases are cordate or unevenly cordate; leaf apices are generally acute, but occasionally acuminate. The leaf edge is serrulate.

Unfortunately, my plant is not flowering so I cannot describe the blooms.

Blooms on my plant have been sparse and pink, with male and female blooms appearing at the same time. The plant has not bloomed every year nor does it appear to have a particular season for blooming. For those of us who grow *B. U303* in Virginia, it must be grown in a terrarium. One small plant survived on our kitchen windowsill for a few weeks, so perhaps it could grow without a terrarium in a humid greenhouse or climate. I grow it under regular florescent lights (one cool white, one warm white) on a stand in our basement, or in a north-facing window. The potting medium is cut long fibered sphagnum moss over horticultural charcoal, over perlite. I occasionally fertilize using one-eighth strength fertilizer in warm water misted over the foliage and medium. For the past four years it has filled a shallow 14" terrarium. Several years ago, one of our branch members brought in a *B. U303* grown in a terrarium in a light soil mix and fed frequently. The leaves were one third larger, darker, and thicker. I have moved my terrarium to a light stand with more light and will fertilize it more regularly to try to encourage it to bloom.

If any of you are growing *B. U303*, please send any information you have about it to **Thelma O'Reilly**. If anyone is interested in growing this plant, please look for it on the sale tables in Houston this May.

Johanna Zinn has the knack for growing beautiful terrarium plants that win show ribbons. You may write her at 4407 Jensen Place, Fairfax, VA 22032. Thelma O'Reilly adds that U303 was collected by Scott Hoover at 2500' on the road to Frazier Hill in Selangor Province in Malaysia on an embankment above a stream.

Houston Awaits You!

by Cheryl Lenert

Many of our plans for the convention have been finalized. We in Houston eagerly await YOUR arrival!

Flying in: It is easiest to fly into Hobby Airport from which there will be a hotel courtesy limo. Flying into Bush International Airport will require a shuttle or taxi ride. There is an Enterprise rental car office in the hotel - this might be an option for groups if they can drop the car off at the hotel.

Hotel: Our hotel is the HILTON Houston Hobby Airport 1-800-HILTONS or www.hilton.com. The hotel special ABS convention rate is \$69. They will extend that rate from May 26 until June 9. This is a great opportunity for members to plan an extended vacation. It is a very nice hotel with all the amenities in which we have not had a convention before.

What to do: If anyone is interested in things to do besides begonias, they can call 1-800-8888-TEX (ext. 2193) or www.TravelTex.com for a wonderful travel guide for all of Texas. They will send this really nice book to anywhere in the world. Remember there is a rental car office in the hotel.

Tours

Wednesday: The tour is to several very large (Texas-sized) antique malls. They will be bringing out all the botanical related items they can find!

Thursday: We will tour homes and begonias.

Friday: Back by popular demand is **Lulu Leonard's** backyard for begonias and barbecues. Last convention in Houston, Lulu's was voted the favorite garden on tour. Maybe there will be a few begonias for sale there. Judges and clerks will go too.

Saturday: Looking like a really fun day of programs - more on that later.

Sunday: We will all go to Mercer Botanical Gardens and then on to **Tom Keepin's** for a unique garden experience and lunch. There will be a stop by Another Place in Time which is a charming specialty nursery and gift experience.

Monday: Spend the day at Moody Gardens for the Rainforest, IMAX, and the amazing new Aquarium.

And

Of course we are actively seeking plant sale material - especially new and/or unusual plants, Boutique items, helping hands, and donations of any kind!

I especially want to mention that we will make special arrangements with the plant inspection department here in Houston for anyone who will either bring or send begonias from out of the country. They only need to contact me at lenert@flash.net or by mail: 13014 Chavile Drive, Cypress, TX 77429 for instructions. We want to make a special display of foreign begonias that have not been seen here before.

Packets will go out at the end of this month. Come see us!



B. 'Nora Hansen'

by Mildred Swyka

I guess this lovely cane is considered old. It is a 1959 hybrid of **Belva Kusler**.

A very reliable cane this, leaves cleft, dark green with faint dots. For me it goes about 30" tall - not a real heavy bloomer, but it does bloom - a nice pink bloom. This one is too tall for planting in one of my begonia bowls.

I do grow some of the larger begonias in pots. *B.* 'Nora Hansen' is best grown out of direct sun. Some of the cane-like such as *B.* 'Barbara Ann' need strong sunlight to bloom while others such as *B.* 'Sophie Cecile' and *B.* 'Cracklin' Rosie', I cannot get to bloom even in strong light.

