

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: **Johanna Zinn** took this dramatic photo of *B. ludwigii* while touring **Gene Salisbury's** Tonkawa, OK greenhouse during the 2003 Convention. It is easy to see why this is one of his favorite begonias.

Back: **Joy Porter** gives us another beautiful watercolor, this time of *B. U273*. Read about this in a new listing of Unidentified Begonias by **Thelma O'Reilly** on page 187.

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Convention Issue: Our Begonia Heritage

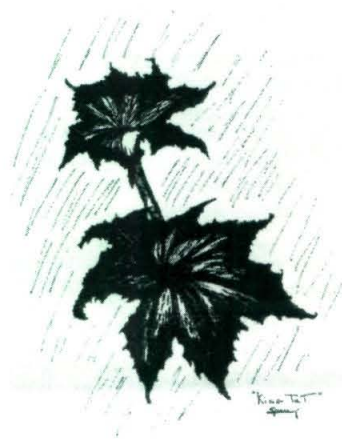
Read all about the 2003 ABS Convention held in April in Oklahoma City described to perfection by **Janet Brown**. There seemed to be more species winners than ever before and cultural awards were many. To round out this convention issue there are also papers included from the 2002 Association of Australian Begonia Society Convention held in Perth, Australia.

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*Winner of Astros Branch
Drawing Contest: B. 'King
Tut' by Sue Sperry.*

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Quick

Check your mailing label. If it reads **200311 or 200312**, your membership is about to expire. Please renew! We don't want to lose you.

President's Message...

This, my last letter to you as president of ABS will be rather brief. This past two years have gone by quickly. As with all things in life there have been the good and not so good. However, I have been very fortunate in that I have learned a lot about the organization of ABS. So I offer to you that you may contact me with questions or concerns you may have about ABS. Just maybe, I can help.

On another front I have also been very fortunate, and that has been the caring and support/work of the board and the members. I thank all of you who care enough about ABS to have taken the time to write, call or fax. Our organization is not nearly as dependent on the president as it is on all who volunteer to do the many chores that keep us going. With one exception, I will not name individual members, rather just look at the back inside cover and the preceeding page. The exception is our editor Freda Holley. Not only does she do a great job editing, she has also done a fine job of making my letters to you "professional." Thank you, Freda.

Speaking of editors, subject to board approval, we have a new Members-at-Large (MAL) newsletter editor - **Sandy Boyd**. My thanks to her for volunteering. She will produce the two remaining issues this years, so currently paid up members of MAL will receive their subscription. dues for the newsletter are \$5, payable at the start of each calendar year. We must have at least 50 paid memberships if we ask Sandy to put in all the work involved.

Finally, no credit belongs to me for the many accomplishments of ABS these past two years. The credit belongs to you. My congratulations to our new and continuing elected officers, my thanks to them

for volunteering. They will serve you and A.BS well.

In friendship,
Morris Mueller

Letters to the Editor

Conventions

Being a relative newscomer and having attended only one other convention, I as more of a contributor came to Oklahoma with a sense of inquiry as to how a successful convention can be had and found that the folks from the OKC Branch and those from contributing branches gave a great deal to make for an educational and *wonderfully enjoyable experience*.

We of the Mabel Corwin, Marge Lee, and Alfred D. Robinson Branches here in San Diego look forward to hosting a convention that may too bring all us friendly begonia lovers together.

Best to all,
Elaine Y. Burden,
Mabel Corwin/
Marge Lee Branches

**The MAL Newsletter
has a new editor,
Sandy Boyd!
Subscribe today;
send \$5 (4 issues) to:**

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Convention 2003—Our Begonia Heritage

April 23-27 Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

by Janet Brown

We came from all over the United States on Tuesday, April 22, to celebrate our begonia heritage and were warmly welcomed in true Oklahoma style by the wonderful members of the Fred A. Barkley Branch of the American Begonia Society.

The Tours:

After a pleasant journey, the Happy Hour, an excellent dinner, a good night's sleep and a great Embassy Suites breakfast, we set off at 7:30 am Wednesday for the long awaited tour to northern Oklahoma and the fabulous Salisbury Greenhouse. The skies were threatening but we had a great driver and we arrived in good time at Tonkawa. The greenhouse although quite large is so packed full of gorgeous begonias that we had to go in groups of ten. While waiting we were treated to Ann & Gene's beautiful home with refreshments and lots of talk. The greenhouse was worth waiting for. There is an amazing eclectic collection of begonias from rare and exotic species to the latest hybrids.

We could not imagine seeing a better collection, nor a more beautifully grown one. After a very pleasant time oohing and aahing we had to leave and went on to a delicious lunch at Northern Oklahoma College. The rain had started so we just got a glance at the gardens and then went on to

Ponca City where we visited the Pioneer Woman Museum with the lovely statue in the square before it. The statue was a gift to the city and Oklahoma from E.W. Marland, an oil baron, who at one time controlled 10% of all the oil reserves in the world! His mansion, built in 1925 at a cost of \$2.5 million, was our next stop. You leave the plains of Oklahoma and enter Europe—a lovely Italianate structure of 43,000 square feet with 55 rooms. It was a delight to see. By the time we left the rain was beginning in earnest and during the trip back we were in the capable hands of our excellent driver. It poured and the traffic increased as we neared the capital but

no tornadoes, just thunder and lightning. A lovely day in spite of that.

Thursday:

We got up a little later for this one but it was also a very full day. Our first stop was TLC Nursery where we had plenty of time to shop and check

out the variety of plants available in OKC. The staff had refreshments waiting for us and couldn't have been nicer. From there we went to the Cowboy Hall of Fame, actually the official name is National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum. At the last convention in OKC in 1994 the banquet was held here and we were able to tour some of the galleries. However, it was still being built and it was quite a surprise to find a very large complex with many galleries and displays, including a whole west-

The greenhouse was so packed with gorgeous begonias we had to go in groups of ten... We could not imagine seeing a better collection nor a more beautifully grown one.

ern town. There is a large park with Remington's 'Comin' Thru the Rye' and 'Buffalo Bill' by Leonard McMurry dominating. The gardens are lovely with other sculptures and several monuments to famous horses and rodeo bulls as well as the cowboys. And of course their most famous work the spectacular and moving

The spectacular and moving "End of the Trail" by James Earle Fraser has its own very special spot dominating the main entrance.

"End of the Trail" by James Earle Fraser has its own very special spot dominating the main entrance. The museum also has a very nice restaurant that we all enjoyed. Next stop was the Dutch Forest Gardens. It is rather difficult to describe this place. It is a very posh suburb of OKC with very large homes and lots. The home we visited had a most magnificent garden that was more like a park with a large pond and trails through the trees. It is a test garden for the Daylily Society so there were lots of day lillies and many other plants as well, including begonias.

Another lovely day with no rain.

Friday: This was a 'day on our own'. We tried to clerk at the show but weren't needed so we headed downtown to the National Memorial and a day we will never forget. We thought about an hour would be needed, instead it was three and it was hard to leave even then. The bombing of the Murrah Building took place on April 19, 1995 just eleven months after the '94 convention. We were there almost eight years later.

First you enter the outside memorial

with the chairs and the shallow reflecting pool and two high stone walls at either end. One says 9:01 and the other 9:03. The bomb went off at 9:02. The museum is in a building directly opposite to where the Murrah Building stood and it was heavily damaged in the blast.

It just reopened in 2001 and the museum in 2002. Buildings in the blocks around are obviously new or in the process of rebuilding. The site is flanked by a church on either side. These were damaged also but stood. You enter the museum and start the tour on the 3rd floor. The first exhibit is an ordinary day in Oklahoma City, the Festival of Arts was going on and it was a perfectly normal morning. At the end of this exhibit you wait to enter a room that takes only 10 people at a time. Once inside you sit and listen to a tape recording of a meeting that was going on that morning in the Water Resources Office.

Suddenly there is a tremendous explosion, the tape rolls on with the sounds of confusion, screams, disbelief at what has happened. The doors at the other end of the room open and you are in the midst of the chaos. You see cases of twisted watches, keys, glasses; life size photos of the rubble and destruction; you hear stories of those who survived and those who lost relatives and friends. There is one room that has been glassed in that has been left just as it was that morning, completely destroyed, the ceiling collapsed, the walls open.

As you go through the rooms you are taken through the investigation and the arrest and trial of McVeigh and the others responsible. But mostly the focus is on the people who were killed and injured and their families. Just when you think you have seen everything and cried your last tear there is a circular room lined with little glass cases. Each contains a picture of a



*Johanna Zinn shares with us a view at left of the jungle area of Oklahoma's Myriad Gardens. Many of these rhizomatous begonias there originated in the greenhouse of **Gene Salisbury** of which we see just the front quarter in Johanna's next photo. For many this visit to the Salisbury's was one of the favorite activities offered in the 2003 Convention.*



victim, 168 in all, and something that was dear to them—a doll, teddy bear, race car. That was the hardest to take and the most moving. Outside again you visit the Survivor Tree that was badly damaged in the blast but has come back and the Survivor Wall with the names of the 800 who got through it although not unscathed.

