



The

Begonian

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The **Begonian**

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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.

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Cover

Front: Think this photo by Mary Bucholtz is of just another beautiful plant? Think again; this is a plantlet growing on a mature begonia leaf. Read all about it and other begonia mysteries beginning on page 95.

Back: Ah, to be in England in the spring and visiting the garden of Terry Tasker where we would see these wonders and others such as those on page 112.

In This Issue

Would you like to take a spring trip to see begonias? Well, you have the chance in this issue! First, take off to Mexico with **Rekha Morris**, then join **Mary Bucholtz** at Harmony Foliage in Florida. And visit England with **Terry Tasker**. Plus, learn about *B. crispula* from **Johanna Zinn** and meet **Francis Hunter** of Florida. Enjoy your journey.

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*Perfect flower seed pod side by side with female seed pod on *B. coccinea*. See article on page 97.*

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Quick

Check your mailing label. If it reads **200307 or 200308**, your membership is about to expire. Please renew! We don't want to lose you.

President's Message

A topic that has not held much interest for me recently drew attention - global warming. This came about because in a matter of days two articles from very different sources focused on it. The following will just highlight what was gleaned from them, as well as a newspaper article that ties into the two magazine articles.

The first piece was in the *Harvard Magazine* (November/December '02) titled "The Great Global Experiment" written by Jonathan Shaw. It is quite lengthy and this will only be limited to facts in the piece and not much on hypothesis. A U.N. Committee report in 2001 confirmed the global average temperatures are rising due to human activity. The principal cause of warming is carbon dioxide which is trapping the sun's warmth under the earth's ozone layer. While the average temperature worldwide rose 1° F in the century, it rose as much as 4° to 7° F in Alaska and W. Canada. Nine of the ten warmest years in the past 140 years occurred since 1990.

What will some of the consequences be? Plants will respond by growing faster due to the increase in carbon dioxide. Half of the carbon dioxide produced each year will be absorbed by the sea and forests, the rest will go into the atmosphere where it will remain for the next 100 years! Globally the sea level will rise due more to rising water temperatures than to ice melt in the polar regions. Weather events will become more severe such as drought, flooding, tropical storms, etc. The ecology of tropical areas will change.

One last note from this article is that the changes talked about by scientists are less than the current variability from year-to-year for any given date.

The second article was from *The Garden Journal of the American Horticultural Society*, December 2002. It is titled

"Climate Change - Coming Soon to a Garden Near You?" written by Phil Gates and Tom Ardle. As would be expected the focus is on gardening in Great Britain; however, there is much that can be generalized more broadly. The authors hypothesize the following:

- * Milder winters will allow for a greater range of more tender species to be grown, and the growing season will lengthen.
- * Thrips, aphids, spider mites, and viruses will increase, and drier summers will more widely disperse the spores of powdery mildew.
- * Weeds will grow more vigorously and be more widespread and some common garden plants may well become weeds.

As evidence and experience the authors offer the following:

- * Under increased warming plants use less water.
- * Bud burst, flowering, and fruiting are faster along with seed germination and leaf expansion.
- * Spring comes earlier, fall later, but more damage is done by frosts.
- * Increased soil temperatures speeds up microorganisms, thus increasing the breakdown of organic matter, decreasing soil nutrients which are washed away by winter moisture. (Nitrate losses from the soil may double.)
- * Heavier winter rains compact soil more, cause more erosion.
- * Hotter summers increase moisture evaporation from the soil.

In a map that accompanies this article the model used shows that areas of least change in the U.S.A. will be the tip of Florida and Southern California along with

Coastal Alaska. Hardest hit in terms of the greatest temperature increases will be the mid-west.

The final piece to be shared appeared in the local newspaper. "Your Garden May Help to Keep Your Health" (Scripps Howard News Service) by Lindsay Bond Totten does not directly relate to global warming, but you can certainly understand how the three pieces are related. Again, evidence is related to the title of the article.

- * Color, and therefore flowers, can alter our moods.
- * Hospital stays are shorter for patients with a view of nature, and patient complaints are fewer.
- * Foliage plants in a room increase pain tolerance.
- * Elderly women who garden decrease the chance of osteoporosis.
- * Plants in an office increases worker productivity and contentment, and decreases absenteeism.
- * Workers with a window view of nature feel less pressure.
- * Trees in housing developments seem to improve neighbors' relationships, and residents are more positive about their homes.

The final sentence sums up what we as begonia growers already know. "Plants really do improve the quality of our lives."

In conclusion, what can we do about global warming? That is an individual decision and commitment. There are however several ways that ABS has available for you to contribute. There is the Save Our Species newsletter, yours free if you adopt one or more species and let Rekha Morris the editor know what they are. (The newsletter is \$5 a year if you don't adopt.) Compile a list of species you grow and send it to Bill Claybaugh our conservation chair. Plant seed from our seed fund chaired

by Michael Ludwig. Make a donation to either the conservation or research fund, sending it to our treasurer Carol Notaras noting the fund intended.

One final note regarding society business. With this issue of the *Begonian* you received a ballot/postcard. Please let your board of elected officers know they have your support by voting. No longer do you have to cut up your magazine and it will only cost you 23 cents. At the last election only 66 votes were received from a potential of about 1000. Show your care and vote, it gives the officers confidence to proceed with ABS business.

In friendship,
Morris Mueller.

Letters to the Editor

Begonia Identification

This is not an article about labels, but just about how I keep up with my plants. I have a wooden recipe box that belonged to my mom that fits large index cards. I have taken pictures of most all the begonias I have and then I have looked up all info on them - parents, etc., and typed a card for each begonia and filed them. Then, when I lose a tag or whatever I just head to the index file. It works for me.

Donna Marshek
Bartlesville, Oklahoma
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Donna, that works great until you have B. 'Grey Feather', B. angularis, B. castaneifolia, B. pulchella, B. angulata, etc. - all of which look so much alike that only a label helps you keep up with them. But you have a great system to keep records with anyway; keep it up!

Looking for Plants

I am trying to trace some plants of the late **M.L. MacIntyre** to add to my collection. I have searched in vain in the U.K. and no one has them any more. We already have most of his hybrids, but some seem to have disappeared. They are: *Begonia* 'Tracery', 'Jodrell Bank', 'Many Colors', and 'Red Spot.' If any ABS member still grows them, could he or she get in touch with me. I fear if these are lost, a life time work of one of the U.K.'s hybridisers has gone forever.

Terry Tasker

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co.uk (www.stbegonias.com)

Also see Terry's article on page 113 of this issue.

I am Linda Ryan from Hammond, LA. Back in the mid 60's my grandmother, Lois Kennedy was a begonia lover and hybridized 2 begonias and had them registered and patented. I am looking at the June 1969 issue of the *Begonian*, vol 36 on page 129, and it tells of *B. 'Melanie Babin'* (#239) and *B. 'Theresa Lynn'*. I am trying to find some of these plants and need your help. If you could direct me where to find them I would appreciate it very much. I am a horticulture teacher at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, a member of the Hammond Garden Club, and a Master Flower Show Judge.

Linda Ryan,
lryan49@bellsouth.net

New Secretary, AABS

I wanted to let you know that **Geoff Apps** (our past Secretary) of the Australian Association of Begonia Societies died

just before the New Year. Our new Secretary is **Peter Carter**, 807 Winter Street, Bunninyong, 3357 Victoria, Australia; email: pcarter@netconnect.com.au.

Tricia Marriott

Editor, *Begonia Australis*

Our regrets for AABS on the loss of Geoff Apps, Tricia. Peter Carter will be the new contact for membership in AABS or a subscription to the Begonia Australis.

A Reminder from Our Membership Chair

Please don't wait until you have missed a whole year of the *Begonian*. Let me know right away if you didn't receive an issue. I don't have many back issues and by the time you let me know they may be gone and you will have to go to the back issue department to get it and that will cost you. Also please note that your due date is on the label of the *Begonian*. If you do not understand the way it is written, say you are due in March, it would be the year 2003 and the month 03, thus the number 200303 on the label: June would be 200306 and so forth. Those that join MAL, please send separate checks for it. To be a MAL member you must also be an ABS member, but it is a separate newsletter and the \$5.00 per year is for the printing and mailing of it. It is a yearly rate, not a one time rate.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Arlene Ingles,
Membership Chair

And it is the Membership Chair, not the editor, that you contact if you do not receive an issue or an issue arrives damaged. See page 118 for her address.

Fun, Failure and Fiasco on the Trail for Begonias

Mexico, December 19, 2002 to January 9, 2003

by Rekha Morris

As we headed up a mountainous road in Mexico in search of begonias, a huge boulder all but obstructed our passage to begonia habitat.

Fortunately a work crew had been hard at work attempting to ease it inch by inch to clear enough space for cars to cautiously maneuver past. This obstructing boulder became a metaphor for our entire trip as one obstacle after another beset us at regular intervals as though we had embarked on a mythic quest, and the road to achievement and success invariably led from one perilous episode to the next. Like medieval knights our dedication and tenacity were to be tested by fog and rain, by fruitless scanning of cliffs where poison ivy not begonias abounded, and eventually by flat tires in the dead of night in the middle of nowhere!