I have heard of begonia growers who grow *B.* 'Sophie Cecile', the sister plant of *B.* 'Nora Hansen', in the ground where it

blooms great. I am content to grow both of these for their beautiful leaves.

Belva Kusler really left us a great legacy of easy to grow canes. For me, B. 'Nora Hansen' would grow as tall as I would let it reaching six foot with ease. B. 'Nora Hansen' and B. 'Esther Albertine' resulted from a cross of B. aconitifolia (syn. B. sceptrum) x B. 'Lenore Olivier' where the latter was the pollen parent. B. 'Sophie Cecile' on the other hand resulted from a reverse cross of these two with B. 'Lenore Olivier' being the female parent. Mildred Swyka is also a hybridizer with several beauties to her credit. She grows her beautiful begonias at 1147 Bethel Church Rd., Middletown, DE 19709.

Crossing the Cane-like for Bigger Leaves ...

As many of you know, this editor loves plants with big dark leaves. It is natural then that I have made crosses that would give me canes with big leaves. Mildred's article opposite reminds me that of all the crosses, the largest leaves have resulted from *B. 'Nora Hansen'* x *B. platanifolia*.

Below you see one resulting cultivar with giant leaves - about 14" long by 12" in width and with heavy mass. Compare them to the leaves of *B. 'Sophie Cecile'*, not exactly small leaves, which grow to the right of them in the photo. If only crosses always gave what we want! Unfortunately, this cross produced plants tending to have few stems that are decidedly top heavy with very long internodes. They grow quickly to great heights. The one in the photo is about 7' tall. They are slow to bloom as are both parents. These giants then will serve primarily for further crosses -- if they prove fertile -- to try to keep the big leaves and lose these disadvantageous traits.

The plants are further reminders that genetics in hybridizing works, with the traits we see in parents inevitably showing up in the offspring. Sometimes this makes achieving the desired results a slow, many-generation process.

~FH



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Pronunciation of Begoniaceae
Names for the *Begonian* 69:
March/April, 2001
by Jack Golding

Begonia

acetosa	ay-se-TOH-suh
acida	ASS-i-duh
acutifolia	uh-kyew-ti-FOH-li-uh
albo-picta	AL-bo-PIK-tuh
ampla	AMP-luh
angulata	ang-yew-LAY-tuh
bowerae	BOW-er-ee, BOW-er- eye

var. roseiflora	ross-i-FLOH-ruh
corallina	kor-ral-LEYE-nuh
crassicaulis	kras-si-KAW-lis
crispula	krisp-YEW-luh
dregei	DREG-e-eye
edmundoi	ed-mun-DOH-eye
gehrtii	GEHRT-i-eye
gracilis	GRAY-sil-is
herbacea	her-BAY-se-uh
luxurians	lux-YEWY-i-ans
lyman-smithii	lyman-SMITH-i-eye
sericoneura	ser-i-kon-OO-ruh
umbraculifera	um-bra-ku--LIF-er-uh
venosa	ven-OH-suh

Match the Begonias

Column 1

U009
U021
U039
U095
U115
U178
U179
U187

Column 2

B. multinerva
B. roezlii
B. oxysperma
B. thelmae
B. manicata
B. heracleifolia
B. crassicaulis
B. novogranatae

Can't do it? Then, maybe you need a copy of the new publication: *American Begonia Society's Unidentified Species Listing* compiled by Freda Holley. This new listing contains all the published U Number listings from past *Begonians* plus a number of others. Of course, most of the U Numbers have not been identified, but some have, as illustrated by the listing above. Some listings are still not available, but space is provided to add information as it is published.

It comes in two editions: 1. In pamphlet form, 7 x 8 1/2", handy for carrying around is **\$6. plus \$1.50** for postage/handling.
 2. Notebook ready [hole punched, notebook not included] 8 1/2 x 11", is **\$10. plus \$2.50** postage/ handling.

The entire price other than the postage/handling goes to a new ABS fund to be announced next issue. Order from Ann Salisbury, P.O. Box 452, Tonkawa, OK 74653, Ph: 580-628-5230 or Email at geneann@cablone.net.

Begonia 'Paul Hernandez'

by Morris Mueller

This plant was hybridized by **Patrick Worley** in 1981 using *B. luxurians* x *gehrtii*. He introduced it in 1985. It takes after its "mama" in that it is a shrub, but like "papa" its leaves are pustulated. Unlike either parent, the leaves are much like the various other hybrids having *B. luxurians* in their parentage (*B. 'Lady Clare'*, *'Mrs. Fred T. Scripps'*, and "Lee's, Stewart's and Rudy's Luxurians").