They say the memorial chairs and plaza are incredibly beautiful at night. We didn't get to see it at night but will always remember it: "*MAY ALL WHO LEAVE HERE KNOW THE IMPACT OF VIOLENCE*".

THE SEMINARS:

#1 On Wednesday evening we met **Mark Tebbitt**, a charming young man from the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Mark is a cultural taxonomist who has worked at the Glasgow Botanic Garden. He spends half his time on begonia research and half writing a book on the DNA of begonias. His talk was most interesting on species and what prevents species from hybridizing. He had an excellent slide presentation with interesting pictures, including electron microscope shots of begonia seed. He also spoke about preserving our species and said that 64 begonias are listed as endangered at this point though there may actually be many more in peril. We are looking forward to the publication of his book, possibly next year and hearing much more from this young begonia scientist.

I should mention that there was a bit of projector trouble at the beginning and **Rekha Morris** filled in for a few minutes telling her story of the latest trip to Mexico in April. (Don't miss the great article in the May/June *Begonian* on her collecting trip last December). Husband Michael had a bad fall while collecting with Rekha this time. He slipped on a hillside and went down 15 feet clutching the precious bag of

specimens as he fell. The accident was just two weeks before the convention and he was still in a lot of pain and using a cane for the injured hip but at least no broken bones.

#2: On Thursday night we had a delightful hour with our friend **Mike Flaherty** from Montecito. Westchester launched his brilliant career and his seminar in OKC was even better. It was a great tour of the mansions of Montecito and how to use begonias when you have endless money. Despite the great entertainment of his talk and slide show we should recognize how much he is doing to show off our beloved begonias by using them as dramatic and glorious landscape plants.

#3: **Mary Fuqua** followed with a wonderful, in every sense of the word, talk on growing the species and natural hybrids found in Indonesia by **Scott Hoover** and herself on their expeditions. Sadly the one planned for this year has had to be postponed due to the political situation but hopefully will be rescheduled next year. There is much to be done. In the meantime the job of growing on the seed brought back from these trips is a full time job. Mary grows in her basement as well as at the New England Tropical Conservatory and told of the difficulty of keeping the specimens going and trying to get them to flower. *B. robusta* is a beauty, very variable in color and growth, some green some beautiful shades of deep red and magenta. *B. robusta* has never flowered in captivity. So if you are growing it from the Hoover seed and it flowers shout it out!

Mary would like to see these collected species grown in their home country and then distributed to other parts of the world. This would help to stem the habitat loss and preserve those endangered species. A great and enlightening talk from this amazing woman.

#4: On Saturday morning the semi-

nars continued. First was a panel of hybridizers including **Michael Kartuz**, **Kathy Goetz**, **Charles McGough** & chaired by **Gene Salisbury**. We saw some lovely new plants and learned some of the secrets—

The star was a beautiful new Rex hybridized by Michael Kartuz that went for over \$120.00!

n o t all—of these creative, patient, perfectionist people who add to our begonia world. Afterwards some of the plants were auctioned off. The star was a beautiful new Rex hybridized by Michael Kartuz that went for over \$120.00! (Yes, he has more and will be sure we get some for our show.) This was a great opportunity to announce our show this summer honoring Mike's hybrids and that was done to great applause.

#5: There are few people who know more about begonias and collecting them in the wild than **Kathleen Burt-Utley**. This charming lady has been everywhere searching for begonias along with her husband who is a world famous expert in bromeliads. She gave a slide show of a recent trip to Oaxaca and the Sierra Madre. One showed a very big pig wallowing in a huge rut in the road—just an example of the difficulties faced in exploring these out of the way regions.

The reward for us is the collection of old and new species, preserving and studying them. Burt-Utley is a professor in the Department of Biological Sciences, University of New Orleans.

#6: The last seminar was a fabulous trip to Australia by **Don Miller**. He attended the 2002 Australian Begonia Society con-

vention and showed pictures of the glorious gardens he visited as well as some photos from past trips. There are no known species of begonia found in Australia but there may be some chance of finding them in the York Peninsula which is in the north and very close to New Guinea. The next Aussie Convention is 2005 in Melbourne/Ballarat.

THE SHOW:

What a great show it was. The September/October *Begonian* will have a complete list with lots of pictures of the glori-

*Charles Jaros
drove from Florida
with 15 beauties
to enter.*

ous plants. Best In Show was a magnificent *B. roxburghii* grown by **Diana Wilkerson** who also had many other beautiful plants in the show. **Charles Jaros** drove from Florida with 15 beauties to enter. And **Gene Salisbury** had many beautiful entries without making a dent in his greenhouse.

THE PLANT SALE:

Incredible and the usual madhouse. They really had a tremendous selection of the rare and wonderful and the Friday night receipts were quite amazing. We all bought a lot, some more than others, and we should be seeing some of these lovely things in the next few months at the summer shows. Credit goes to **Wanda & Richard Macnair** who were in charge of the

plant sale.

They did a magnificent job.

THE MEETINGS:

President **Morris Mueller** presided over the ABS meeting on Saturday afternoon, following a lovely luncheon. Time and space do not permit the meeting report in this issue but I will try to have a report at the meeting.

It was a shame that our National Director **Ramona Parker** could not be at the convention due to poor health, however we hear that she is doing better now and will hopefully get to the next big meeting at the Southwest Region Get-Together in August in Dallas. The convention is just not the same without Ramona.

Two things to mention before the full report: Parliamentarian **Marge Lee** has resigned her position after many, many years. Pres. Mueller read her letter of resignation at the meeting and many tears were shed. However, the position, a very important one, has been awarded to **Ann Salisbury** and who can think of a better or more qualified person.

Second major announcement: The 2004 Convention will be held in late August in San Diego and will be sponsored by the San Diego branches and cochaired by **Michael Ludwig & Dean Turney**. Much more news on this great event will be coming.

THE BANQUET:

Delicious food, lovely table decorations and programs, absolutely superb

Master of Ceremonies **Tim O'Reilly**. Our beloved **Thelma O'Reilly** was taken ill on Friday night and had to be hospitalized at 4:00 am. Despite her sudden illness she insisted that Tim carry on and carry on he did. Thelma was released on Sunday and they were able to get home where she is recuperating and doing very well. We missed her! Morris Mueller gave a short but moving speech. Ann Salisbury received a special award for her work on the convention and for many years service to the ABS.

The other ABS awards were given as follows: Rudolf Zieshenne Award to **Freda Holley**, Begonian Editor; Alfred D. Robinson Medal of Honor for a begonia cultivar to B. 'Cowardly Lion' / **Kit Jeans Mounger**, hybridizer; Eva Kenworthy Gray Award to **Cheryl Lenert**; and the Herbert P. Dyckman Award to **Janet Brown**. The awards were presented by Awards Chairman **Michael Ludwig** and as always his remarks were moving and deeply appreciated.

In closing we must all thank Convention Chairmen **Ann & Gene Salisbury** and the Convention Committee for a marvelous, happy, begonia filled 5 days in Oklahoma City. They are the greatest and really know how to make you feel welcome.

Our begonia spirit has been re-charged while meeting with our friends, old and new. We wish you all could have been with us to celebrate our passion for begonias and the people who help them grow to brighten our lives.

Hope you will do it again soon, Oklahoma, and we'll see you in San Diego next year.