Since we had opted to drive to Mexico rather than fly, I decided to take advantage of our long southward route on highway 85 and explore one or two areas on our way to Veracruz state. The first of these forays in this as yet unexplored territory for us took us up Rio Santa Maria near Ciudad Valles in San Luis Potosi state. This 16 km round trip by a small row boat to Tamul waterfall took us through spectacular scenery with small waterfalls spilling into the river through masses of ferns, and surprisingly, also masses of poison ivy. Although there was water, water everywhere, there was not a begonia in sight. By the time we reached the main waterfall I was as jaded as **Oscar Wilde**, who was utterly unimpressed by Niagara Falls as he found nothing remarkable about

water falling downwards. On the other hand, had all that volume of water been going upstream like salmon during spawning season, Wilde would have been duly impressed as I would have been by the incredible beauty of this riverscape had I found begonias along the way. Eventually I did find a small patch of *B. wallichiana* just beginning to bloom. When our oarsman realized what I was looking for, he told us that there was a bog close to his house where these plants grew all along the bank. By the time we reached his village it was dark, but by flashlight I could see juvenile *B. wallichiana* covering the entire slope down to the marshy section of the river we had rowed up earlier. As my main objective is to document the begonias of Veracruz and adjacent Oaxaca state, I decided that it was more important to continue southwards rather than take other exploratory side trips which might turn out to be of as little interest with regard to begonias as this one had been. Since we would be driving via Tamazunchale, where according to Prof. Burt-Utley *B. glandulosa* is endemic to a limited area in San Luis Potosi and adjacent Hidalgo states [Brittonia, 1984, p. 233], I was eager to try and locate this species.

The first begonias I sighted were patches of *B. wallichiana* along cliffs in and around Tamazunchale, and luckily some had set seeds which I collected for the ABS Seed Fund. Amongst these were a few *B. heracleifolia*, however, it was not until we were nearly 12-15 miles south of Tamazunchale that I began to see more *B. heracleifolia* and large stands of

B. nelumbifolia. Fortune had decided to smile on my search for begonias that day, which happened to be Christmas day! About 2-3 miles south of Tamazunchale along a somewhat exposed cliff side, Michael, my husband, had found an unexpected spot to pull over, often a difficult undertaking along these mountain roads, and suggested that I walk up and down and check out the cliffs for the next 300-400 yards. About a hundred yards downhill from the car I spotted an isolated clump of begonias, which I was delighted to discover resembled illustrations and descriptions of *B. glandulosa*. A short distance from this isolated clump and underneath a fairly thick canopy of shrubs were more of the same begonias. The deep shade and the encroaching fog, even though it was early afternoon, made for poor conditions for photography. Moreover the begonias grew some 10'-12' up the cliff and Michael had to resort to acrobatic maneuvers to get a small plant for me to bring back and have enough leaves to press for the Clemson University Herbarium. With visibility reduced to barely 20' our drive down the mountains to Pachuca took nearly nine hours.

The next area I had targeted for exploration was Valle Nacional on highway 175, which connects Oaxaca City to Tuxtapec. We left Oaxaca city early on the morning of December 28th, but barely an hour out of the city it began to rain and rained heavily all the way for the 220 or more km to Tuxtapec. Some 35 km or so south of Valle Nacional we began to see stands of *B. nelumbifolia*, and it was from one of these lush stands that I collected seeds in the rain - this was the first time I had seen *B. nelumbifolia* seeds on this trip and I was not going to come back empty handed, rain or no rain! As I slid down a wet slope clutching a large bundle of seed heads, I just missed landing on a

small clump of begonias hidden beneath the huge foliage of *B. nelumbifolia*. One large leaf of this unfamiliar begonia was almost totally suffused in a lovely shade of pink. Despite the rain, I hurriedly plucked that leaf and a few other smaller green ones for the herbarium. These turned out to be the foliage of *B. ludicra*.

As the rain was fairly severe and I had counted some 30 landslides, I sadly gave up all thought of carefully reconnoitering this area for begonias, and resorted instead to prayer to aid us out of the mountains without mishap. Nevertheless since we were of necessity forced to drive slowly, I continued to scan the hillsides for begonias and it was nearly dark when I sighted several clumps of *B. heracleifolia*. Unable to resist their remarkably large foliage, I hastily threw my parka over my head and braved the pouring rain. It was rewarding to come away with several variant foliar forms from the dozen or so plants I could just make out in the shadows. It continued to rain all the way to Fortin de las Flores [between Cordoba and Orizaba], and we arrived in Tropical World wet and disappointed about midnight.

In the Cordoba/Orizaba area I had planned to revisit two areas, Zongolica and a huge crater-like depression about a mile and a half in circumference known as the 'Caldera'. On the morning of Dec. 29th we headed for the Caldera where I had photographed *B. pinetorum* in Oct. 2001 and wanted to collect herbarium specimens and seeds. At that time the cliffs and caves were dripping with moisture, and I was delighted by the great profusion of *B. wallichiana* interspersed with purple flowered gesneriads. This time the cliffs were dry as were the *B. wallichiana*.

Nevertheless I was able to collect plants and leaves of *B. pinetorum*, *B. heracleifolia* and *B. carolineifolia*. Since there had been a drought, none of these



Rekha Morris took this photo of *B. glandulosa* two to three kilometers south of Tamazunchale. Below is *B. heracleifolia* together with an unidentified begonia at Zongolica.



had begun to flower so there were no seeds.

In October of 2001 we had driven to Zongolica and a little beyond the town but had to abort our trip due to a landslide. This time with the help of Bruce Pearson of Tropical World we drove around the entire area in a pick-up truck driven by his friend, David. The first begonias we encountered on this road to Zongolica were around Tlilapan where there were several large leaved *B. barkeri*, whose foliage on the underside was a deep shade of burgundy. I photographed *B. incarnata* in several areas, and luckily found seeds for the ABS Seed Fund on a plant whose foliage was reddish-maroon on the underside. *B. heracelifolia* continued to amaze me with the variations in both the color and form of its foliage, and it was here that I found one small plant of this species which was entirely maroon. Then for a long stretch lasting at least two hours we saw no begonias, and the small waterfalls above the town of Zongolica where I had photographed *B. ludicra* in October of 2001 were entirely dry.

My disappointment at this was only somewhat mitigated by encountering an extraordinarily decorated church. Its entire façade was covered by squares, circles, rosettes, and other decorative forms constructed to the best of my knowledge out of agave foliage. Around 3:00 p.m. or so that afternoon just past a small village, we began to see begonias growing on boulders along the dirt road. There were two species of begonias on these boulders, one was clearly *B. heracleifolia* whose foliage was a dominant shade of silvery-gray resembling the color of the rocks it grew on. I have not been able to identify the second species yet, however, they grew alongside with *B. heracleifolia* and in some cases were so closely clustered as to appear to be a single plant with variant

foliar forms. One such clump I had sighted initially grew on a huge, overgrown boulder some 15' high whose near vertical sides daunted my efforts to reach it. Michael gallantly scaled the boulder and returned with the entire clump, which I am happy to report now has several leaves of each type.

Bruce Pearson was eager to explore a waterfall and a huge cave in the area for possible camping trips, so we interrupted our drive and headed for the cave down a more slippery, muddy, rock-strewn path than I had yet encountered. While Bruce and David raced off to the cave, Michael and I followed at a much more dignified pace dictated both by my compulsion to continuously search for begonias and by the rough terrain which I had to negotiate with extreme caution as I had injured my left knee and ankle at an archeological site in India a few years earlier. I had stopped to straighten up to relieve the stress on my back from the constant leaning on my walking stick, as I hopped from rock to rock to avoid the slippery layers of mud, when I noticed huge, dark leaves some fifty feet in the thicket. Uncertain whether these might be unfamiliar palm leaves or fern fronds I headed into the jungle growth for a closer look. A group of young boys from the village who had been chatting with Michael got extremely agitated when they saw me veer off the path as there were supposedly two types of large and toxic snakes to be encountered among the rocks where I was heading. Having grown up with cobras who during the winter months surfaced from underground cellars to sun themselves in the large courtyard of my family home, I merely made heavier thumping noises with my walking stick and continued towards the huge leaved plant. Imagine my surprise and excitement when I discovered that the foliage was that of *B. thiemei*. On our return to Tropical World that night I

stretched the largest of the leaves I had collected across the 8" square tiles of the floor in our room, and the segments spanned four tiles with half inch wide grouting in between, i.e., it was approximately 34" in diameter. By the time we resumed our drive around Zongolica, it was growing dark rapidly in the hills. All I was able to see in the shadows were dozens of large clumps of *B. nelumbifolia*, *B. heracleifolia*, and another large, shrub-like species I could not identify. Clearly this is an area I will have to revisit, but next time we will reverse the process commencing our explorations on the side where we had ended up at dusk on this trip.