B. 'Paul Hernandez' is not a plant for those with limited space on a window-sill. It, like *B. luxurians*, can get very, very big if grown where it likes it. There was a plant at Antonelli Brothers that was at least eight feet tall and equally wide. For me it is an easy, if somewhat slow grower in a pot. This year it is staying outside for the winter, and so far (December) is showing no signs of mildew. While protected, it also is showing some new

growth. Like all begonias, mealybugs like it.

It is easy to start from stem cuttings, but I've never been able to successfully get a plant from a leaf, a characteristic it shares with "papa" *B. gehrtii*. Leaves root, but no plant forms. I've never tried parts of leaves, only whole leaves.

While my plant has never bloomed, it has large clusters of small white flowers. Since it is a hybrid, the only way to propagate it is vegetatively.

To produce a full plant, it probably should be pinched. However, I cut it back in the spring to propagate, and this also forces new growth from below the soil.

In general this is an easy plant to grow with no special requirements. Given ample light the leaves take on a red color, less light and the leaves stay a light olive green.

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If you have space this is a good plant and one of my favorites.

Morris Mueller takes time out from his begonias (and cats and chickens!) and duties as president to share with us. His address is on page 79.

Below is a photo of B. 'Paul Hernandez' exhibited by Mary Sakamoto in the show in Los Angeles in 1999. To the top right is a giant B. 'Paul Hernandez' seen in Elda Regimbal's garden, also in 1999.



B. 'Virginia Jens'

Johanna Kitson sends us this photo of *B.* 'Virginia Jens' in front of Virginia Jens herself!

I believe the plant must be a sturdy one because I have received several photos of it in various shows around the country. It is one of **Paul Lowe's** last hybrids, *B. crassicaulis* x *B. sericoneura*.

Of course, Virginia Jens herself is well known to all of us from her articles and photos in the *Begonian* as well as the great conventions she chairs. You may remember how she filled the office she works in with terrariums. She is very active in the Palm Beaches Begonia Society in Florida.

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Thank you to the following donors for their seed donations. **Yoshiko Azuma, Eleanor Calkins, Jackie Davis, Beatrice Huckreide, Marge Lee, Midori Nobsawa, Thelma O'Reilly, and Brad Thompson.**

Seed List
March-April 2002

- MA02-01:** *B. acetosa*
- MA02-02:** *B. acida*
- MA02-03:** *B. acutifolia* (\$2 per pack)
- MA02-04:** *B. albo-picta*
- MA02-05:** *B. ampla* (\$2 per pack)
- MA02-06:** *B. angulata*
- MA02-07:** *B. crispula* (\$2 per pack)
- MA02-08:** *B. edmundoi*
- MA02-09:** *B. herbacea*
- MA02-10:** *B. gracilis* (seeds)

MA02-11: *B. gracilis* (bulbils)

DESCRIPTIONS

MA02-01: *B. acetosa* Vellozo (sect. *Pritzelia*) Brazil. A compact plant with numerous branching, horizontal, thick rhizomes. Leaf blades thick, fleshy, ovate, not peltate, palmately veined and covered with fine white hairs, underside dark red. Green petioles to a foot with fine, shaggy red hairs. White flowers well above the leaves. Plant grows best in warm, humid atmosphere in medium light. Leaves are deep coppery olive green above and deep wine-red underneath. White flowers on long peduncles.

MA02-02: *B. acida* Vellozo (sect. *Pritzelia*) Brazil. Rhizomatous, compact plant. Leaves are a light green, round, entire and petioles are green with white hairs. White flowers in late spring carried just above the foliage. Compact. (There were also plants of *B. acida* Martius ex de Candolle, a synonym for *B. subacida* Irmscher, grown some years ago and it is not possible to tell with absolute certainty the identity of the seed here as they came in.)

MA02-03: *B. acutifolia* Jacquin (sect. *Begonia*) Cuba, Jamaica. Short, bushy succulent stems are reddish brown with green streaks; long pointed, crinkled, toothed, glossy green leaves are sparsely hairy above, hairy on veins below. White flowers, pubescent ovary with one long and two short wings, in summer.

MA02-04: *B. albo-picta* W. Bull (sect. *Gaertdia*) Brazil. Shrubby, branched stems. Two inch elliptic-lanceolate leaves glossy green with silvery white spots, short petioled. Small greenish-white flowers in summer.