*Don't Miss Convention 2004 in San Diego, CA!!
Make your plans now to attend.*

Our Begonia Heritage

Convention 2003 Begonia Winners

by Leora Fuentes

Best in Show: *B. roxburghii* grown by Dianna Wilkerson

Best Species: *B. U402* grown by Charles Jaros

Sweepstakes: Dianna Wilkerson with 12 Blue Ribbons

Alice Clark Artistic: Dora Lee Kimbrough

Showing is Sharing: Gene Salisbury with 42 entries

Hybrid of Distinction: *B. 'Winter Blanket'* hybridized and shown by Charles McGough

People's Choice: *B. U388* grown by Lou Dyess

Division Winners

	<u>Division</u>	<u>Begonia</u>	<u>Exhibitor</u>
A.	Cane-Like	<i>B. 'Ann Jones'</i>	George Macias
B.	Shrub-Like	<i>B. 'Frutescans'</i>	Lou Dyess
C.	Thick-Stem	<i>B. beddomei</i>	Dianna Wilkerson
E	Rhizomatous	<i>B. 'Kissammee'</i>	Gene Salisbury
EE	Rhizomatous - Unusual Growth/Foliage	<i>B. roxburghii</i>	Dianna Wilkerson
EEE	Rhizomatous - Distinctive Foliage	<i>B. 'Holley's Rage'</i>	Gene Salisbury
F	Rex Cultorum	<i>B. 'Simple Simon'</i>	Bill Claybaugh
G	Tuberous	<i>B. partita</i>	Tom Keepin
H	Trailing Scandent	<i>B. convolvulacea</i>	Lou Dyess
I	Contained Atmosphere	<i>B. xanthina v. picta</i>	Charles Henthorne
J	Species	<i>B. soli-mutata</i>	Dianna Wilkerson
L	Hanging Container	<i>B. holtonis</i>	Dianna Wilkerson
N	Novice	Rhizomatous Cultivar	Charles Henthorne
O	Novel Grown	<i>B. dregei</i>	Charles McGough
Q	Traveling Begonia	<i>B. 'Brown Jewel'</i>	Joyce Pridgen
T	Seedling	<i>B. nelumbifolia 'Red Vein'</i>	Freda Holley
U	New Introductions by hobby Grower	<i>B. 'Winter Blanket'</i>	Charles McGough
X	Photographs/Artistic	<i>B. 'Art Hodes'</i>	Carman Bahr
Y	Computer Enhanced Photos	<i>B. boliviensis</i>	Gene Salisbury
Z	Art	Begonia Watercolor	Dora Lee Kimbrough
ZZ	Crafts	Our Begonia Heritage Quilt	Leora Fuentes
ZZC	Collection of Five	Collection of Five	Bill Claybaugh

ZZF	Special Exhibits	<i>Research on Begonias of Veracruz</i>	Rekha Morris
ZZG	Companion Plants	<i>Dorestenia</i>	Gene Salisbury
ZZH	Contained Atmosphere	<i>Querfelix Zelanica Fern</i>	Leora Fuentes

Culture Awards

<u>Begonia</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Exhibitor</u>
<i>B.</i> 'Brown Jewel'	99	Joyce Pridgen
<i>B. hatacoa</i> 'Silver'	98.5	Joyce Pridgen
<i>B. roxburghii</i>	98	Dianna Wilkerson
<i>B.</i> 'Holley's Rage'	97.5	Gene Salisbury
<i>B.</i> 'Little Brother Montgomery'	97.5	Charles Jaros
<i>B. xanthina</i> v. <i>picta</i>	97	Charles Henthorne
<i>B. holtonis</i>	97	Dianna Wilkerson
<i>B. U388</i>	97	Armando Nodal
<i>B. dregei</i> (Syn. <i>partita</i>)	97	Tom Keepin
<i>B.</i> 'Silver Jewell'	97	Charles Jaros
<i>B.</i> 'Charles Jaros'	97	Charles Jaros
<i>B.</i> 'Kissammee'	96.5	Gene Salisbury
<i>B.</i> 'Anne Jones	96	George Macias
<i>B. soli-mutata</i>	96	Dianna Wilkerson
<i>B. U074</i>	96	Charles Henthorne
<i>B.</i> 'Raspberry Moon'	95	Charles Jaros
<i>B. convolvulacea</i>	95	Dianna Wilkerson
<i>B.</i> 'Brown Eyes'	95	Joyce Pridgen
<i>B. dregei</i>	95	Charles McGough
<i>B.</i> 'Lillian'	95	Gene Salisbury
<i>B. U404</i>	95	Charles Jaros
<i>B.</i> 'Frutescans'	95	Lou Dyess
<i>B. dregei</i> 'Glasglow'	95	Lou Dyess
<i>B. luzonensis</i>	95	Tom Keepin
<i>B.</i> 'Lois Burks	95	George Macias
<i>B.</i> 'Spider Man'	95	Charles Jaros



*Species rule the day! Top left is Dianna Wilkerson's Best of Show winner **B. roxburghii** and right her Division Winner **B. holtonii**. Below right is Charles Jaro's amazing Best Species and Best Division Winner **B. U404** and below left is Dianna Wilkerson's Division Winner **B. soli-mutata**.*



THEY'RE MORE THAN O.K.....

The 2003 ABS Award Winners

by Michael Ludwig

At the annual convention of the ABS, I again had the honor of presenting those members, which you view as a valuable asset, a token of our appreciation. They have helped us grow into a better and stronger society. These members have given of their time and talents to make this a better society for all. They have done this over an extended time or over and above normal member participation.

To start the awards there was a:

Special Presidential Award to Tim O'Reilly. He was recognized for his outstanding job as Master of Ceremonies numerous times and activities within and usually behind the scenes of the society. He can always be seen at conventions talking to other spouses and making all feel welcome weather they love begonias or not. He has given support to numerous programs within ABS most recently contributions to the reprint fund named for his lovely wife, Thelma. Thank you Tim and congratulations on this overdue recognition.

The Eva Kenworthy Gray award, given for cementing goodwill among the membership was awarded to **Cheryl Lenert.** Cheryl is the Bookstore manager. Last year she was chairman for the Houston convention, where she and her committee welcomed the members of the ABS and showed them the famous Texas hospitality. As an active member of the Southwest Region and numerous branches for many years, her smile and hard work is often seen and always welcomed. Thank you and well done, Cheryl.

The Alfred D. Robinson Medal was awarded to **B. 'Cowardly Lion'.** This real showstopper is the work of hybridizer par excellent, **Kit Jeans Mounger.** It is ABS registered plant # 969. A wonderful rhizomatous plant, it's beautifully chocolate marked light green spiraled leaves leave all wanting it. This plant is easily grown and has won division and best of show awards at numerous shows. Kit has produced numerous great hybrids and it's wonderful that she has finally been rewarded with this ADR winner.

The Herbert P. Dyckman award for service was presented to **Janet Brown.** She is currently on the Grant Review committee. She has served as a Vice President for a number of years and has survived being convention chairman. She has been an active member in the Los Angeles area branches for many, many years. She renders service at shows throughout the area and is very giving of her time. She's also a regular at conventions with her daughter.



To the left is **Cheryl Lenert** with her **Eva Kenworthy Gray Award** and below is **Janet Brown** holding the **Herbert Dyckman Award**. Photos by **Johanna Zinn**.



Cane Begonias: Plants for Now

Australian Convention Report
by Ross Bolwell

*This article appeared in the March 2003 **Begonia Australis** and was originally presented at the Association of Australian Begonia Societies Seventh Convention in Perth, Australia in 2002. The introduction is by **Tricia Marriott**, their editor.*

Ross Bolwell has been a grower and breeder for over thirty years. He lives, eats and breathes begonias! Trained in horticulture at Northern Sydney Institute of TAFE, Ryde College he later gained a Bachelor of Education: Adult Education at UTS Sydney. A nurseryman for 22 years he is currently Head Teacher, Horticulture at Ryde College. Ross still runs his nursery but now as an out-of-control hobby offering begonias for sale via mail order and at the nursery.

The sort of inspiration that led to the choice of this title came from driving around Sydney's newer suburbs recently, and seeing the new estates with small blocks of land and large houses. This set my mind to thinking what sort of plants would grow in these new estates.

Visiting a few friends living in these areas and seeing the lack of garden space around their homes made me realise that large plants would not be part of this brave new world. What sort of plant would be ideal in these situations? Well we are probably not talking about the perfect plant for somewhat imperfect conditions. Of course there is no such thing as a perfect plant because such would need to meet so many needs.

A perfect plant would have to grow

in full sun but at the same time be able to thrive in dense shade. It would suit indoors equally as outdoors. The perfect plant would also be happy in strong winds, hot temperatures but yet cope with frost. It would be drought tolerant but also able to survive periods of inundation. The flowering would be spectacular and continuous. No doubt it would be easy to grow and hard to kill. It would be disease resistant and suitable for pots as well as in the ground. Such a plant would be long lived and would not need any maintenance. The foliage would be a feature and the plant would be miniature, small and large to suit all needs!

Perhaps plastic or silk plants would be suitable. But we know that these are not perfect either. They are no cheaper than real plants. They fade over time, gather dust and never change. No new buds, no unfolding leaves, no developing flowers and no change. Boring! Such fake plants may have their place for some but to me they waste time and money. Poor imitations. These are not plants for our times.

So, let's decide on what the conditions for now and the future are, if housing continues this way. We used to have the standard $\frac{1}{4}$ acre housing block (about 1000m²) and the typical house built upon it was not large and there was plenty of space in both the front and back yards. The modern world advertises 600m² blocks as large! How big would a small block be? And the new houses are very big, mostly two-storey and they fill the block from side to side and almost fully front to back. This new housing creates very different growing conditions to that of the past.