Unwilling to return without making one more attempt to explore the environs of Valle Nacional on highway 175, we set off early on the morning of January 1st for Tuxtapec, about 3 ½ hours from Tropical World. I wanted to explore around the various waterfalls we had passed on the rainy drive up from Oaxaca city, and try and locate *B. sericoneura*. Prof. Burt-Utley has written that "*Begonia sericoneura* is one of the most commonly collected species in Central America" [Tulane Studies, vol. 25, no. 1., 1985, pp. 98-99], and in a personal note mentions that a little *B. sericoneura* is to be found in the environs of Valle Nacional. We succeeded in finding *B. sericoneura* south of Valle Nacional where it grew for about 1/10 of a mile along a dirt road. However, locating it took several hours of stopping at all the dirt roads we ran into, and the one along which we found this species led across a river without a bridge in sight. Luckily the river was not in flood and the riverbed was thickly so packed with river stones that our tires did not sink in the mud and we made it across with ease. Excited as I was at locating this species with its strongly defined, dark veins, it was dismaying to see that the lower sections of the slope

along this road had been heavily slashed quite recently, and I was able to pick up rhizomes and leaves in good condition from the ditches at the edge of the dirt road.

Although we continued driving southwards in search of some of the waterfalls we had previously passed in pouring rain, dusk was fast approaching. We hurriedly collected herbarium specimens, and where possible, cuttings and rhizomes of *B. heracleifolia*, *B. nelumbifolia*, *B. ludicra*, *B. glabra* and several other species which need to be identified. From the environs of Orizaba and Cordoba I collected seeds of *B. barkeri*, and more herbarium specimens and rhizomes of *B. heracleifolia*, *B. carolineifolia*, *B. nelumbifolia*, and *B. manicata*. After a day spent cleaning, drying and pressing all the samples of seeds, roots, rhizomes and leaves I had collected, we headed for the US border and on to Pendleton, S.C.

I acknowledge with gratitude the generosity of the ABS, many of its chapters and individuals whose donations funded this trip in its entirety. I would also like to acknowledge the invaluable help of Bruce Pearson, Michael and Abel Rodriguez in generally facilitating our stay in Tropical World, and specifically in procuring the required phytosanitary certificate from the Mexican authorities without complications and stress. Their warmth and friendship make each trip south in search of begonias not a foray into unknown uncertainties but a return to the familiar and the friendly.

You may write to Rekha Morris at 318 Woodland Circle, Pendleton, SC 29670.9433 or email her at shivavana@juno.com

LIST OF BEGONIAS DOCUMENTED AND COLLECTED

ON THIS TRIP:

- [1] *B. barkeri*: Zongolica and in the environs of Cordoba, Veracruz. *B. barkeri*: Burgundy underside of foliage. Zongolica, Veracruz.
- [2] *B. carolineifolia*: 'Caldera' and environs of Cordoba, Veracruz.[3] *B. glabra*: Hwy. 175, Oaxaca.
- [4] *B. glandulosa*: Border of San Luis Potosi and Hidalgo states.
- [5] *B. heracleifolia* var. *viridis*: 'Caldera' & Zongolica, and Hwy. 175, Oaxaca.
B. heracleifolia var. *nigracans*: " " Also around Tamazunchale, San Luis Potosi. *B. heracleifolia*: With pronounced silver-gray variegation. Zongolica. *B. heracleifolia*: Narrow, curly edged, segmentation, Zongolica.
- [6] *B. incarnata*: Road to Zongolica and environs of Cordoba, Veracruz.
B. incarnata: With maroon underside of foliage & road to Zongolica, Veracruz.
- [7] *B. ludicra*: Hwy. 175, Oaxaca.
- [8] *B. manicata*: Environs of Cordoba, Veracruz..
- [9] *B. nelumbifolia*: South of Tamazunchale, San Luis Potosi & Hwy 175, Oaxaca.
B. nelumbifolia: Red veined form, Hwy. 175, Oaxaca and environs of Cordoba.
- [10] *B. pinetorum*: 'Caldera' and cave in Zongolica, Veracruz.
- [11] *B. sericoneura*: Dirt road off Hwy. 175, Oaxaca
- [12] *B. thiemei*: Zongolica, Veracruz.
- [13] *B. wallichiana*: Around Ciudad Valles and Tamazunchale, San Luis Potosi; 'Caldera', Veracruz, and Hwy. 175, Oaxaca.

Unidentified species from following locations:

Zongolica:

- [14] On road to Zongolica around Tlilapan in Rafael Delgado, among several forms of *B. barkeri* there seems also to have been some cross breeding, as I saw forms which might be a cross between *B. barkeri* and *B. heracleifolia*.

[15] & [16] In the vicinity of *B. heracleifolia* growing on boulders there were 2 species with unlobed foliage. One of these grew into a small shrub with tall stems between 2' and 3' high.

Hwy. 175, Oaxaca: 3 species around waterfalls:

[17] With bright green, hirsute foliage. Jack Golding suggests that these might be *B. faustinoi* or *B. alice-clarkiae*.

[18] Foliage with large splashes of maroon/purple on the reverse

[19] Hairy, red stems, lobed and unlobed leaves with maroon pattern.

[20] 1 species growing with *B. sericoneura* off Hwy. 175.

SEEDS: Brought back following seeds of for the ABS SEED Fund:

[1] *B. barkeri*, [2] *B. heracleifolia*, [3] *B. incarnata*, [4] *B. manicata*, [5] *B. nelumbifolia*, [6] unidentified, shrub-like begonia from Zongolica, [7] What appears to be a natural cross between *B. barkeri* & *B. heracleifolia* from road to Zongolica, [8] *B. wallichiana*

ROOTS AND RHIZOMES

Brought back several roots/rhizomes of each of the species I encountered.

Dr. Larry Mellichamp, Director of the University of North Carolina Botanical Garden at Charlotte, has generously offered to grow back-up begonias of all the species I collect at his greenhouses. Most of the begonias I brought back are already showing new growth, and as soon as I am able to, I will take a plant of each of the species listed above to Dr. Mellichamp.

HERBARIUM SPECIMENS

The curator of Clemson University's Herbarium, **Patrick McMillan**, has already mounted all the specimens I brought back. There are 13 folders: [1] *B. nelumbifolia*. 11 sheets of this species from various locations. [2] *B. carolineifolia*: 5 sheets from various locations. [3] *B. pinetorum* from two locations, *B. glandulosa*, 6 sheets; *B. manicata*, 3 sheets & unidentified begonia with bright green, hirsute foliage from Hwy. 175, 2 sheets. [4] *B. ludicra*, 2 sheets from two locations on hwy. 175 [5] *B. heracleifolia*, 9 sheets various forms and locations. [6] *B. incarnata*, 2 sheets, and two locations. [7] *B. wallichiana*, 2 sheets, San Luis Potosi. [8] *B. thiemei*. [9] *B. sericoneura*, 2 sheets. [10] *B. barkeri* and possible hybrid, 6 sheets [11] Unidentified begonias from Zongolica [12] Unidentified begonias from Hwy. 175, Oaxaca. [13] Outsize leaves of *B. barkeri* & *B. thiemei*, 15 sheets



Left above, at Harmony Foliage, Inc. is B. 'Raspberry Crush' with sturdy, mature foliage on the mother leaf. At right is adventitious growth on a mother plant on B. 'Jelly Roll Morton' (photo by Charles Jaros). Below in second photo by Mary Bucholtz is a more mature rhizome formation on mother leaf of B. 'Raspberry Crush'.



The Mysticism of Nature

by Mary Bucholtz

If one had a choice of how to spend a weekend, what would be the chosen? For me, silly question, I would want to be surrounded by begonias and begonia friends. That is just what happened to me in late September 2002.

My destination was central Florida and the greenhouses of Harmony Foliage, Inc. Those of us who attended our Houston Convention in May of 2002 saw an astounding array of begonias on the sale tables. They were all waiting to be tucked away in our suitcases or other traveling containers for plants and transported to our various growing areas. The starts of many of these sale plants came from Harmony Foliage, a wholesale nursery, open to the trade, and unfortunately, closed to the public. Occasionally "good fortune" does come our way as it did for me that September day.

Gracious hosts **Deb Cox** and **Robin Jordan** were waiting for me and begonia aficionado **Charles Jaros**. What was to be one of my most exciting tours began immediately upon entering a special greenhouse, marked boldly "Keep Out". A most interesting discovering occurred. Before me sat two very large begonias, easily 36" plus in diameter. One was a Rex, *B. 'Raspberry Crush'*, an **Elsie Frey** hybrid of 1956, parentage unknown (I have only found this spelling of Raspberry for this hybrid). The other, a rhizomatous, *B. 'Chivalry'*, a **Brad Thompson** hybrid of *B. 'Bokit' x carrieae x 'Frisly Dilly'* hybridized in 1995. The size in itself was enough to take one's breath away, but many of the leaves of these begonias were covered with new plants. These were not just a leaf or two of a new plant, but actual individual plants complete with rhizomes and new leaves. There were many leaves just starting to produce additional plants as well.