MA02-05: *B. ampla* J.D. Hooker (sect. *Squamibegonia*) Tropical Africa. (See article by Thompson in *The Begonian* Mar-Apr 1982:34-5, 39) Woody stems, 1-2 ft. long; oblique medium green leaves with deep red along the mid-rib, palmate venation; white flowers with rose colored markings on short peduncles in fall and winter. The light orange berry-like fruit is enclosed in bracts and is about 2 inches long.

MA02-06: *B. angulata* Vellozo (sect. *Pritzelia*) Brazil. No description available.

MA02-07: *B. crispula* Brade (sect. *Pritzelia*) Brazil. Rhizomatous compact plant with short-stalked, deeply crisped, shiny green, round leaves; white flowers; requires warm, humid conditions. Moisture should be kept off the leaves which rot easily when wet.



B. crispula from the cover of the *Begonian*, January 1958. It was accompanied by a cover story by Teuscher of the Montreal Botanic Gardens.

MA02-08: *B. edmundoi* Brade (sect. *Gaertdia*) Brazil. Shrubby to 2 feet, dark erect thin brittle stems; dark green upper and red under leaves, dentate margins; large flowers white with pink margins.

MA02-09: *B. herbacea* Vellozo (sect. *Trachelocarpus*) Brazil. Shaggy rhizome; leaves 4"-6" long, symmetrically lanceolate, attenuate, serrate, light green, sometimes with cystoliths; short petioles; flowers white to pink, male flowers in clusters on peduncles shorter than the foliage, female flowers solitary, sessile at base of leaves.

MA02-10: & **MA02-11:** *B. gracilis* Kunth (sect. *Quadriperigonia*) Mexico. Tuberos, tall stems, mostly unbranched. Leaves variable in size, crenate, fleshy, and pale green. Large pink flowers on short, axillary peduncles in summer.

March/April Seed Fund Notes

We have received fresh seed of some of the species listed in January. The following are no longer available: *Begonia digyna*, *B. oxyloba*, *B. versicolor*, and unidentified: U252, U237, and U422.

The following should be added to the master seed fund inventory: March/April, *B. acetosa*, *acida*, *albo-picta*, *angulata*, *edmundoi*, *gracilis*, *herbacea*, 'Rory' (*B. boliviensis* X *cinnabarina*), 'Di-anna', *dregei* types mixed, *dregei* 'Glasgow', 'Elizabeth Lockhart', *luxurians* op, rhizomatous mixed, 'Sword Fighter', 'Texas Tea Sipper', U335, U341, U345, U346, U348, U352, U353, U354.

B. corallina Carriere

by Freda Holley

Tell me, fellow Begoniacs, of a thrill greater than that we feel at finding at last a begonia read about, lusted after, and sought for years. Such a moment came for me at the LA Convention in 1999 when we visited **Rudy Ziesenhenné's** greenhouse. All during the years I had worked on my booklet *Raising Cane: experiences in Growing the Species Cane Begonias*, I had sought this begonia and here it was at last -- a scrawny bit of green labeled *B. corallina*. Of course, I snatched it up and brought it home to Texas. Now three years later, I can add it to my roster of species canes grown and photographed. I have set seed and raised its offspring as well.

As I mentioned in the booklet, the **Thompsons' Begonias** mentions *B. corallina*, but does not include it in the listing of the cane-like. However, it is listed in the *Begoniaceae* (Smith et al., Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1986) which says it was first described in the *Revue Horticole*, 47: 89 in 1875. I do not find the plate there very helpful in assuring the identity of my plant.

Charles Chevalier's 1938 *Begonias*, in the translation by **Alva Graham**, on page 137 devotes some attention to its description and defends it as a species separate from *B. maculata* Raddi, where some writers have listed it as a variety, on the basis of a difference in placentas in the female ovary. The plant I have would have a greater resemblance I would say to *B. macduffieana* than *B. maculata* although its growth habit is more like that of the latter. Chevalier says it has been confused with *B. coccinea* by some.

In **L.H. Bailey's** very extensive review of begonias in his *The Standard Cyclopedia of Horticulture* (New York:

Macmillan, 1935), on page 483 there is a listing of *B. corallina* hort under *B. maculata* which may or may not be the species we are discussing.

I found no listing for it in Pat William's *Begonian Index 1941-1998* (South Australian Begonia Society, 1998) and I found only one reference to it in my indexes from 1996 to 2001. It was listed in the Seed Fund of November/December 2000 (right after I had found it, of course), page 231-2 with this description: "Stems 8-10 feet; leaves 3-8 inches long, lanceolate, gloss green with white spots above, red underneath, greener toward the margin; numerous large, pink flowers in spring." This description is very much the same as that in L.H. Bailey which again, may or may not be our true species.