Because of the height of double-storey houses more shade and less sun reaches the sides and the back yard. There is hardly a front yard to speak of and each side is barely large enough for a pathway. Quite often there are no eaves on these

homes. Many properties are fully paved, so the only plantings suitable are in tubs, pots or planters. Any soil areas often have builders' waste and rubble buried beneath and pH is often affected, usually upwards. Space for growing is restricted. Sunny bay windows are often used and there is some room for a conservatory or a small shade area. You can forget trees and large shrubs in such situations. So it's small shrubs, perennials, annuals and lawn. Enter the Cane Begonia. Canes fit these conditions beautifully.

Cane begonias are wonderful plants that provide many features for a garden. Their flowering alone is worthy of any planted area. Some are nearly ever blooming with large clusters of flowers from white through all shades of pink, orange and red. Some are two toned or picotee and yellow flowers are a distinct possibility for the future.

Flower clusters can range from as few as 20 or so flowers up to over 80 flowers per cluster. Individual flowers range in size from small (12mm) up to large (40mm). The flowering of these plants is enhanced by the foliage display. Often the leaves are patterned with spots or splashes of silver, pink or red. Sometimes there are subtle shades of green, from light green to almost black with many having a contrasting deep red reverse. The veins on the reverse side of some leaves are also deep red, with light green between. Those that are shy to flower often have such spectacular foliage that the flowers are not missed. One of the nicest features of canes is the different shapes of the leaves. The usual shape is botanically termed 'obtrullate', the classic 'angel wing' shape from which they get their alternate name of angel wing begonias. There are many other leaf shapes that enhance the look of different plants. The other nice feature of tree begonias is their fast growth and the continual appearance

of new canes from the base giving the plants an ever-changing look. So there are always new developing stems, leaves and flowers to provide interest.

Cane begonias are not fussy with the type of soil they are planted in. Small back yards are relatively easy to work to help improve the soil structure that has all too often been destroyed during the land clearing and building process. Because cane begonias are shallow rooted, raised beds are ideal to grow them in. They are tolerant of a wide range of pH, as many begonias in the wild grow in many differing soil types from limestone outcrops to acidic forest soils. The root systems will never reach the builders rubble beneath a built up bed. Again, as long as the soil is well drained but also able to hold sufficient moisture, any soil type will suffice. Provision of suitable mulching materials is beneficial to cane begonias as it helps maintain aeration and also helps to retain moisture. The suppression of weeds is another factor in favour of mulching.

Sunny spots that change to shade during the day and vice versa are great positions for canes. Sheltered behind fences that mark the boundaries between back yards makes ideal positions for these plants, as there is protection from the extremes.

Lets look at how canes fit the new housing ideal. Firstly size. Canes can be low growing and lax making them useful in pots and hanging baskets. These can be placed under pergolas, around pools, in garden beds or on verandahs. Medium sized plants can be placed in the garden with suitable varieties for full sun to half sun. These are also excellent in tubs and decorator pots. Then the tall varieties can be placed in narrow sections between houses or in gardens where their flower clusters can be seen peeping over the fence. They also grow very well in large

planter tubs.

Other than major storms where all plants are subject to damage, these new estates provide plenty of shelter from strong winds because the back yards are small and enclosed. Canes thrive in such sheltered positions and, with plenty of variety in sunlight, many exciting nooks and crannies can be found for them.

When it comes to temperature, being tropical plants, canes prefer to be warm rather than cold. They will survive hot summer temperatures as long as the water is kept up to them.

It is the cold that slows them down. When temperatures drop close to zero Celsius many canes will lose some of their leaves and nearly all stop growing for a while. Once those few cold weeks are over and temperatures begin to rise again they quickly put on new growth. Frost is probably the only factor that limits the use of these plants. But tubs of canes can be moved around in winter to avoid frost. One simple solution is to cover exposed plants with hessian. Unfortunately the new housing is devoid of trees that help create natural frost barriers. Also the lack of eaves on many homes offers no frost protection. Frosts will damage plants beneath shade cloth but not beneath glass, fibreglass or polycarbonate coverings. So it is important when planting canes in the ground that a frost-free position is selected. Otherwise you can treat them as annual plants as they sometimes do in the colder parts of the USA and Europe and let them perish and plant new ones next season.

When grown outside canes are not fussy as to humidity requirements. Indoors, they do need a little extra humidity because the air tends to be drier in such areas. Air conditioning is not suitable for them without humidification. Light levels indoors need to be high for canes to flower and if too low the plants will not survive.

Watering is critical for canes indoors. They need to become moderately dry between each watering so that aeration levels remain as high as the medium allows. Overwatering occurs through too frequent applications of water not from how much water is applied at each watering. Quality potting media can alleviate this problem to some degree. Over time all mixes compact and aeration reduces to a level where re-potting is essential.

To grow canes indoors all factors need to be in the correct balance: light, temperature, humidity, water and nutrients. These are what determines the success of canes indoors, in fact all indoor plants.

Tree begonias come mainly from the Amazon forests in South America. Fourteen of the species (excluding sub-species) come from Brazil, and only one comes from another country, that being Bolivia.

There are about 800 cane hybrids listed in my database and these come in all types and all sizes. From the tall Superba's, down to miniature forms and all sizes in between and the very special Mallet types, these are wonderful plants. It is very difficult to choose from among over 800 hybrids for mention. This can be narrowed down to Australian developed hybrids and other overseas varieties grown here.

Species are well worth considering for growing in the new estates. The low growing *Begonia albo-picta* with its greenish white flowers and small dainty spotted foliage would suit many positions in half sun. The very tall *B. angularis* also with marked grey green foliage and angular stems is another very useful species. I have seen this plant growing epiphytically on brickwork on one Australian property, where it was obviously well at home.

Two other species are ideal for growing in the new style of garden; these being *B. maculata* and *B. undulata*, the latter adapting well to full sun.

Low growing hybrids that suit the backyards of today include the dark lightly spotted foliage and pink flowers of *B.* 'Annan Charm', the delightful orange flowers of *B.* 'Aztec Sun' and *B.* 'Fabulous Tom'. *B.* 'Happy Heart' is a short growing bronze foliaged variety with pink flowers. *B.* 'Jester' is a small dark foliaged variety with a few spots and orange-pink flowers. The wonderful *B.* 'Lenore Olivier', sold as *B.* 'Zulu' in Australia, with its bright coral flowers and has been the parent of so many new hybrids. *B.* 'Lois Burks' also sold under another name in Australia as *B.* 'Tango' has bright green foliage and tangerine coloured flowers. *B.* 'Margo' with its small mid green foliage and mid pink flowers is ever blooming. *B.* 'Orange Rubra' is the orange flowered classic, *B.* 'Pinafore' also with small dark leaves and dark pink flowers is well known. *B.* 'Pink Imp' is also a dark foliaged dark pink flowered plant. Then there is *B.* 'Starry Night' with very dark spotted foliage and bright pink flowers. This plant is a must!

Medium growers useful for today are *B.* 'Annan Grace', a gorgeous light pink flowering begonia with silver spotted leaves. *B.* 'Christine B' is a plant with mid green leaves that have a thin red edge with bright cerise pink flowers. Of course the award winning *B.* 'Flamingo Queen' fits in this medium growing group. *B.* 'John Tonkin' is a large dark leafed hybrid with large apricot pink flowers, truly beautiful. *B.* 'Juanita's Jewel' is a begonia with mid green spotted leaves with flowers that are red in high light. A shy flowering plant for shade is *B.* 'Looking Glass' with spectacular silver leaves. Another dark foliage begonia with silver marked leaves and coral pink flowers is *B.* 'Mystic'. *B.* 'Pearl Lustre', a lesser-known sister plant to *B.* 'John Tonkin' with bright coral pink two-toned flowers. *B.* 'Pink Burgundy' is a fabulous dark foliage plant with pink flowers and red

reverse to the leaves. *B.* 'Shy Lady' has mid green leaves and white flowers with apricot petioles. Finally, the dark foliaged *B.* 'White Cascade' has white flowers with a hint of pink in bright light.

Tall growing begonias include *B.* 'Amazon', the coral flowering *B.* 'Aozuru', red *B.* 'Lucerna', the large flowered *B.* 'Orange Sherbet', the very tall *B.* 'Pink Cascade', the old favourite *B.* 'Pink Rubra', and the silver marked foliage with bright pink flowers of *B.* 'Silver Mirror'. Another group of begonias called Superba are mostly tall growing plants with very large exquisite leaves quite often marked and lobed. *B.* 'Esther Albertine' has mid green lobed leaves with light pink flowers. *B.* 'Irene Nuss' is a large pink flowered garden plant and *B.* 'Kermo Queen' is a delightful apricot pink version of it. Tall growing *B.* 'Kentwood', silver marked *B.* 'Lana' and *B.* 'Nokomis' are excellent plants. *B.* 'Sophie Cecile' also sold as *B.* 'Sylvia' in Australia is another great plant with wonderful superba leaves and is excellent in the garden. It is a little shy blooming.