My first question was, "Under what conditions are these begonias growing?" The response was most interesting. These two begonias normally would have been trimmed, but no longer are either a "working plant." They are a "pet plant," a favorite of Deb and Robin so they are allowed to hang around and enjoy their retirement. They are growing in the coolest, most moist spot in the greenhouse and are potted in Fafard 2-S soilless mix. They receive fertilizer, Peters 20-20-20, half strength, once a week applied through a drip system and had received no fungicide in 2002 to the date of my visit. However, a smooth, dry, light green algae forms on the benches and pipes of the greenhouse and on older leaves of these "pet plants." Harmony Foliage has extremely hard water which possibly promotes the growth of the algae.

The adventitious growth seems to appear more frequently in the spring, especially when the weather is cloudy and rainy and on old, mature, and broken leaves. Harmony's stock plants are recycled every six months. Occasionally, the adventitious growth has appeared on some of the six month old stock plants.

I have seen this occurrence before, but never the quantity or quality of the new plants growing on an existing leaf as they were in the Harmony Foliage greenhouses. I think this is a major effort of the begonia to survive. It is an additional effort to setting seed. Considering all the conditions present in the greens what do you think causes this phenomenon? I'm sure science can give us the answer. However, I prefer the mysticism of nature as an answer. As much as we want to succeed as growers, the begonia wants to succeed in continuing to live.



Begonias in Mother Nature's Laboratory

As does **Mary Bucholtz**, I continue to marvel at the wonder of begonias. Not only are begonias among the most varied plant families around with an amazing variation in their chromosome number (at least 22 to perhaps 256), they also frequently mutate in equally fascinating ways. Over the years I have observed a number of these events and noted others documented in the *Begonian*, *Begonia Leaflet*, and other publications. Probably the most amazing, illustrated a number of times, is when the lovely, small little patterned leaved *B. U168* sports a completely different plant, much larger and with plain leaves.

The genetic complexity reflected in the large chromosome numbers probably reflects the propensity with which begonias mutate to produce such events.

Leaves are in fact a frequent point of anomaly. On the opposite page is a photo (D) of a leaf on my hybrid cane which developed an oversize leaf consisting of two perfect bottom halves joined at the half-way point. Recently **Bill Claybaugh** provided an email photo of a similar occurrence in several leaves of *B. 'Snow Capped.'* *B. listada* is particularly prone to leaf variants, often developing ears shaped like miniature elephant ears. I have another photo of one with one top flowing into two equal bottoms. Most such events happen on only one or two leaves and are not repeated.

Other odd occurrences, however seem to be natural. For example, plants of *B. 'Rudy's Luxurians'* and similar begonias regularly exhibit three or more shaped leaves from those with a slightly cleft leaf to those with divided leaves as the parent *B. luxurians*. Another is on the leaves of *B. kellermanii*. These peltate, felted leaves

are naturally rather large and thin, but when time for bloom approaches the leaves become smaller and succulent. They then also appear to be framed with a white rim.

But not only leaves do strange things. At left, **Dianne Wilkerson** provided a photo (A) of a rhizome which suddenly sprouted little plantlets along its stem. This winter a rhizomatous plant I found at Huntington Gardens suddenly developed two leaf stems with similar growths. I was unable to root and grow any of these plantlets. **Johanna Zinn** provided another such example. Incidentally, other rhizomes, particularly those with peltate leaves, seem naturally to develop plantlets at their umbo. These also have never rooted for me. Johanna also provided another photo (E) of a stem which appeared to consist of many stems fused together into one.

Flowers can do equally strange things. Right now on *B. rajah*, I have a flower peduncle whose flowers bloomed and fell, then developed a little plantlet. This winter a very tiny *B. humilis* had a leaf transmuted to a male flower. I have documented the strange behavior in the flower clusters of two plants of *B. coccinea* in my booklet *Raising Cane* where either all or a part of each flower cluster in which the male flowers became perfect - that is containing both male and female parts on the individual blossom. I was able to use the male stamens to fertilize the ovary and get fertile seed. These became small, rounded seed pods, in some cases sitting in the same cluster beside the regular large, fat elongated ovaries. Opposite is Johanna Zinn's photo (B) of a flower on *B. elaeagnifolia* doing the same thing is opposite. **Charles Jaros** provides a photo (C) of a *B. listada* type hybrid with tiny flowers on its leaves.

If you have an example, why not share it with our readers. ~FH

American Begonia Society Election 2003

About the Candidates

For President

Howard Berg has just completed his terms as Vice President and 2nd Vice President. He has been a member of ABS since 1966 and of the Knickerbocker Branch since 1968. He was one of the founding members of the Chicago Branch and served as its initial President. He has served the Knickerbocker Branch as President for four terms over the years and is currently its Treasurer. He also served ABS as 3rd Vice President in the past. Howard collects sets of antiquarian botanical books, particularly those that have material on begonias including color prints.

For 1st Vice President

Janet Brown is completing her term as 2nd Vice President and has chaired the Grants Committee. She joined the Westchester Branch and ABS in 1991. She served as Westchester Branch Show Chairman for 9 years, President for 3 years, and Newsletter Editor for 6 years. She was ABS Convention Chairman for 1999. She loves begonias, particularly Thickstems and the American Begonia Society. Janet is also a frequent contributor of articles and photographs for the *Begonian*.

For 2nd Vice President

Mary Sakamoto has been a member of ABS for 20 years. She has been Chairman and member of the Awards Commit-

tee, Co-Chairman of the 1992 ABS Convention, Plant Sale chairman for 2 ABS conventions in 1995 and 1999. She is a Senior Judge and serves as Convention Advisor. She has been Treasurer for the Orange County Branch for 10 years and National Director of the Orange County Branch for over 10 years.

For Secretary:

Richard Macnair is currently serving as ABS Secretary. When you read his notes, you feel that you have attend the Board Meeting he records, so thorough are his notes. He is very active in the Buxton Branch of ABS, and has served as its President. He is a diligent behind-the-scenes worker for ABS. He never fails to support both the annual conventions and the ABS Board in every way possible. He works with his wife Wanda to make many plant sales successful.

For Treasurer

Carol Notaras has been our treasurer for the past ten years. She has also served two terms as President of ABS. She is an active member of the San Francisco and Sacramento Branches and was ABS Convention Chair in 1989. She also grows award winning begonias and contributes photographs for the *Begonian*.

The Official Ballot is enclosed with this issue on a Postcard. Just add a stamp and send it in. The Ballot Counting Committee reminds you that the ballot is voided if personal remarks or additions are made on the ballot. Please don't invalidate your vote! Comments may be made on a separate sheet of paper.

An Interview with Frances Hunter

by Mari Phillips

Frances Hunter is a founding member of the Begonia Society of the Palm Beaches and is Chairman of the Board and Vice President of the Horticultural Society of South Florida.

What becomes a legend most?

Sparkling brown eyes and a wit quick as a whip! I knew it would be a wonderful luncheon interview with the delightful Frances when she graciously accepted the seat with a view. "Oh good," she said, "now I can look inward and outward at the same time!" Frances is a founding member of the Begonia Society of the Palm Beaches, maintains an active membership in more than a dozen plant societies, lectures, judges at plant shows and is Chairman of the board of the Horticultural Society. "That one's a bit of a secret," she said with a twinkle. "I don't like to tell people everything; it seems so boastful." One wonders how its possible that one woman can do so much, and then, if you're lucky, you get to hear some of her history.

Frances was used to lots of activity from the very beginning. Her father was an officer for the Public Health Service, and the nature of his job took him and his family throughout the United States and Europe. In Norway, post-grad classes seemed inviting for the first day; the lure of the mountains called her, and she learned to ski and skate instead. Her love for learning caught up with her in Germany in the late 1930's where she attended postgraduate classes in Munich and Berlin. It was there that she met **Bob Hunter**, an art history major, midway through his European tour. He went on to Austria; she went on

to Ireland, but when her boat docked in America, Bob was there to meet her. Flash forward to 1942. Bob has finished his stint in the service, and the Hunters are ready to get on with their life. Frances was working at a museum in Chicago, and Bob spoke to the Director of the Art Institute in Chicago. He had nothing for Bob, but he did know of a man who might be looking for someone like Bob. Bob met and spoke with a "Mr. Norton". Mr. Norton recognized talent and hired Bob as director for his soon to be built museum in... "Well" an excited Bob told his young wife Frances "I'm not sure if its Palm Springs, or Palm Beach, but it sounds like we should take it!" Fortunately for us here in South Florida, it was Palm Beach, and Bob Hunter became the first director of the Norton Museum.