Most early books on begonias, including those of **Gray**, **Buxton**, and **Brillmeyer** make no mention of *B. corallina*. **Helen Kraus** in *Begonias for American Homes and Gardens* (New York: Macmillan, 1947) reports that it was brought from Brazil to France in about 1875 and she obviously relies on the Chevalier description.

I have grown my *B. corallina* for almost three years, first in Nacogdoches, TX and now in Stillwater, OK. It prefers the humidity of the former, but has grown outside for two summers here. For me, it has been a slow grower. The first year it added no new canes. While the initial one held on and grew taller, it was a thin wiry cane branching only at the upper level, but it had survived the rather traumatic move in 2000. In the spring of 2001, a new thicker cane emerged, but in its several moves about its new home as I attempted to find a congenial location for it, this new

stem was twice broken off. Each time, it was slow to put up new growth on that stem and no new cane emerged either.

During all this the original cane continued to hang on, branch, and bloom. It is an ungainly stem prone to flop its branches onto any adjoining plants within reach. It is probably 8' long, but certainly not 8' tall! This winter it has again sent up one new branch and it is shooting up strong and fast, about as thick as my thumb which is twice last year's stem and four times the original stem in size.

After much pollinating, I was able to get seed pods formed in 2000. Late that fall I planted its first seed. On this date in January of 2002, I have several babies all consisting still of one stem so it has remained a slow grower. I have distributed a number of them as well. They are consistently uniform in all aspects of appearance and growth so I am convinced that it is indeed a species, hopefully the true *B. corallina*. The leaves on the mature plant in high light are plain, dark green, but in low light new leaves emerge with white

spots and the babies are gloriously spotted. Too, they have the true "angel wing" look with the paired swept-back upper leaf angles.

Leaves on my plant are about 6" x 2 1/2". These are smaller than those described by Chevalier, but my plants grow in far less than optimum conditions. Males have 4 tepals, 2 are 1/2" x 3/8" and 2 are tiny, 1/16" x 1/8". I do not have female blooms at the moment and I did not measure them earlier. The females are not remarkable, however.

Chevalier mentions a number of hybrids most of which I've never seen or heard of. *B. 'Lucerna'* or *B. 'Corallina de Lucerna'* may be an offspring of a cross with an unknown begonia. *B. 'President Carnot'*, of which I have heard, but never seen, is said to be a cross with *B. olbia* as the female parent.

It is no surprise then that *B. corallina* is not widely grown or easily found for it is an ungainly grower with no compelling characteristic except flower color. Yet, I treasure it as a disappearing jewel. If lost





On the opposite page is the mature plant of B. corallina as it drapes itself over other plants. One seedling at left shows its “angel wing” shape. Another seedling below demonstrates the uniformity of the seedlings. The bottom photo illustrates how that first skinny stem had to be supported during its bloom period.

it might be irreplaceable although I would hope that many growers may have it at the back of their collections and that this article might assist in its preservation. If you have it or grew it from seed fund seed, let me know.



Propagating Begonias Without Using Soil Mixture

by Bernie Wiener

There have been a number of different types of soil mixtures used in propagating begonia cuttings. I have been using Oasis Growing Media for years with great success.

Oasis Growing Media are rigid, open-celled, water-absorbing foams specifically designed for optimal callus and root formation. The performance of these media is due to the unique cell structure which closely resembles the cellular structure of the plant itself. These media offer the propagator the following advantages: optimal balance of air and water; stabilized pH; elimination of soil/media mixing; improved uniformity of root formation due to media consistency; rapid transplant and no shock to the cutting.

Oasis Rootcubes medium comes in standard 10 inch x 20 inch sheets with individual "cubes" in 1 inch, 1 1/4 inch, 1 1/2 inch, and separate "strip" configuration. The rootcubes are punched with tapered holes so you guide the cutting insertion without a problem.

Propagation of Cuttings

(1) Thoroughly wet the medium before sticking cuttings. Randomly cut into several cubes to check for dry spots inside the medium. If any are found, rewet the medium.

(2) Placing the cutting in the tapered holes, see that the cutting is stuck at least 1/3 of the cube depth and no more than 3/4. After the cutting has been inserted, do not lift or pull up the cutting as this will break the contact between the cutting base and the Rootcubes Growing Media.