One last group of tree begonias came about from crossing cane types with rex begonias. These plants combine the cane like habit with rex like leaves. Such plants are probably better in pots and tubs rather than in the ground but are very useful in sheltered situations in the new estate housing areas. Probably one of the toughest, though shy flowering is *B.* 'Melisse', a large leaved mallet with silver markings. One of the nicest mallets is *B.* 'Tingley Mallet' with its purple red leaves and pink flowers. Two others worth trying are *B.* 'Aya' and *B.* 'Don Miller'. The fantastic news about canes is that new hardier exciting varieties are regularly being introduced by a number of breeders around the world. These new plants will continue to provide begonia razzle-dazzle for new generations. So, there is a place for these won-

derful plants in the gardens now, and in the future and as the pressure for higher density housing keeps building block sizes down, the relevance and usefulness of cane begonias will continue to increase.

Surely these cane begonias are the plants for now!

Editor's Notes

Once again I have a short supply of articles. Please help me out! Won't you write something for the coming holiday issue?

Remember I have that lovely watercolor of the Chinese species *B. fimbriatipula* by **Joy Porter** that I would love to have a short article about by someone who grows or has grown it.

Over time I have discovered that the begonias that I love best mostly come from Brazil and the quantity and variety from there astound me. **Gene Salisbury** is fascinated by the plants of Madagascar. When you discover such a fascination with the flora of a certain country, you naturally begin to notice these and the environments they like. Aren't you fascinated with the begonias of a certain country or region? How about an article describing your experience with them?

Remember also that we have had very few articles about trailing scandents; there must be someone out there who grows one of these with ease and could tell us about. There are not a lot of these, but practically none of the hybrids have been written about. I notice that Logee's has a new one - *B. 'Potpourri'* - surely one of you has tried this one and can tell us about it! And I'll bet you've grown one of **Michael Kartuz's** hybrid trailers that you could tell us about!

Or how about combining country and trailers and write one about the trailing scandents from Africa? I manage to kill all those I try - do you have any secrets for getting them to do well?

Or from another angle, maybe you have grown a plant we wouldn't naturally think of as a trailer with good results. If so all of us basket lovers would like to know about it!

Do you live near a botanic garden that grows begonias? How about making a visit there and describing it and the begonias they grow for us?

Do you collect begonia stuff? How about describing that collection? I am sometimes amazed at how much I see on Ebay relating to begonias - how about an article on what you have discovered there? I know some of you must be buying Shelley china - tell us about that, where it's made, what's available, how old, what you have, what you want.

How about needlepoint? Have you seen interesting begonia needlepoint or needlepoint patterns? Or cross stitch?

Our Round Robins seem to be fading way or maybe they've just been replaced by the internet begonia chat group. I wonder if someone would not like to write up a regular summary of what's appearing on the chat line - what questions beginner's ask, threads that develop, hot topics. Wouldn't someone volunteer to do a bimonthly summary for those not able to tune in?

You get the drift! I would welcome anything that deals with begonias. Remember it doesn't even have to be typed; I've entered many a handwritten article and if you are not sure of the wording or the spelling of that begonia, that's what editors are really for!

Or just make my day and write a short letter to the editor!!

Announcement of ABS Grant and Request for Additional Funds for Trip to Mexico in October 2003

by **Rekha Morris**

It has been extremely satisfying to hear from so many members of the ABS that they enjoyed my account of the Dec.2002 - Jan. 2003 trip to document and collect begonias of Veracruz and Oaxaca states of Mexico funded fully by the ABS, several of its chapters and individual members [*Begonian*, pp. 87-93]. It has been especially exciting not only to hear that the seeds collected during this trip germinated promptly, but thanks to **Tom Keepin** I actually saw robust seedlings at the Oklahoma City convention this April. It is both with gratitude and excitement that I now wish to share with all those who supported me verbally and financially that at this same convention the Grants Committee of the ABS with **Janet Brown** as its chairperson endorsed my attempts to continue to document the begonias of Veracruz and Oaxaca by awarding me another grant of \$1500.00 for the next trip which I am planning for this October.

For those who may not be aware, I would like to mention that I have already taken a trip to Veracruz, San Luis Potosi and Oaxaca early this April [April 3rd - 12th, 2003] at my expense. An account of this trip is in progress, however, as a mark of my appreciation the seeds I collected have been handed over to **Ann Salisbury** for distribution to all the ABS chapters and individuals who supported my Dec./Jan. 2002/2003 trip. Among the new finds were seeds of *B. sericoneura* and *B. mariti*, the latter discovered and named by Prof. **Burt-Utley** to honor her husband.

I hope to make the October trip equally if not more fruitful as I will be exploring a few fresh areas [sections north of Xalapa, Xalapa Herbarium, eastwards to Lake Catemaco, further east to Minatitlan, and finally south to Acatlan along the border of Veracruz and Oaxaca where Prof. Burt-Utley has recorded *B. lyman-smithi* growing with *B. sericoneura*, and revisiting older ones along the way to continue to collect seeds of those species whose seeds I have yet to collect.

I now appeal not only to the generosity of those who supported and were satisfied with the results of my Dec./Jan. 2002/2003 trip, but also to those who have read my account of the Dec./Jan., 2002 / 2003 trip. I hope that having become acquainted with my commitment to both documenting and saving Mexican begonia species through this account, and the display at the Oklahoma City convention on my field research methodology there will be others who may feel stimulated to help fund this extensive trip currently in the planning stages.

Those who are able to make a contribution towards this October 2003 trip are requested to send checks to **Carol Notaras** [who as Treasurer for the ABS is in charge of all funds for such field research], 2567 Green Street, San Francisco, CA 94123 . Please do not send checks or cash contributions to me directly.

Rekha Morris,

June 25, 2003

Conservation Comments

by Bill Claybaugh,
Conservation Chairman, ABS

It's time for a change.

There have been three recent events, that combined, will force a readjustment in one element of the ongoing "Conservation Program". Let me explain.

First, I have recently reviewed the "traffic" on the Astro web site and find the consolidated listings of begonia pictures are the most popular pages for web site visitors. For those who have followed the evolution of this web site, they realize that since inception, about three years ago, the Astro web site has grown in size from about 10 pages and 50 pictures, to its present size of over 175 pages and over 1800 pictures. This information covers two national conventions, two South West Region (SWR) conventions, several ABS Board meetings, numerous branch meetings, several private begonia collections, a review of the Uxxx species, and pictures from **Scott Hoover's** explorations in Indonesia. Throughout this time, the web site has featured each event, as it happened, along with numerous pictures of plants and people. Finally, the best pictures of individual plants were consolidated into three files, featuring cultivars, species, and the Uxxx species. These are the popular ones, and I surmise that people are viewing these collections of photographs to help identify their plants.

Second, for the past six months I have been developing species description information, in preparation for the "Begonia Description and Use of the *Begoniaceae* Keys" workshop at the August '03 SWR meeting. This work includes a large number of botanical "characteristic terms" which describe begonia plants,

leaves, inflorescence, and flowers. Also, in preparation for using the *Begoniaceae* Keys, I have, with **Jack Golding's** help, created a glossary of over 500 descriptive terms that are needed to use the keys. All of this information is in the Workbook to be published in conjunction with the workshop. Now, having this information in one place, encourages me to put it to use describing as many species as possible.

Third, I have recently been unpleasantly surprised with the number of species plants that I have seen, or have bought into my collection, that are misnamed. Many times the names are only misspelled, but sometimes they are not even close, obviously describing an entirely different variety. It seems that many members have no reliable means of checking the identification of plants, so misidentifications are just passed along to the next member receiving a plant or cutting.

All of the above leads me to the conclusion that we need an easier way to identify species plants and we need to disseminate this information as broadly as possible. To that end, I am going to revise some of the Astro web site to emphasize species identification. The major tool will still be color photographs of plants, but added attention will be given to individual leaves and to inflorescence and flowers. Further, a section will be devoted to describing the plant parts in botanical terms, following the examples presented in the "Begonia Description ... " workbook. Because of space limitations, some older web pages will be eliminated to make room for the new work.

This approach has its problems, in that we must be certain of an identification before putting it on the web site as the "real McCoy". This last consideration will undoubtedly make the task more difficult, more time consuming, and may require the help of numerous members. We will start

with varieties whose identify is obvious, like *B. rajah*, and work our way toward the more difficult species like *B. sericoneura*, with its numerous synonyms. The concept of synonyms itself adds another important variable to the equation, which must be addressed.