Frances found herself in a house, "The Directory" in Florida, and for the first time in her life, was faced with the challenge of landscaping. "In the beginning," she laughed heartily, "Everything died! I had no idea what to do." This lover of education; of learning; of books and libraries... could not find a publication; not a book; not a guide on gardening in South Florida. Mr. Norton's brother in law was her only resource. Once in a while he would stop by and leave some plants that he thought Frances might like and, by trial and error, she learned. Finally, she had a row of thriving marigolds, and thus began the green career of Frances Hunter. In the late '40's the Hunter family moved to Atlanta, and Frances joined her first plant club, the African Violet Society. This gutsy little group of 25 people organized the very first flower show entirely devoted to this little known plant, contributing to its upcoming popularity.

The Hunters returned to Florida in the '50's, but this time it was different. This time, it was Miami. In Miami, there were

nearly half a dozen plant societies, organized education, and people devoted to sharing information about their special interests. America was booming, and the world was opening up. Anything was possible. There was **Dr. Fairchild**, who traveled the world collecting rare and exotic plants. His job was to bring both edible and ornamental plants back to South Florida to study the economic feasibility of growing these specimens here. Because of his significant contributions to horticultural understanding, **Colonel Montgomery** donated some of his estate, and founded the Fairchild Gardens in the doctor's honor.

Nixon Smiley, director of Fairchild Gardens wrote the first, and still current resource on gardening in south Florida.

When Bob and Frances moved back to Palm Beach County, Frances continued to make the trek to Miami for plant society meetings. How long did that take? "Oh" she says, "hours! There was no I95, nor Turnpike" (think about that the next time you opt out of a lecture because The Mounts is all the way across town). One day Frances ran into **Paul Lowe**, with whom she had worked in the Bromeliad and Begonia Clubs in Miami. "Frances", Paul said in exasperation. "We've simply GOT to do something in this town." The seeds were sown In 1979 the Begonia Society of the Palm Beaches was born. Other plant societies followed (Frances belongs to 12 of them). "Although," she says sadly, "the only bromeliad society in the county is in Boca Raton."

In 1995 the Horticultural Society of

South Florida was founded. The city of West Palm donated the "not so beautiful" building at Fern and Quadrille. They needed a West Palm Beach representative, and the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs suggested Frances. Members worked hard to restore the building to its current charming beauty complete with fountains and a good-sized library. Frances borrowed from the Montgomery Library in Miami to build the library in West Palm. Classes were set up, and Frances introduced the 'Horticultural Study Course', a two day seminar with guest speakers and an in depth coverage of four plant families. This particular class was popular; it continued for five years.

Marvelous flower shows grew up incorporating all the plant clubs in the district. The shows were divided into nine sections; each section representing one plant family. At one show, **Dorothy James**, State Horticultural Chairman for the flower show, approached Frances.

"Frances," she said, "I want you to do the Lilies and Amaryllis for me". Frances was stunned. "Oh, Dorothy!" She exclaimed, "I know nothing about them". Dorothy was unfazed. "Frances, it's only November," she replied "and the flower show isn't until April. You've got PLENTY of time." And so Frances began her life long love of classification and identification. Her talent for identification grew, and Frances learned to be an official judge.

And of course she collects rare plants. Her favorite? No, not begonias; aroids. She loves their variety, their beauty,

"Frances," said Paul [Lowe] in exasperation, "we've simply GOT to do something in this town." The seeds were sown. In 1979 the Begonia Society of the Palm Beaches was born. Other plant societies followed (Frances belongs to 12 of them).

and their ability to naturalize without much help.

Frances doesn't plan to slow down much anytime soon. She maintains membership in all those plant societies because, she says, the magazines keep her up to date. Gardeners haven't changed much, she says, but plants have. The horticultural world is growing as more and more plant varieties, and cultivars are introduced. "And don't forget hybridization," she reminds us, "a marvelous way to maintain interest. Just fascinating to see all the changes." Natives? We decide that's for another issue.

Her own garden? "Oh," she throws her hands up in disgust, "it's a mess!" "So Frances," I ask, "what words of wisdom would you give a new gardener in South Florida?" Her answer? In a heartbeat she quips, "Grow what grows here. Figure out the plant's natural environment, and duplicate it. This is a tropical place. Grow tropicals!"

Nancy Cohen provided us this article written by Mari Phillips for the Mounts Botanical Society newsletter. Nancy is a member of that Society and of the Begonia Society of the Palm Beaches, and that by now Mari Phillips has also joined that branch and ABS. If so, welcome!

Corrections

On page 234 of the November/December 2002 issue, the correct spelling of the title should be: *Begonia convolvulacea* (Klotzsch) A.DC in Martius.

On page 76 of the March/April 2003 issue, the photo of Armando Nodal was taken by Doug Pridgen.

Send an extra copy of your convention photos to the Begonian editor!



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Ft. Worth Botanic Garden Begonia Species Bank Update by Linda Shires

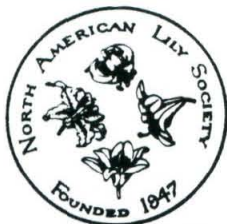
The modifications to the Begonia Collection Greenhouse are nearing completion. Stuppy's Greenhouse Mfg. was the contractor on the project to install a new wet wall system at the south end of the greenhouse. A new Wadesworth Controller System has been installed to unify all the new additions as well as the existing heaters and fans. The new R.O. system or Reverse Osmosis Water Purification System has been installed to provide rainwater quality water for the begonias to drink. The R.O. System will also benefit the mist system which helps cool the begonias and adds humidity to the air without adding minerals or chemicals. Once the modifications are complete and the greenhouse has been replanted, it will be open to the public on Tuesdays through Sundays from 8am until 3 pm. This has been a long process in completing this project since the

greenhouse burned and was rebuilt several years ago. The improvements have been worth the wait and worth their weight in gold, since we will finally have the proper growing conditions necessary for begonias to thrive.

The Begonia Species Bank and Hybrid Collection thrives due to the dedicated efforts of a wonderful volunteer staff here at the FW Botanic Garden. Their efforts include pruning, grooming, seed and cutting propagation, terrarium maintenance, bench cleaning, inventory and database compilation, identification of species and hybrids, good ideas and much more. They are a wonderful gregarious group including: **Tisa Bellah, Tamsin Boardman, Diane Clark, Betty Colbeck, Flo Cozine, Jeanie Dinsmore, Jean Harris, Sue Kaufman, Joan Kessinger, JoDell Lynn, Dr. Larry Oakford, Bobbie Price, Jim Rivers, Carl Shires, Rose Svojger and Gayle Williams.** The work they do is very much appreciated and will soon be on display, when the Begonia Collection Greenhouse is reopened to the public May 1, 2003.

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Conservation Comments

Dr. Bill Claybaugh,
Conservation Chairman, ABS

Large, Heated Terrariums

Two key elements in the ABS conservation program which was developed last year, are to: 1. Encourage terrarium growing of species and 2. To propagate, grow, and distribute more species. I believe I have recently developed a method to do both, conveniently and cheaply, and am proceeding ahead at full steam. Let me explain.

The first step in the process was to learn to grow species in terrariums. I used all the techniques espoused by **Wanda Macnair, Leora Fuentes, and Cheryl Lenert** and tips picked up from the *Begonian* over the past 30+ years. I found that I had lots of success and the plants grew beautifully. I also found that I had over \$500 invested in glass terrariums, ranging from 4 inch to 12-inch diameter bubbles.

Further, I was quickly running out of room in the house, and my wife was threatening to throw the whole lot, me included, out in the yard. This forced me to consider putting terrariums in the shade house, and to find a cheaper means of supplying the humid atmosphere that many of the plants needed to survive in Texas. I also wanted to more easily propagate numerous species to distribute both locally and to other ABS branches.

One day last spring while shopping at Wal-Mart, I found large storage boxes,

approximately 17 inches wide, 22 inches long, and 6 inches high. They were only \$6.00, made of translucent polyethylene, and looked perfect for plant containment.

The obvious problem was the lid, which was opaque plastic so would not transmit light. I initially tried the containers with perlite in the bottom, about one-half inch deep, and with a clear plastic (saran wrap) cover over the top. This worked OK, but fooling with the plastic cover was aggravating, and needed improvement. Then I put the perlite in the lid and inverted the translucent container over the top. I also put the plants in three ounce plastic Dixie cups rather than in the container medium and found that I could get over 30 plants in conveniently.

The first step in the process was to learn to grow species in terrariums. I used all the techniques espoused by Wanda Macnair, Leora Fuentes, and Cheryl Lenert and tips picked up from the Begonian over the past 30+ years.

Incidentally, I now use three ounce plastic Dixie cups to root most of my small plants. I grow them in these cups until they are big enough to move to 3 or 4-inch containers. These are cheap, less than one cent each, and always

sterile. I cut small slits along their bottom edge, for water drainage, or drill ¼ inch diameter holes in the bottoms.