(3) DO NOT allow the Rootcubes Growing Media to dry out. The propagation time required will vary from 18 to 28 days depending on the cultivar and propagation environment. To aid root development use bottom heat of 70 to 80°.

(4) Following transplanting irrigate the pots twice -- the first irrigation with water, the second with fertilizer concentration of 20-20-20 or 20-19-18. The double irrigation ensures that the medium is thoroughly wet and there is good contact between the cubes and the potting medium. On the second and third day after potting if the moisture stress is high, irrigate the plants directing the moisture to the base of the cutting.

NOTE: Propagating rhizomatous leaves can occur by rolling up the leaf and inserting it into the tapered hole or placing the leaf into the grooves of the strips of the cubes. For more information contact: Smithers-Oasis Grower Products, P.O. Box 118, Kent Ohio 44240, phone 800-321-8286 (In Ohio or outside U.S., 216-673-5831).

Bernie Wiener is working on starting a new ABS Branch in the Delaware Valley (see Letters on page 44). You may write to him at 229 Ellis Road, Havertown, PA, 19083 or call him at 610-446-2160.

**Send Your Quick Tips
to
Dianna Wilkerson
at the
address on page 78.**

Round Robin Notes

by Virginia Hamann

Round Robins seem to be flying much slower and some have not made it back to this “nest” forcing me to mark them grounded. The reason for this is the instant replies using E-mail and the busyness of ABS members.

#25 Midwest Growers II: Cane begonias that **Marvin Kahr** (IA) cut back in the fall grew into nice full plants during the winter. Two canes sat on a dark cool landing to the basement, not watered much in winter; they came to life this spring when they were watered and brought into the light. Marvin reports they are nice full plants once again. Marvin thinks this is a good way to carry large begonia plants over winter with minimum care. **Daniel Haseltine** (IL) planted begonia and gesneriad seeds in February, some germinated very well. Older seed were slower. He is now busily transplanting.

#6 Odd, Rare & Unusual: **Marilyn Dube** (OR) sent pictures of her nursery. She sells annuals and perennials in season, growing begonias and gesneriads as well. The pictures were of benches of many blooming begonias. This robin was written in the hottest of summer months telling of how growers were coping with the heat. Misting and using swamp coolers is one way of keeping the plants cool.

#43 Terrarium Growing: Members were stunned by the sudden passing of **Mae Blanton**. Her May letter was upbeat with plans to start seeds and add more begonias to her collection. Her advice on hybridizing using *B. dregei* was to be careful as it is mildew prone, and its progeny can be mildew prone as well, but she liked it for

its beauty. Always giving good advice, Mae would close her letters, “Love Ya, Mae” and she meant it.

#25 Midwest Growers II: Bruce Williams (MN) is putting together a table for propagation which will be waist high to keep his back from hurting too much. He will equip it with heat mats and lights. **Esther Griffith** (KS) moved to Decorah, IA during the hottest part of the summer. She reports that both she and her begonias survived.

#1 General Culture: Once again pictures are worth many words. **Marilyn Dube** (OR) sent pictures of her plants. *B. ‘Patun Leather’* and *B. ‘Pinafore’* in full bloom are lovely. **Elaine Ayers** (OH) puts her begonia plants in a special bed sinking the pots into the ground. They flourish for her. She takes cuttings of canes at 18” in height taking cuts below the 3rd or 4th node. The cuttings are inserted 3 nodes deep in a 5 gallon fish tank filled with sterile loam, moistened with rain water. The tanks are under lights in her garage. The lights are on 24 hours as she has to keep racoons and groundhogs at bay.

More advice from **Mae Blanton** to **Chris Rice** on the “Iron Cross Begonia” [*B. masoniana*]. Water sparingly, but don’t let it dry out completely. A safe environment would be a terrarium, but that is not necessary. Do not fertilize until new growth starts, then feed, but sparingly. Keep wilted leaves off the plant. Chris asked about hybridizing, and Mae said if interested in hybridizing, go for it for you have nothing to lose and it is fun too.

Join a Robin and be a part of Virginia Hamann’s flock! Write her at 1169 Lincoln Ave., Chester, Iowa 52134-8508 or call her at (NEW area code) 563-565-4208.

In The Mailbox

by Greg Sytch, Horticultural Correspondent

After a hiatus, I am back with more Q & A.

Rexes

Some of the more curious questions and advice has recently been about Rexes - again! They certainly are a confounding group of plants. You see, here in Central Florida, Rexes act opposite to up north. In summer, with our high heat and hot nights, they go semi-dormant. Leaves may become affected with a virus as they deteriorate, or they may simply begin to rot with wet soil in our heavy rains. It is the cooler fall weather that brings them back to life here, and they respond fast.