Finally, this project will require considerable time to make real progress. The time frame is obviously dictated by the calendar because of plant blooming. The species to be covered in this activity will come from past and future shows, from private collections, and from the Fort Worth Botanical Gardens. I invite you to visit the Astro web site over the next year or so to view the transformation, as it takes place.

The web address is <http://absastro.tripod.com>.

The editor could really use some black and white begonia sketches for the table of contents page (see 163). Do you draw? Could you help?

Recycling Tip

Many growers have learned that they can make hundreds of plant labels by cutting up used white window blinds that they can buy at yard sales for about a dollar. But have you considered other creative uses for these labels? Buy a set in a distinctive color and make labels you can stick in a pot of cuttings that will be available for a plant sale or give away. Buy another color and stick it in plants to which you have applied a pesticide. Yet another color could mark those that have been fertilized if you are like many of us who don't get around to fertilizing all of them every time you water. These colors don't really make good labels because the writing won't show up well, but they are great for these other purposes.

And don't forget, if you have a tip for us, send it to: **Dianna Wilkerson** who is in charge of Quick Tips. Find her address including an email address on page 198.

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Michael Ludwig, Administrator

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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.

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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.. The donors this month are **Eleanor Calkins, Normand Dufresne, Ingeborg Foo, and Thelma O'Reilly.**

This fresh seed for this issue should be added to the Master Seed Fund List for 2003:

ML3: *B. carrieae* R.Ziesenhenn
[*Gireoudia*]

ML3: *B. scutifolia* J.D.Hooker
[*Loasibegonia*]

ML3: *B. U#412*

ML3: *B. U#444*

ML3: *B. versicolor* Irmscher
[*Platycentrum*]

ML3: *B. reniformis* Dryander [*Pritzelia*]
Syn. (*vitifolia* var. *bahiensis*)

ML3: *B. wollnyi* Herzog [*Knesebeckia*]
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Among the seed fund offerings this issue are those of a **B. wollnyi** grown by **Thelma O'Reilly**. She sends this photo along with the following comments. "Since the early 1970's I have grown six (6) different forms of **Begonia wollnyi** Herzog from seed or plants. Pictured above is the most beautiful and prolific to date. Fresh seed of this form is available in the September/October C.M. Kelly Seed Fund Listing."

Unidentified Begonia Species Listing

**Thelma O'Reilly,
Project Director**

B. U266

Northern Thailand. Seed and cuttings collected by **Scott Hoover** along road in Doi Inthanon National Park, January, 1990. Habitat: Dry embankment in heavily forested area with large trees. Small population of about 12 plants of a very beautiful species. Elevation 5500 ft. Collector noted that this species has an affinity to *Begonia cathcartii*.

B. U267

Northern Thailand. Seed collected by Scott Hoover along road to Reforestation Substation in Doi Inthanon National Park, January 1990. Habitat: Stream margin and forest area above stream with individuals scattered along sloping embankment. Elevation 5400 ft. Collector noted affinity to *B. cathcartii*.

B. U268

Northern Thailand. Seed and cuttings collected by S. Hoover near top of mountain along road to Ma Hidon waterfall, January, 1990. Rhizomatous. Species has secondary branches. Habitat: Dampish north facing embankment covered in brush. Elevation: 5400 ft. Collector noted affinity to *B. siamensis* or *B. laciniata*.

B. U269

Northern Thailand. Seed collected by S. Hoover at stream crossing road beyond

B. U268 collection, January 1990. Habitat: Damp area, plants growing on boulder. Elevation 4700 ft. Rhizomatous. Mature plants nearly one meter tall with large leaves to 20 cm. Pink male and female flowers.

B. U270

Western Malaysia. Seed and cuttings collected by S. Hoover 60 ks from RT2 on road to Genting Highlands, February, 1990. Habitat: Abundant population along small, heavily shaded stream. Growing on rocks and soil. Elevation 3000 ft. Rhizomatous. About 20 cm. high, in fruit. Leaves triangularly shaped.

B. U271

Western Malaysia. Seed and cuttings collected by S. Hoover on road to Genting Highlands, February, 1990. Habitat: Plants growing on rocks and soil above shaded stream. Elevation 3300 ft. Shrub-like. Beautiful species to 50 cm. with red venation on leaves. Collector noted affinity to *B. pseudisoptera*.

B. U273

Western Malaysia. Seed and cuttings collected by S. Hoover along Hwy. 59 to Cameron Highlands, February 1990. Habitat: Growing among boulders in very dry area. Elevation 2000 ft. Shrub-like. Epiphitic at base of tree growing among boulders as an individual or an aggregate of several plants all massed together with interconnected roots.

B. U274

Western Malaysia. Seed and cuttings collected by S. Hoover on Hwy. 59 to Cameron Highlands at small waterfall near road, February 1990. Habitat: On cliff face with small stream of water running down face. elevation 2000 ft. Rhizomatous. Vine-like growing in moist soil. Leaves to 10 cm.



Left is Begonia U268 grown by Mabel Corwin and photographed by Thelma O'Reilly. Below is Begonia U269 grown by Mabel Corwin and photographed by Jack Golding.



Flowers pink. Tentative identified as *B. pavonina* by collector.

B. U275

Western Malaysia. Cuttings collected by S. Hoover along stream embankment on RT 59 to Ringlet, Cameron Highlands, Pahang Province, February 1990. Habitat: Growing along embankment above side road along heavily shaded stream under banana trees and other vegetation. Elevation 4500 ft.

Rhizomatous. Beautiful vine-like creeping species, some with bronze leaves often having yellow veins, some with green pustulated leaves. Collector noted affinity to *B. decora*.

Thelma O'Reilly chairs the Unidentified Species Project and welcomes photos or information on any unidentified species you are growing. You may write to her at

The Botanical Ark, Begonias and The Great Rain Forests of the World Convention Report by Alan Carle

*This is another paper appearing in the March 2003 issue of **Begonia Australis** and was also a presentation at the Seventh Association of Australian Begonia Societies Seventh Convention in Perth, Australia. Many ABS members met Alan Carle at the 1999 ABS Convention in L.A and through an interview at that convention written up in the **Begonian**, January/February, 2000 issue. **Tricia Marriot**, their editor, gave us the following introduction.*

*Alan Carle is the founder of The Botanical Ark near Mossman in Queensland, a 30-acre area where he and his wife grow rainforest plants. Alan has been on many trips overseas collecting native and endangered flora. He spends two months a year collecting and has been to South America, Brazil, Ecuador, Columbia plus New Guinea and some Central African countries. Alan specializes in plants that are edible and have a practical significance to the local people. (Extract from *The Begonian* – January/February 2000).*

Initial History of the Botanical Ark

followed by: Accidental Begoniaism? Is there such a term? Perhaps.

I never thought I'd ever be collecting Begonias. Sure they were pretty, dainty, colourful, but they weren't edible, so I wouldn't collect them.

My association with Begonias really began about 20 years ago; I clearly remember finding my first patterned leaf Be-

My association with Begonias really began about 20 years ago.

gonia in the wilds of northeast Peninsular Malaysia. I had found ***Begonia raja***!!!

I traveled along a few battered roads, overhanging with jakfruit, rambutans and coconuts, put the hire car at the mercy of a few logs tied together, which the attendant then poled across the river, and drove to a place I am now sure would have invalidated all the hire car and insurance claims (but I

did actually drive carefully).

Once I reached the end of the rubber plantations (and the beginnings of the forest) I walked along the river following a water pipe upwards, searching for new fruits and gingers. I strolled through the forest, stopping for photos, taking notes and absorbing the serenity and peacefulness of the wild - surely a contradiction in words, but a wonderful marriage in the mind.

After a few hours I felt the day (and the chance of getting back to civilization) slipping away. Having experienced a few new and exciting things that day I turned back and headed down the raging river. Along the way I looked in a small rock overhang adjacent to the water pipe. In the damp, shady fissures of the rock there was the most beautiful Begonia I had ever seen. And it had ripe/mature seed. I couldn't help myself. I have grown this Begonia now for more than 20 years.

When **Dr. Ruth Kiew**, of the **Singapore Botanic Garden** (and a world expert on Begonias) heard that I had found *Begonia raja* she asked if I still had the site location as she was trying to relocate it in the wild. I did have the locality and the date and time, and a big WOW! placed along side my notes in the journal. But better than that I was able to provide Dr. Kiew with some photos and a living plant!

20 years after I discovered *Begonia raja*, I discovered I had actually found *Begonia foxworthii*- true it was a different species, but it was still beautiful. Over the years I have learned a lot about plants and a few things about Begonias.