Now light entered my new plastic terrariums properly, but the little plants keep growing too big, too fast and needed more height. Finally, in desperation, I inverted one container over another, "...and what to my wondering eyes did appear..." but a cheap, easy-to-handle, terrarium that was 17 x 22 and 12 inches deep, and it cost only \$12. I again put one-half inch of perlite in the bottom and started filling it with small pots of species. Soon I found that I could easily handle plants in even four or six inch

pots. This has been especially nice for those small growing rhizomatous plants that I am partial to. Finally, in another shopping trip to (where else) Wal-Mart, I found that I could buy these same containers that were almost 12 inches high and cost only \$8.00. This immediately gave me terrariums that were 12, 18, or 24 inches high, so that I could customize the container to the plants contained therein.

I use fluorescent lights to supply light to these containers. I use shop lights, two forty-watt tubes, bought at Lowe's for less than \$10 per fixture. I suspend these on chains so that I can easily move the lights up or down depending on the height of the plastic container.

The above arrangement worked great in the spring, summer, and fall, but come winter, something was still lacking. My little plants needed heat to continue growing at some reasonable rate. By now it was approaching Christmas, and Lowe's had a big sale on Christmas lights. Among them were outside "rope" lights that were intended to light the edge of things like stairs, door casings, etc. These are about 1/2 inch in diameter, plastic covered, and intended for outside use. I purchased one of them, 18 feet in length, blue in color, and costing \$9.00. It was 100 watts and was just comfortably warm to the touch. I also purchased an electrical timer, one that plugs into a 110-volt outlet and can turn power on or off every 15 minutes for the total 24-hour day. It cost about \$7.00.

Now the final step. I placed the rope light on my shelving in the shade house, in a big "u" shape, about one foot wide

and 8+ feet long. On top of that I put six of the plastic containers previously described. Then I plugged the rope light into the timer, set it to be on for 45 minutes of every hour, and set back and monitored the temperature in the containers. I found that I needed less heat during the day and

more at night, so made some minor adjustments in the on-off cycles. After a couple of days, I found that when the shade house varied from 40 to 60 degrees, night and day, that my plastic terrariums varied from about 60 to 75 degrees. I had successfully raised the temperature of the growing environment by 15 to 20

degrees, with very little cost or effort.

I now use this system to root my cuttings and to grow all my species propagations until they can safely be moved in to the harsher environment of the shade house. The terrariums supply the humidity that small plants want, and the heat speeds up the growth process. My total setup, to start and raise almost 200 plants simultaneously, cost under \$110. Further, my wife now lets me occasionally bring terrarium plant back into the house, so we're both happy. Try this simple setup. You'll like it, and you can help me grow and distribute species begonias to your friends and club members.

Bill is of course our Conservation Chair and you will find his address on page 119. Here, Bill discovers that found non-plant items often have excellent applications. I recently bought some plastic knitting needles at a garage sale and found they make excellent stake training tools for my begonias! Morris Mueller has a whole presentation on such items in fact.



Bill Claybaugh provides copies of his new setup in his lathe house described in his article with a closeup of some new plants below.



Begonia crispula

by Johanna Zinn

B. crispula Brade is a Brazilian species described in 1950. Three to six inch orbicular, crinkled leaves grow at the ends of short, thin, creeping rhizomes. The leaves generally grow flat and tightly together in clusters of leaves. Petioles are one to two inches long, light cranberry in color, and are covered with very fine light colored hairs. Mature leaves are light to medium green in color and are covered with very fine light colored hairs that can be felt more easily than they can be seen. New leaves can be blue-green or gray-green. Light cranberry-colored veins radiate from the site of the petiole attachment. The veins are raised on the back of the leaf, and depressed on the front, which contributes to the leaves' puckered appearance.

Sparse flowers appear throughout the year on new growth. Flowers on my plant are less than one-half inch in diameter. In natural light, in a north-facing window, the peduncle is six to eight inches long and the flowers white. Under fluorescent lights the peduncle is five to six inches long and the flowers are white with faint pink coloration on the backs and centers of the tepals.

B. crispula needs high humidity to survive. In Virginia I grow it in a terrarium in well rinsed, cut sphagnum moss placed over a thin layer of perlite mixed with charcoal. After nine or ten months, the leaves begin to yellow and I know that it is time to change the moss. My plant grew well under fluorescent lights in our cool basement, but is also content to grow in a large terrarium situated in a north-facing window. Our basement temperature ranges from fifty-five degrees on a cool winter night to seventy-five degrees in the summer.

Because of its tightly clustered,

crinkled leaves, *B. crispula* should be watered very carefully to prevent leaf rot. I water only when the moss begins to dry out or when there is little or no condensation on the sides of the terrarium. I will occasionally use a very dilute fertilizer applied only to the moss. Pests and diseases are not often a problem in sealed terrariums. To prevent disease, remove dead leaves and spent blooms, and trim the leaves touching the sides of the terrarium. Since *B. crispula* leaves will not tolerate washing or spraying, combat pests by sealing a piece of a No Pest Strip or dog's flea collar in the terrarium for several days.

To propagate, place a section of the rhizome or a leaf cutting, into cut, moistened sphagnum moss in an enclosed container under lights, or in with the mother plant, or start from seeds. Leaf wedges have decayed before rooting for me.

B. crispula may take a little extra effort to grow, but it is certainly worth that effort. It has been called finicky, delicate, difficult, even temperamental and a "Queen Bee", [Kit Jeans Mounger]. If you are interested in a challenge, there will be leaves on the sale tables in OK.

Johanna Zinn is a frequent contributor to the Begonian. Her photo of her B. crispula is on the opposite page. She grows many terrarium and other beautiful begonias at 4407 Jensen Place, Fairfax, VA 22032.

From *Begonia* no. 200, July/September (Journal of the Japan Begonia Society) comes the following quote on growing *B. crispula*. It is by **Masahiro Shiino**, translated by **Akira Tanaka**:

"This species has a small ovary and makes a small amount of seeds. Then you cannot get more seed from this species for



a time. So I recommend the way of propagation with leaf cuttings or rhizome cuttings. You can grow this species better in the condition of moderate moist soil and in loose humidity in a terrarium. You must not pour water directly on the leaves. Because the leaves of this species spread out more or less flat on the soil and new leaves tend to spread out over the oldest one.

So, when you pour water directly on the leaves, water stays on the surface of leaves a long time and make them rot. If you pay attention to this point, you can grow this species easily.

The species has a small number of leaves and thus does not grow large, but has an elegant atmosphere.”

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In Memory

On September 2, 2002, the begonia world lost a special lady by the name of **Julia B. Meister** at the age of 74 years. Julia had major heart problems most of her life.

Despite many years of all kinds of medicines and operations, her life was tuberous begonias. Our 42nd wedding anniversary would have been on October 8, 2002.

Together we were a team with tuberous begonias.. I got the flower beds ready and Julia, with her special touch, grew the prize winning tuberous begonias. Despite her winning many trophy's at the New York State Fair and the Monroe County Fair and countless blue ribbons, Julia's biggest reward was watching the reaction and expressions on people's faces when they looked at tuberous begonias.

Julia was a member of, and co-founder of the "Upstate Tuberous Begonia Society." Julia also had several articles in the *Begonian*. The May/June, 1993 issue featured a close up picture of one of her begonias on the front cover. Also the back cover showed begonias in front of our home on Mystic Lane.

In 1994 while she was recovering from major heart surgery the doctors said I could enter her begonias. Out of 600 begonias I took 37 blossoms of which I entered 23. I brought back the trophy that same day to her room and her nurse wore the blue ribbon.

Although I was there somewhere, tuberous begonias were a love of Julie Meister.

Gene Meister,
222 Mystic Lane
Rochester, NY
14623-5449

A Welcome to the Dorothy Caviness Branch

*by Mary Bucholtz, Branch
Relations Chair*

It has happened again! We have a new branch, the Dorothy Caviness Branch, Bartesville, OK. This branch became active almost at it's inception. They have already entered a Branch display at the Washington County Free Fair, had a program on seed planting, and toured the "Dream Greenhouse" of the Salisbury's. And yes, they are involved and working on the plans for our National Convention in April to be held in Oklahoma City. Be sure to look for these new branch members at convention and let them know how happy we are to have new friends and growers.

These new members have chosen to honor Dorothy Caviness by naming their branch for her. Dorothy is an extremely prolific Southwest Hybridizer. I'll bet everyone of us must have at least one of her hybrids in our collection. For me, to have one, is to wish for more.

Elected officers of the Dorothy Caviness Branch are:

President: **Donna Marsheck**
Vice:resident: **Laura Stranger**
Treasurer: **Paul Rothstein**
National Director: **Ann Salisbury**
Corresponding Secretary:
Marcy Robinowitz
Historian: **Laura Stranger**

ABS is always looking for people who love and grow begonias. Our *Begonian* is full of useful information about our favorite plant and branches can offer even more information. If your area does not have a branch, write to me (address on page 119) for information about forming one. It only takes seven (7) interested ABS members.