By October, new growth flushes from the center. By January, blooms are raging on every plant and I can hybridize. By spring, the plants are lush, full and blue ribbon worthy; but alas, come the summer rains in June, they go downward. Keep them somewhat dry and shade helps. However, leaves rooted in summer develop well with little problem.

Up north, Rexes act differently. They thrive during the warmer seasons, and rest during the shorter, cooler days of winter. It is important not to overwater during winter. If they are not growing, do not feed either. Be cautious during winter to watch out for mildew. Mildew attacks during cool, moist periods and can easily be spread through rotted leaves or spores flying through the air. Any all purpose fungicide monthly is a great prevention.

Once new growth begins (usually March), pick up the feedings to biweekly and gradually increase the water - but never keep Rex feet wet. That is a recipe for disaster. Always use a light, porous soil mix

so that water flows freely. Hopefully, this will help with some of the more popular questions regarding Rexes.

When A Begonia Stops Growing

Recently a Begoniac asked me a question regarding a begonia of hers that had stopped growing. Halt! Zap! Just nothing for months. Without much knowledge of conditions, soil, etc., I can offer the following advice which has worked wonders for me.

Take the plant and remove it from its pot. Check for any problems such as bugs, fungus, or sour soil. Shake all old soil off, and allow the root ball to dry out for a few days on newspaper. Once all old soil has been removed, repot in a small pot that is barely big enough to accommodate the roots. Water and fertilize sparingly for a few weeks. This should boost new growth as the plant receives new life from fresh, porous soil and the airing out should eliminate problems. If pests or fungus were present, treat the water you use to water the plant with. If the plant still does not grow after a few months, perhaps it is telling you a message...try another one!

If you have an additional questions regarding Rexes, need advice, or are looking for any resources for begonias, feel free to email me at gsytch@cs.com, or send mail to Greg Sytch, 6329 Alaska Avenue, New Port Richey, FL 34653-4301.

Regards!

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NEWS: ABS, Branch, International

It is with sad regret that I tell you of the death of **Jan Doorenbos**, one of the greats in the world of begonias. Next issue will carry an article in his honor prepared by **Jack Golding**.

The New England Tropical Conservatory is working with **Dr. Mark Tebbitt** of the Horticultural Taxonomy Department at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. He is assisting them to determine whether species collected in Indonesia are new as believed. If so he will describe them. As the fourth largest genus of flowering plants, NETC considers their evolutionary history and biogeography to be an important piece of the puzzle of the evolution of flowering plants.

The Mae Blanton Branch (Ft. Worth) now meets at the Texas Garden Club Headquarters at the Ft. Worth Botanic Garden. They are excited to have graduated from meeting at member homes to a public building. They are a support group for the Begonia Species Collection housed at the Gardens as well. They meet the fourth Tuesday of each month at 10 a.m. More information is available from **Joan Kessinger** at 817-489-5055 or email at jdbk@earthlink.net

Ann Salisbury has recently received some older *Begonias* from the 1950's and 1960's. Order them early as they will go fast. Her address is on page 78 and 79.

Another new book on begonias! **Mike Stevens** of New Zealand announces the publication of his new book entitled just *Begonias*. It is 96 pages with over 95 colour photos (11 full pages). Contents include such topics as: History and Key

Discoveries; Culture of Non-tuberous Begonias; Sub-groups and Cultivation of Tuberous Begonias; Large Flowered Tuberhybrida in Containers Year-round; Basket Begonias; Begonias in the Garden; Pests, Diseases and Disorders; Fertilisers and Soils; and more! It will be released in the US in March by Firefly Books Inc., P.O. Box 1338, Ellicott Station, Buffalo, New York 14205. Price from them will be \$16.95 with the ISBN 1-55297-551-7 (paperback) number. You may obtain information about its availability in New Zealand and others countries by contacting Mike Stevens, 47 Burnside Crescent, Christchurch 8005, New Zealand or m.i.stevens@xtra.co.nz.

The Long Beach Parent Chapter celebrated its 70th birthday in January 2002, sharing a birthday cake. Congratulations! They also had a special program in February with a program by **Mark Bartolomew** of Hi-Mark Nursery. The program also honored three great California hybridizers: **Rudy Ziesenhenné**, **Irene Nuss**, and **Brad Thompson**.