Begonia foxworthii has quite a de-

gree of variation within the species, the patterns change with the different localities where it is found. Likewise *Begonia raja* does. The locality in the north east, not far from where I found 'mine' is where the exciting patterned form we all know of exists. But another form with drab coloured leaves with no horticultural potential exists in another locality. (Kiew 1998).

Actually I learned a little more about Begonias over those years. Some species of Begonias are actually edible. It has been

documented *Begonia lazat* from Borneo has leaves that are edible, and I've since heard of others. *Begonia edulis* from Vietnam suggests it should be edible, so I have a new challenge in life - which and how many species are edible? Cooked or raw? Are there different flavours? Do any contain

toxic compounds? Can we identify certain sections of Begonia that are more likely to turn up edible or perhaps medicinal? I'd love to hear from anyone who has knowledge of these matters. I couldn't image a more colourful salad than one of Begonia leaves!

One person in particular has sparked my interest in Begonias. He is here with us today, **Mr. John Tan**, from **Singapore**. I had first met John in the 1980's and discovered we shared a love for many different types of plants. I also discovered we shared grave concerns about the disappearing rainforest of the region and the world.

It was John who first pointed out to me that when the rainforest habitat is damaged or destroyed that often the first plants to disappear are the delicate soft tissue plants of the under story - in particular Begonias and Gesneriads. *This makes sense*

if you understand where the majority of Begonias occur in the forest. Almost universally their habitat is unique, and most often in the damp wet niches.

In the vastness of some forests, especially on the larger flatter areas, one either sees the same few Begonias over the whole area, or often none at all. Once you enter the mountains and valleys you can come upon one species after another. These areas are where Begonias are really at home. But usually they are restricted to quite small areas within these overall environments.

How Many Begonias are there?

How many Begonias might we find in a particular area? How many Begonias are there? It has generally been accepted that there are around 1600 species worldwide. (Sands 1998). While recent taxonomic work has seen some species combined into one (as with **Begonia aequata** from the Philippines) new ones have been discovered and await the often painfully slow process of determination and naming. The results of this pending work will probably surprise most of us.

To illustrate an example let us look at the South East Asian Region. Recent work in the much-studied Peninsular Malaysia confirms 45 existing species (having already lost perhaps 5 species) with 5 or more new ones to be named. Most of these Begonias do occur in the mountainous areas, some with very narrow ranges. Perhaps a few more new ones will be discovered, but in relative terms the genus is

fairly well understood.

In the sub-regions of Borneo and New Guinea the story is quite different. There are currently around 80 species described from Borneo with herbarium specimens for perhaps 220 more to be named. (Kiew Pers.Comm.2002). This contrasts with estimates by Sands 1998 where he estimated 110 species in total. And as we begin to understand the uniqueness of habitats and explore new areas, that number may reach un-thought of heights in the years to come.

New Guinea is in a similar situation. While 1998 estimates put the numbers at 86 species of Begonias, the difficult terrain, history of explorations and numerous potential habitats may well see

the genus number in the hundreds of species.

Where are these potential habitats? In Borneo, Mt. Kinabalu has 25 species ++, Mt Mulu and Mt. Api, 14 spp +. Small isolated limestone outcrops in Sabah (North Borneo) are revealing new species, and one should expect similar results in parts of Sarawak and Kalimantan and New Guinea. One very interesting aspect of Begonias in South East Asia is the very high degree of endemism, which is almost 100% - meaning that the Borneo species do not occur in Peninsular Malaysia, nor in the Philippines, nor in any neighboring sub-region (Sands 1998).

Conservation Status

At **The Botanical Ark** we are very concerned with conservation issues. It was a talk by **Dr. Peter Raven**, of the Missouri

When the rainforest habitat is damaged or destroyed often the first plants to disappear are the delicate soft tissue plants of the understory.

Botanic Gardens, that actually inspired us to use our garden and plants as a way of highlighting rainforest conservation issues. In the mid 1980's Dr. Raven addressed a Conference in Sydney, and said that in the next 25 years up to 20% of all living organisms will become extinct. An article appeared in the Australian Newspaper and finally reached the damp Whyanbeel Valley in North Queensland. When you hear those figures a second time, perhaps a third, they seem just as unbelievable as the first. But when you research the issue you discover that there are varying estimates of extinction, and perhaps Dr. Raven's was at the high end but all agree that we are not only in one of the great extinction eras of the world, but a large cause of it, and it seems only natural for me to want to do something about it. You may have seen **WWF (WorldWide Fund for Na-**

ture) notices in magazines or television that says we are losing between 50 & 100 species, not every year, but everyday!

Extinction of plants is primarily caused by habitat modification or destruction. But global warming and ruthless collecting, amongst other factors are also affecting it. For a country such as Australia not to ratify the Koyoto Protocol and strive for an actual reduction in those greenhouse gas emission targets is unforgivable. Future generations will remember this.

What if the figures are true? What if it was across the board? Imagine losing 20% of your loved ones or friends, or colleagues (beyond natural causes). Nobody wants to face issues like that.

But the issue is not that simple, not that easy to comprehend or understand, nor see. Extinction is often unseen, and works in select areas. We most certainly

won't lose 20% of the great land mammals, nor possibly birds, nor tree species. But we may lose more than 20% of some insects, micro-organisms, rare plants, and yes even Begonias.

As Begonias occur in specialized and stable areas and because of the very high levels of endemism, the damage and destruction of the forest cover will almost certainly result in the localized extinction of that species or variant of the species. Once the gene pool is depleted to a point where it cannot evolve or sustain itself, the species will become extinct in the wild. Esti-

mates for the conservation status of Begonias in Peninsular Malaysia are that up to 85% of species are now critically endangered. And that is in an area with a National Parks and Forestry system that affords some degree of protection. What about the areas of the world

where that protection does not exist, or cannot due to population pressures? Begonias may well be a good indicator of the health of our planet. If we can save the Begonias, can we save the world? Again a very difficult question to answer- but I do know that if we don't try, we will never succeed.

What can we do?

Many of us can grow Begonias in our gardens or homes, but that will not save the species. If we are to really succeed we must save those forested areas - *and that is the challenge*. Let us now use our Begonias to highlight what is happening to their homelands, and let us give back to the Begonias a little of the greatness that they have given us.

Extinction is primarily caused by habitat modification or destruction.

Pinching Your Begonias

By Brad Thompson

How to Pinch: To pinch your begonias you need to remove the growing tip of each stem where the next leaf will come out. Usually you remove it by pinching it off with your fingernail (yes, that's why it is called pinching and no, I don't know who thought of calling it that). Make sure you remove the bud and the new baby leaf below it to make sure you get it pinched off.

When to Pinch: On plants that you're going to pinch, start pinching after pruning out three nodes (a node is the joint in the stem where the leaf is connected). The reason for this is that if you don't wait until you get out three nodes then you won't gain anything because after pinching out one bud where would it branch from? With three nodes, after removing the one node (the growing tip is a node too), then you are left with two nodes that will send out side shoots. These you let grow out three nodes and then pinch again. Usually a plant that is actively growing can grow out three nodes in three or four weeks. You continue pinching until about 6 weeks before a show to make sure the plant has time to grow out and bloom well in time for the show. Pinching will delay blooming, but you will be rewarded with so many more stems that have blooms that it is well worth the extra wait, besides the fact of how nice and full your plant will be.

I was amazed at the difference pinching made especially on plants that had a tendency to become leggy and sparse. If you plan on entering shows and would like to win something for your efforts then you really need to learn to pinch to have qual-

ity show plants, but even if you're just growing them for yourself you should still pinch for beautiful full plants.

This article was taken from the San Gariel Valley Newsletter, Begonia Journal where it appeared on June 10, 2003.

How to Become an ABS Judge by Maxine Zinmann

This article appeared in the November/December 1997 Begonian, but because there will be a judging school at the coming SWR Get-Together it is being repeated here. Rules have not changed.

Sophomore: Complete Judging Course and test, clerk at least one ABS show, and be a current ABS member.

Junior - 25 points: Judge at least 5 ABS shows; work one show (entries plus classification); and be a current ABS member.

Senior - 50 points: Judge at least 10 ABS shows, instruct at 2 ABS Judging schools, or write two articles for the *Begonian*, and be a current ABS member.

Point Earning System:

- 3 points for completing judging course.
- 3 points for each year when a show is judged.
- 2 points for instruction at a judging school or *Begonian* article.
- 1 point for entries/classifications at an ABS Show
- 0.5 points for serving as ABS clerk

These rules were approved by the ABS Board at its meeting in Houston on May 17, 1997. Each prospective judge is responsible for keeping their own record and submitting to Maxine Zinmann..