Begonia listada by **Normand Dufresne**

Begonia listada is found in Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay. It came into cultivation in 1961 as *B. listada* hort. which is short for horticulture and means that the name is not an official one because there is no valid description of the plant. In 1981 Drs. **Lyman Smith** and **Dieter Wasshausen** of the Smithsonian described and gave it the official name *Begonia listada*, which is Spanish for "striped." *B. listada* and its hybrids are so distinctive that they have their own horticultural group: Shrub-like Distinctive Foliage *listada*-like. This begonia can grow to be as much as a foot in height, but its real tendency is to spread out rather than grow tall.

The leaf is hairy dark green with a white stripe down the middle of it. The underside is red. On average, they will be 4" long by 1-1 3/4" wide. On occasion *B. listada* will sport and produce triangular leaves (as featured on the back cover of a past *Begonian* issue), but this is not a stable mutation and the plant will soon revert to its original leaf.

The flowers are white with pink hairs on the buds. The buds on my plant have fallen off without opening. It's a sparse bloomer in the fall and winter.

This [Normand's plant] *B. listada*, which is in a six inch pot, is the best I've ever done in my attempts at growing this begonia. The 108° to 110° summer temperatures in my greenhouse were too hot, and fatal, for this begonia. Last summer I grew it outside on the north side of the house and my plant was much happier.

In doing the research on this begonia I learned that it can be propagated from a leaf! That will be my next project.

An excellent photo of B. listada as grown in the Netherlands, taken by Antoon Hoefnagels,



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appears on page 194 of the September/October 2002 Begonian. It was also featured in an article by Peter Sharp of Australia in our last issue on page 69. I have always loved B. listada and also find it a difficult one to grow. As do so many begonias, it likes it cool, but not cold, and humid. Thus, for me it grows fine winters inside, but neither inside nor outside in our heat. And definitely, it does start from a leaf - one of my first experiences with the fact that there are no hard and fast rules in begoniadom; always there are exceptions, and so I very often try starting leaves of other than rhizomatous where I have been told it will not work. Usually it doesn't, but often it will! Normand's article first appeared in the December 2002, Buxtonian, newsletter of the Buxton Branch. He has a regular monthly feature for each issue on 'Plant of the Month.' Normand is also a well known grower of our difficult begonias.

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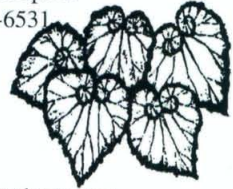
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*Here are two more photos of Terry Tasker's plants. We see from the photo above that *B. gehrtii*, center, grows as well in England as we saw it did in Portugal a few issues ago. Below are his many beautiful Rex cultivars.*



Growing Begonias of *All* Kinds in England

by Terry Tasker

I have grown and shown double tuberous begonias for twenty years, but over the past six years or so I have grown more species begonias than I have double tuberous. At one time I grew over two hundred pots of double tuberous begonias for showing.

My attention is now drawn to the decorative leaf, textures, shapes, colours, growing habits and places of origin of species and hybrid begonias. A whole new world has opened up for me in this fascinating hobby. My collection now consists of two hundred species and three hundred plus hybrids/cultivars. I thirst for more.

Rhizomatous begonias are in general, the most popular of all the begonias I have come across. Their almost endless shapes, colours, textures, growing habit and ease of keeping (with a few exceptions) makes them ideal for the beginner to start growing begonia species or hybrids. I have found they need free draining compost, nutrients, water, (but not too much) light and slighter cooler conditions than other begonias.

I do not over pot my plants, as they grow better when root bound. If I have to pot on I only use the next size pot. I feel plants get stressed when over potted.

I mist my plants with a foliar feed in spring; this helps to stimulate action of new growth. I still use urea and nitrate of potash at the quarter strength, on my established plants as it is recommended for double tuberous with a slight variation in that I add Epsom salts to the mix one tea spoon to a gallon of spray. In summer they

are fed with a very high potash tomato feed. I water or spray in the morning so the plants are dry by late afternoon/evening. My green houses are always set, in winter, at 70°F plus purely because I have some very rare and difficult to keep begonias and humidity is at 50% rising to 70% in summer.

The heat is given by two gas boilers and pipe from domestic supply; no fumes are given off just heat. Don't be put off by these temperatures; many will tolerate as low as 45°F in winter.

Growing begonias or any plant is just common sense. Study your subject and give then what they require.

One thing you must be on the look out for is signs of powdery mildew on the foliage. Remember prevention is better than cure. I have always followed a practice of spraying any insecticides/pesticides or fungicides every two weeks. Get into a routine; it pays dividends in the end. And yes, I do have air circulating fans as well.

To get good growth out of my begonias they need light. Too little light and they grow leggy and will never look right. Too much and the plants will scorch and possibly wither and die. I grow them in a shade that you can just about see a shadow on the plant from your hand when the sun is out. This seems to be just right for them.

As the plants are growing, make sure you turn the pot each week; the plant will grow even and give a more pleasing all-round shape to it.

Once the plants are growing well I will propagate from them. Rhizomatous

I do not overpot my plants, as they grow better when root bound.

begonias are, I feel, one of the easiest to take cuttings from. There are several methods in which this can be done, but one of the more popular ways I use is my method for small eyelash type such as *B. 'Red Planet'* and *B. 'English Lace'*.

Prepare a seed trays a few days before by cleaning thoroughly and filling with cutting compost water in with a weak solution of fungicide, place the lid on the tray and put on to propagating bed set at 75°F. This will warm up so the cuttings are not put into cold compost.

Choosing a plant from which I need to propagate I cut off a leaf together with its stem, about two inches in length. Dip the leaf into a solution of fungicide to make sure it is free from disease. Insert the stem into compost about ½ inch and firm. Continue until the tray is full. Do not let plants overlap. The surface of the leaf must not be allowed to touch the compost, as this would risk decay. I do not use rooting powder; if the plant is healthy there is no need.

I cannot stress how important it is to be clean as possible when taking any cuttings or setting seed.

Before putting on the cover, water the cuttings with a suitable fungicide, which has been allowed to stand for a few hours to come to room temperature. Place the tray into the propagator. Give then as much light as possible; if you have grow lights, give the cuttings sixteen added hours of light until rooted then reduce to ten.

Spray as required keeping humidity high. I have found that putting 'Maxicrop' original seaweed extract, which contains a growth stimulant in my sprayer, is excel-

lent for any type of cuttings. If you do not have grow lights do not be put off; it just takes a little longer that's all.

After 3 to 5 weeks (depending on variety) small plantlets will appear from below the compost all round the bottom of the stalk.

At this stage I start to acclimatise the young plants by removing the propagator top for a few hours a day until they are ready to be potted to their first pot. Carry on foliar feeding and do not overwater the compost. Pot on as required.

The compost I have been trying for the last six months is a peat substitute; it is a very fine, but coarse, coconut fibre.

For rooting begonias I have had nothing better in all the years I have been growing. In my opinion it is ideal for getting your cuttings/tubers a good start into life.

Up to date, using this method, I have taken over two thousand cuttings, losing twenty. I need to grow so many as I love to show my plants. Try the above and publish your findings in the bulletin. You might find a better variation.

Terry's address will be found on page 86. We welcome a new contributor from England! He helps the editor reach the goal of at least one new contributor for each issue. (Others also appear in this issue.) Those of you who have not yet joined that elite group, send the editor an article! And of course you will then be even more welcome in the category of regular contributors!

News: ABS, Branch, International

The list of adoptors of species maintained by **Rekha Morris** is growing! National Directors are urged to collect from their Branch members a list of species being grown to send to **Bill Claybaugh** and a list of those wishing to adopt a species to send to **Rekha Morris**. Remember, you will then receive the SOS Newsletter for adopters. If you do not adopt a species, then you may subscribe to the newsletter for \$5. Rekha's address is 318 Woodland Dr., Pendleton, SC 19670 or by email at shivavana@juno.com. Bill's address is on page 119.

The Thelma O'Reilly Reprint Fund is growing. **Tim O'Reilly** gave it a big boost with a \$500. contribution. A number of items have been recommended for reprint. Readers, however, may actually have reprints made themselves, funded by the Fund, and need only seek approval for the item from the Publication Committee, chaired by the *Begonian* editor. Just send a copy with estimated costs to the editor (address on page 118). Return of the costs to the Fund from sales would be expected of course. New publications may also apply for support from the Millie Thompson Publication Fund. Contributions to either fund are also welcomed.

Tom Ogren, author of a number of garden books including *Allergy-Free Gardening* (Ten Speed Press), has asked that we tell you that he has a new book *Safe Sex in the Garden* (about plant sex that is, he says). I know many of you suffer allergies and might be interested. You may reach Tom at www.allergy-free-gardening.com.

In January the Potomac Branch visited the U.S. Botanic Gardens in Washington, D.C. where they were "able to see a number of gorgeous begonias looking very happy hidden and some in prominent places." (**Barbara Nunes**, Editor). In February, led by **Johanna Zinn**, they planted their seed from Indonesia collected by **Scott Hoover**.