Karen Platt of England is doing a book, *Black Magic and Purple Passion*, which will list and describe many dark begonias. If anyone has slides or high resolution j-peg photos of dark begonias and would like to loan them for use in this book in return for a photo credit, contact her at 35 Longfield RD, Crookes Sheffield, S10 1QW, England or you may email her at k@seedsearch.demon.co.uk. She must have them by the end of March.

Send your news items to the editor at the address on page 78.

Growing Begonias

Most begonia species were and are still found in shaded areas of humid forests in tropical and subtropical regions. Your commitment to giving your plant regular care, combined with common sense, is a good start for growing healthy plants. However, you must also know the basic principles of good culture and be able to apply them with some flexibility to allow for changing growing conditions.

Light: Proper light will encourage rich leaf color and profuse blooms. Your plant will adjust somewhat to its environment, but look closely for signs of distress. Observe and respond to these signs:

Too little light: Stems weak and leggy, faded color, new growth progressively smaller and few, if any, flowers.

Too much light: Leaves scalded (turn reddish or fade in color). Adjust light gradually when changing the growing conditions. In summer, begonias need protection from midday sun. The rhizomatous and hairy leaved types need plenty of filtered light, but no direct sun. (Leaves become pale with overexposure.) Rex and other tender varieties will only grow outdoors in morning and late afternoon sunlight; however, the Rex begonias require fairly bright light to maintain the beautiful color patterns in their leaves. The cane-like and the semperflorens will only flower when growing in full sun most of the day. This is a general guideline: begonias with lighter leaf colors need protection from midday sun, whereas those with darker leaf colors can tolerate more sunlight. Remember to turn your plants occasionally to ensure healthy growth on all sides.

Temperature: Temperatures with the range of 58° - 72° F (15° - 22° C) will suit begonias. The best daytime temperatures are 62° - 65° F (17° - 18° C) and, at night, 60° F (15.5° C). If the temperature

is too high, leaves will look lifeless and feel dry; the plant will dry out quickly. If the temperature is too low, the plant will not grow and its soil will sit wet too long between waterings, possibly encouraging a root rot. If temperatures fluctuate to extremes, flower bud and leaf drop will result. Do not place your begonias near heat sources or air conditioning vents.

Humidity: Begonias require a relative humidity of 40-60%. Most homes are not this moist. To increase humidity, place plants on a drip tray filled with small, clean pebbles. Set the begonia on top of the pebbles where evaporation from the pebble tray will considerably increase the relative humidity. Do not mist your begonias.

Watering: Water thoroughly each time you water. Use tepid water, water in the morning, and do not wet the leaves. Many begonias have minute hairs where water droplets cling, causing a situation that could develop into a leaf spot. It is impossible to water on a schedule; you must learn to feel the soil. Water only when the soil surface feels dry. Adjust your watering to changing growing conditions and to the needs of your plant. For example, during cloudy weather, you will not need to water your plant as often as you would during sunny days. Overwatering can result in rot, leaf drop, wilting leaves, yellowing leaves, and flower bud drop.

Growing Medium: The growing medium needs to be coarse, light, porous, and slightly acidic with a soil pH of 6.5-7.0. When potting use azalea pots - those that are shorter than they are wide.

The above was adapted from The Queensland Begonia Society Inc JOURNAL, Vol. No. 43, Winter 1999, pp. 40-41 which had in turn taken it from material of the Smithsonian Botanic Gardens, Washington, D.C. December 1992 (Revised 1993).

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COMING EVENTS

March 1-2, 2002: Begonia Bonanza held by the South Florida Botanical Gardens. Guest speakers include Charles Jaros and Tim Anderson. Lots of plants for sale. For more information, call 813-974-2329.

April 20-21, 2002: Fred A. Barkley Branch Show and Sale at the Will Rogers Garden Center, Oklahoma City, OK. For more info, contact RL Holley at 405-385-0484 or email at fholley@provalue.net.

May 29-June 2, 2002: Begonias International: ABS Convention/SWR Get-Together, Houston at the Hobby Hilton on Airport Road (near Hobby and there is a shuttle). See page 59 this issue for details.

September 27-29, 2002: AABS Convention, Perth, Australia. Western Australia is famous for its unique wildflowers and it will be spring there giving visitors the opportunity to see the fantastic array. The venue is the Metro Inn Apartments, Nile Street, East Perth, Australia. For details contact the Western Australia Begonia Society, P.O. Box 427, Cloverdale W. Australia 6985. Telephone (08) 9361 4564 or E-mail lancas@inet.net.au. You're invited.

Closing date for next issue is March 15!

The Begonian

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