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Begonia Art in Oklahoma

Begonia art of all kinds was big in the 2003 Convention. It seemed there was everything - from unique photographs to quilts and even stools our members showed their talents. Two truly unique quilts were entered. The first, shown above left, created by **Vera Miller** created the unique illusion of a shadow box using prints originally done by **Chuck McGough**. Lucky **Paul** and **Angela Rothstein** took this prize home with them. See it to the left top. And below that we see the quilt "Our Begonia Heritage" created by **Leora Fuentes** which was absolutely gorgeous! Of course, photographs do neither of these justice. *Dora Lee Kimbrough* won Division and the Alice Clark Artistic Award for her begonia watercolor.

Charles McGough's work as usually gave the entire show a special impact with his artistically grown plants, but his latest artistic work appeared in the planters he created from tofu, bowls to bonsai and landscape planters. Of course, he also won the special award for the best new introduction of his hybrid *B. 'Winter Blanket'*. Charles deserved a special award for coming up with neat names for his many cane-like creations. His selections are cold (remember *B. 'White Ice'*): *B. 'Ice Needles'*, 'Spring Snow', and 'Blizzard'; or heat reminiscent: *B. 'Desert Prince'* and 'The Sultan'. When it comes to artistic, no one tops Charles.

There were tee shirts with begonia designs and a needlepoint basket. And **Rekha Morris** won a blue for her special exhibit on the begonias of Veracruz which included a complete photographic record.

If you wanted to see art in Oklahoma, you didn't have to go to a gallery! ~FH

And Astro Branch Goes Artistic!

Art seems to be breaking out all over our begonia world. The June 2003 meeting of the Astro Branch of Houston was devoted to 'Begonia Art and Collectibles'. Their meetings are now being held at the Houston Garden Center which is in Houston's beautiful Herman Park. This meeting planned by **Cheryl Lenert** shows why this is a branch that just keeps on growing and growing.

First, they had a contest inspired by an earlier SWR contest done by Chuck McGough in which members submitted begonia drawings that they made. At this meeting members voted on their favorites for first, second, and third place with winners having their drawing made into note cards with envelopes. Fifteen members participated. First place winner was **Sue Perry** of *B. 'King Tut'*; **Matt Reiff** won both second and third with *B. 'Witlacoochee'* and *U076* respectively. See the winner on page 163.

Second, Cheryl and **Tom Keepin** brought the begonia art and collectibles that they have collected over the years with each giving a talk about what they have collected. For those of you who have visited the homes of these two you know their collections are both interesting and beautiful.

Third, there was an ABS slide program obtained from **Charles Jaros** on the collection of **Rudy Ziesenhenn**

To round out the meeting there was of course the plant sale table well stocked and a raffle plant and a name tag drawing plant as well. All this and air conditioning too!

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Southwest Region *Begonia* Leaflet

I just received my August/September 2003 issue of this wonderful newsletter. Especially beautiful this issue is **Don Miller's** color photograph of *Begonia* 'Miniperba' which is a recent hybrid from Florida's **Doug Pridgen**. You may have seen photos of it before in the *Begonian*, but Don's photo really shows the outstanding coloration of this lovely to perfection. All of which is to remind you that if you don't subscribe to this publication you are missing out on a lot of begonia information as well as Don's color photos (You get an actual photograph!) which appear in every issue. Since this is edited by **Tamsin Boardman**, former editor of the *Begonian*, it usually has a species featured in every issue. She loves species and it shows! It arrives bimonthly in alternate months to the *Begonian*.

Just \$10 brings you both this 12 page leaflet and membership in the Southwest Region. What a bargain! You do not have to live in the Southwest to become a member, just love begonias. You do have to be an ABS member. An individual subscription is only \$15, family \$15, foreign \$15, and Branch \$10. Send to SWR membership chair: **Leora Fuentes, 2200 Glen Forest Lane, Plano, TX 75023**

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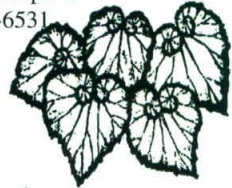
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COMING EVENTS

August 28-September 1, 2003 - Viva Begonias, Hyatt Regency DFW Judging School, Workshops, Tours, Show, Plant Sale, Auction! Southwest Region Get-Together, ABS Annual Meeting. For information contact **Tamsin Boardman** at 254-728-3485 or by email at bcbnt@lipan.net.

September 20, 2003, 12 noon to 3:30 p.m.; **Buxton Branch** will present its annual show and sale at the U. Mass. Eastern Extension Center, 240 Beaver St., Waltham, MA. This is a judged show, sharing the hall with the NE?AGGS. Admission is free. For further information, contact **Wanda Macnair** at 617-876-1356 or email her at wmacnair@msn.com.

2004 ABS Convention, San Diego, CA: Information coming soon!

March 2005 AABS Convention, Ballarat, Victoria, Australia planned to be in conjunction with the Ballarat Begonia Festival (visit www.ballaratbegoniafestival.com to learn about this important festival).

The Begonian

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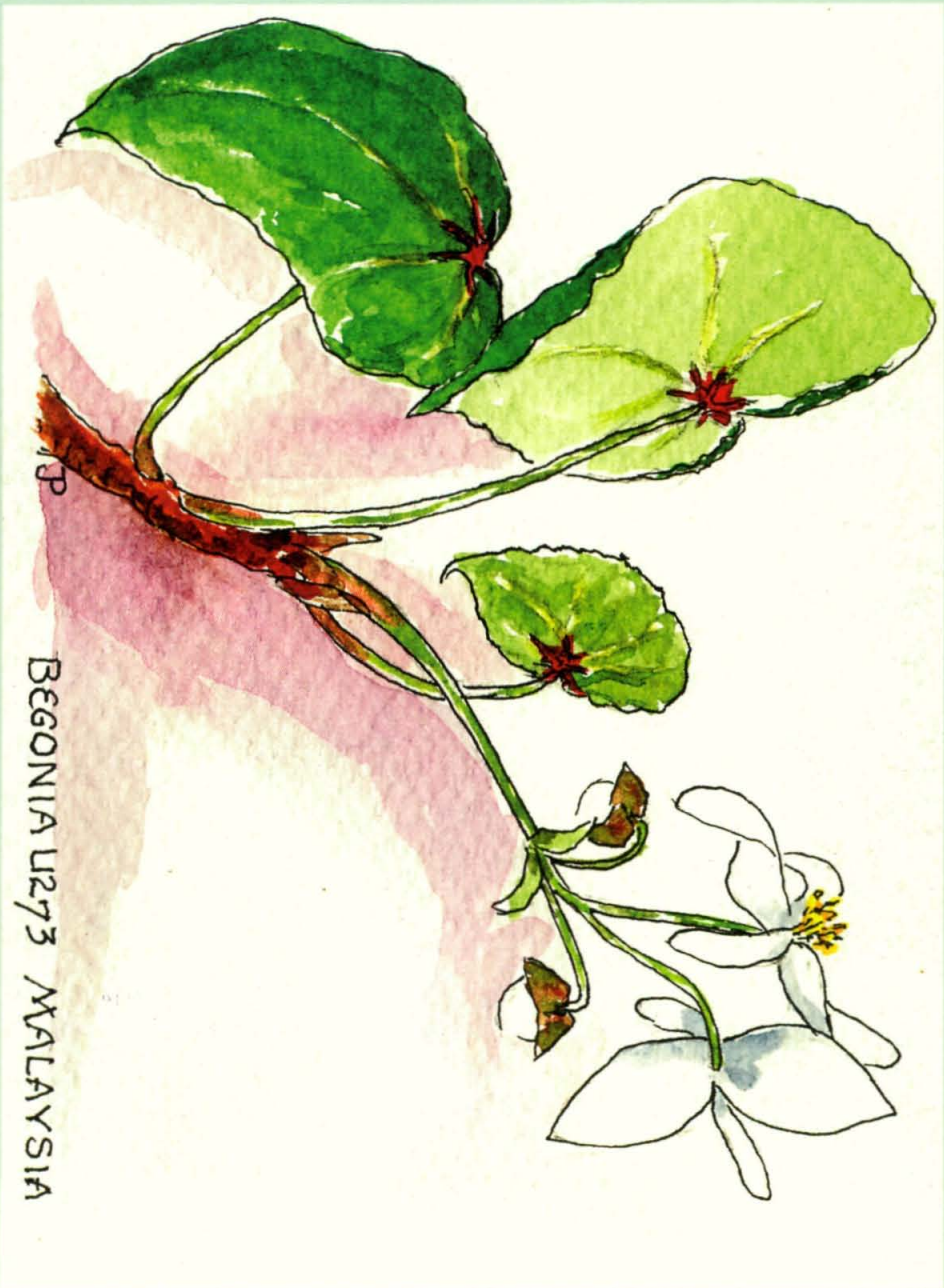
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