Planting seed seemed to be on everyone's mind this winter. **Cheryl Lenert** provided to the Astro Branch in Houston a demonstration on how to harvest, prepare, and plant begonia seeds. Seed were provided from the ABS Seed Fund and other Astro members to those interested in planting seed.

From the *San Miguel Beacon* of the Margaret Lee Branch in California we learn: "There is some further information about *B. teuscheri*, our branch plant selection for S.O.S. I reported in the last newsletter that I had asked Jack Golding to find out why Doorenbos had assigned *B. teuscheri* to the American section *Pritzelia*. **De Wilde** at Wageningen replied that no one there knows the answer! So, the true origin of *B. teuscheri* is not known--and may never be known." (**Ed Bates**, Editor)

Virginia Jens and **Mary Sakamoto** have moved - check out page 119 for their new addresses.

Remember if you want your meeting advertised in the Coming Events calendar in each issue, send a notice on the order of those appearing on page 118 and send it to the editor, address on page 118.

CLAYTON M. KELLY SEED FUND LISTING

The Margaret Lee Branch, San
Diego County, CA
Michael Ludwig, Administrator

The seed fund is a service to members only. It is a privilege of your membership.

DISCLAIMER: The seeds distributed by the seed fund are identified as received from the donors. The seed fund cannot guarantee that the identification is correct. The species names (in italics) reported here are correct based on the latest information from **BEGONIACEAE**, Ed. 2; Golding, and Wasshausen.

When you find that seeds received from the seed fund do not develop into the plant described please notify the Seed Fund so that a warning can be published for others who may have received seeds from the same batch. Each offering is identified by a code to be used whenever writing to the Seed Fund about the seeds. The descriptions published are from the literature and apply to the name used for the offerings.

The Seed Fund needs donations of seeds. Seeds may be traded for listed seeds. Seeds may be ordered from the master list by name. If you have a special need ask the Seed Fund Administrator. Please pollinate your species begonias with pollen from other plants of the same species and contribute (or exchange) to the seed fund.

Most packets of species seeds are \$1.50; all packets of cultivars (including open pollinated) seeds are 50¢ per packet. Very rare seeds and newly collected seeds will be \$2.00 or more per packet. California residents please add 7.75 % sales tax. All orders must be accompanied by check or money order, **payable in US funds ONLY, to The Clayton M. Kelly Seed Fund.**

Costs of mailing: US only: 1-12 packets \$1; 13-24, \$1.35; 25-36, \$1.71; 37-48 (2 cans), \$2.30; 49-60, \$2.66.

Canada only: 1-12 packets, \$1.10; 13-24, \$1.46; 25-36, \$1.82; 37-48 (2 cans) \$2.35; 49-60, \$2.71.

Mexico only: 1-12 packets, \$1.15; 13-24, \$1.51; 25-36, \$1.87; 37-48 (2 cans), \$2.50; 49-60, \$2.81.

All other international mail: 1-12 packets, \$1.85; 13-24, \$2.68; 25-36, \$3.68; 37-48, \$4.68; 49-60, \$5.68. Please send your order with payment to:

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The CLAYTON M. KELLY SEED FUND is managed by the Margaret Lee Branch of the ABS in San Diego County, California.

Thank you to recent donors for their seed donations: **Beatrice Huckreide, Eleanor Calkins, Ingeborg Foo, Thelma O'Reilly, and Michael Ludwig.**

Please make these changes to the master seed list for 2003:

DELETE: *B. luxurians* op, *B. manicata*, *B. 'Odorata Rosea'*, U #007, mixed Rhizmatous hybrids

ADD: *B. herbacea*, *B. tayabensis*—LIMITED
B. 'Costello', *B. 'Kent Brandon'*, *B. barkeri*
B. heracleifolia from Zongolica—LIMITED
B. heracleifolia from border San Luis Potosia
Mixed seed-- includes *B. incarnata*,
B. manicata and others
B. wallichiana—LIMITED

Rekha Morris's seed from Mexico: U #443
—I'll try to find out something about this one.
I'm not sure which it is according to the notes.

BEGONIA DESCRIPTIONS FOR SEED FUND

Descriptions for ML03 are being published in installments. IN this issue are *B. coriacea* to *B. dregei*.

B. coriacea Hasskarl. [Java] (Sect. *Reichenheimia*) (Syn. U087) An enchanting small begonia with rounded, peltate leaves the color of deep copper; continuously blooming deep pink flowers; needs high humidity.

B. crassicaulis Lindley [Guatemala] (Sect. *Gireoudia*) Erect rhizome; glossy, dark green, palmately lobed handsome leaves drop in late winter; blooms on bare rhizome then leaf out after the blooms have faded.

B. cubensis. Hasskarl [W.I., Cuba] (Sect. *Begonia*) (Syn. *cubinicola*) Shrub-like; dainty small rippled green leaves; white to pink blossoms in spring and summer.

B. cucullata Willdenow [Brazil], (Sect. *Begonia*) Shrub like, Stems to 3' little branched; leaves to 4", inrolled at base, glossy green; flowers in summer, white to pink.

B. cucullata Willdenow var. *arenosicola* Smith & Schubert [Brazil] (Sect. *Begonia*). Succulent stems to 3', green, little branched; green leaves to 4"; white flowers much of the year. Variety *arenosicola* is distinguished by the narrowly elliptic leaves, rounded at the tip, narrow unequally cuneate at the base; and large subentire roundly obtuse stipules.

B. deliciosa Linden ex Fotsch [Borneo] (Sect. *Platycentrum*) medium growth, bushy; deeply lobed, olive-green grey spotted leaves, red reverse; large soft pink flowers.

B. diadema Linden ex Rodigas [Asia: Borneo?] (Sect. *Platycentrum*) Rhizomatous, stems to 2 feet, succulent; leaves

many, deeply and irregularly palmately lobed, toothed, glossy green with white blotches, petioles red; flowers white or pink, in cymes enveloped in a dark red sheath before opening, male flowers 2 inches across with 4 tepals, female flowers smaller with 5 tepals. Autumn to winter.

B. dichroa T. A. Sprague [Brazil] (Sect. *Gaerdtia*) Grows on an erect stem, half drooping, to 2 ft; has short, reddish green petioles, glabrous wavy dark green leaves and fragrant orange flowers most of the year.

B. dipetala Graham [India] (Sect. *Haagea*) The name means two petalled. Two feet tall. Thick stemmed, rigidly erect, brown rarely branched. Leaves medium, ovate-pointed, doubly toothed, green with scattered bristly hairs, red beneath. Large, soft white to pink fragrant flowers in pendulous clusters. Collected in the Bombay area; has annual rainfall over 80 inches from July to October; sandy loam; temp. 68°F—86°F.

B. dominicalis A. de Candolle (Sect. *Begonia*) [Lesser Antilles, Dominica] Erect shrub to 4'; leaves bare, medium green, entire, oval with long tips, to 10"; inflorescence dense with hundreds of very small greenish-white flowers.

B. dregei var. *dregei* Otto & Dietrich [South Africa] (*Augustia*) Stem with enlarged caudex, sometimes referred to as semi-tuberous, stems 1-3 feet, succulent; leaves 3 inches long, ovate or rhombic, shallowly lobed, toothed, thin, light green with purple veins and lightly spotted with grey above reddish underneath; flowers few, white, on axillary peduncles. Summer.

B. dregei Otto & Dietrich var. *macbethii* L. H. Bailey Stem with enlarged caudex, sometimes referred to as semi-tuberous, 1-2 feet; small maple-leaf-like leaves; blooms early spring to late fall; very subject to mildew.

COMING EVENTS

July 19, 2003, 9-5 p.m., Westchester Begonia Society Annual Show & Sale. One day only. We are in a lovely, spacious new location, Covenant Presbyterian Church, 6323 W. 80th St. (Corner of 80th & Sepulveda), Los Angeles, CA 90045. This year's show will honor **Michael Kartuz** hybrids. Admission is free. Easy and plentiful parking. For more information contact **Janet Brown** at JBBROWN3@aol.com or by phone at 310-670-4471.

August 28-September 2, 2003, Southwest Region Get-Together & Judging School, Ft. Worth, TX. Includes ABS Annual Board meeting and installation of ABS officers. Hotel will be Hyatt Regency DFW. Thursday will be judging school and show and sale set-up. On Friday will be judging and a special seminar by **Bill Claybaugh** on using the Smithsonian key to identify species (9 a.m. to 3 p.m.) and opening of show and sale. Saturday: Show and sale; ABS Board meeting, lunch (probably at FW Botanic Garden), afternoon seminar by **Linda Shires** on propagation and a cutting party at FWBG; back to hotel for banquet and & ABS annual meeting & installation of officers. Sunday: Show and sale, nurseries tour. Monday: Nurseries tour. More information to come.

2004 Convention: Information coming soon!

**Closing Date for July/August 2003 issue news is May 15,
but work on the issue begins on May 1.**

**If you have a new feature article, please provide by May 1.
The September/October issue will be the 2003 Convention issue!
Send your photos, letters or articles as soon as you can!**

The Begonian

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