

THE BEGONIAN

November / December 2011



The Begonian

Publication of the American Begonia Society
American Begonia Society

Founded January 1932 by Herbert P. Dyckman

Aims and Purposes

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

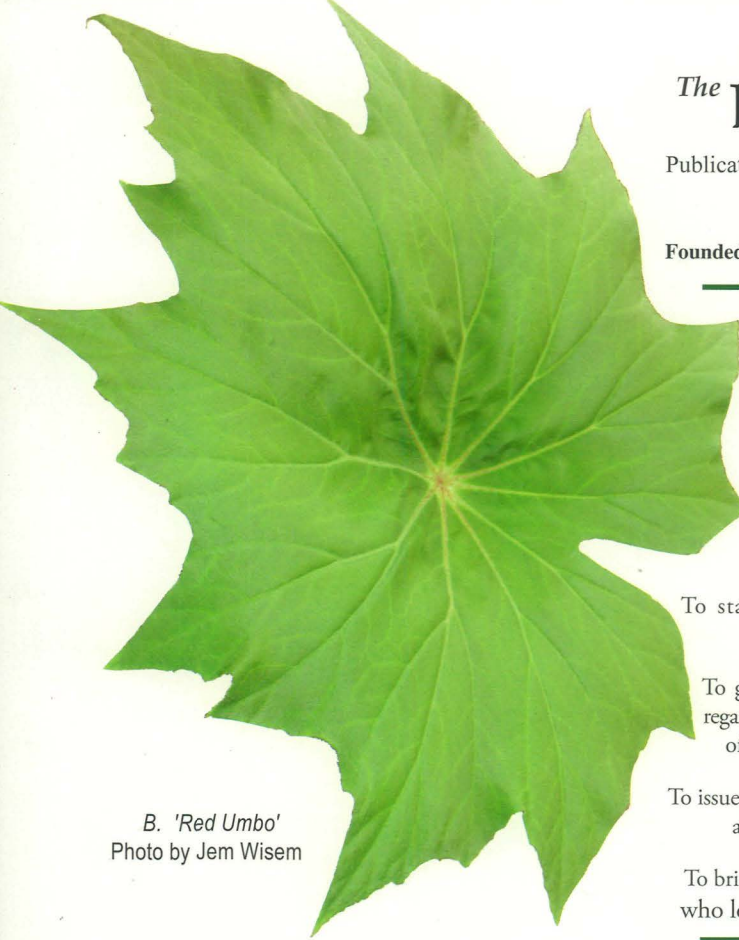
To encourage the introduction and development of new types of these plants.

To standardize the nomenclature of begonias.

To gather and publish information in regard to kinds, propagation, and culture of begonias and companion plants.

To issue a bulletin that will be mailed to all members of the society.

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



B. 'Red Umbo'
 Photo by Jem Wisem

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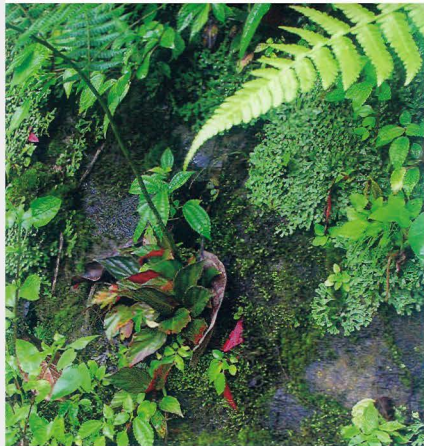
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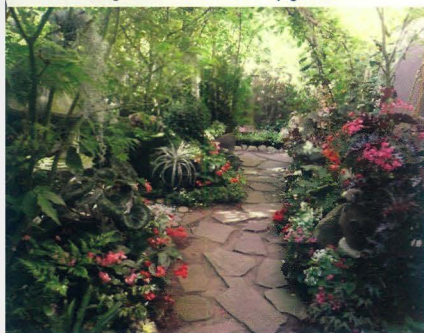
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B. hatacoa var. *rubrifolia*. pg. 214



Begonias in Sweden pg. 236



The Gazebo Show pg. 224



B. lacunosa flowers pg. 226



The smallest waterlily pg. 232

Front cover: This is one of the most fragrant tuberous begonias – “Fragrant Spice” pictured at the Gazebo Flower Show. See more on page 224.
Photo by Gary Hunt

Back cover: A look inside Gene and Anna Salisbury's greenhouse in Tonkawa, OK.
Photo by Jem Wiseman

This is the November/December issue of The Begonia and, as I write this President's message, it is in the lower 90's here in Central Florida, but the mornings are now quite pleasant - and that means that fall is on its way even here.

A begonia and/or an ABS membership is a wonderful gift so keep this in mind as the holiday season approaches. I want to thank Wanda Macnair for the superb job she has done in securing donations from Branches and individuals for this issue. These donations offset the costs of this November/December issue, and remember individual donations are tax deductible. Thanks to Linda Tamblin our editor for putting out such a wonderful publication.

I also want to thank the Tampa Bay Branch for hosting the ABS Annual meeting this past August. And, a special thanks to Dale Sena and Merle DeLand for opening their homes and yards for us to enjoy. I wish more of you could have attended but those who did had a wonderful time.

Well, this is the second time around for me as President of the American Begonia Society and it is an honor for me to again hold this position. I have been a member of the American Begonia Society since 1972 (I was 17 years old) and through branch meetings, get-togethers and conventions I have made wonderful, life-long friends. That, and the love of begonias, is what this organization is all about.

As always it is my wish to bring into friendly contact all those who love and grow begonias and, with the membership and boards' help, this will be accomplished. Your board and committee chairs are there for you so don't hesitate to contact them.

Branches - remember to send your newsletter to the ABS President, Branch Relations Director and our Historian. (Contact information in on page 240) I wish everyone a Happy Holiday Season.

President's Message



B. U309 Photo by Jem Wiseman

Charles Jaros, ABS President

Holiday Greetings

Bronze

Delaware Valley Branch
Greater Atlanta Begonia Society
San Gabriel Branch
Donna J. Zody

Fred A. Barkley Branch
Houston Satellite Branch
Palos Verdes Begonia Society
San Jacinto Branch
Johanna Zinn

Silver

Tom Cootz/Stephanie Rose
Doug Frost Branch
R.L. and Freda Holley
Joan Coulat Branch
Cheryl Lenert
Mid-America Begonia Society
Joe and Nelda Moore
Orange County Branch
Bobbie Price
San Francisco Branch
Santa Clara Branch
Westchester Branch

Platinum

Astro Branch
Austin Area Begonia Society
Begonia Society of Tampa Bay
Begonia Society of the Palm Beaches
Buxton Branch
Merle DeLand
Linda and James Lawson
Lula Mae Leonard
Mable Corwin Branch
Richard and Wanda Macnair
Margaret Lee Branch
Carol and Peter Notaras
Rudolph Ziesenhenné Branch
Southwest Region ABS
Potomac Branch

Gold

Alamo Branch
Barbara/Howard Berg
Dallas Area/Mae Blanton Branches

Total \$4,075



Update on Unknown Malaysian Begonia

Tony Pinto shared photos of an unknown Malaysian begonia (above) and asked for ideas of what it might be. Peter Rahm, of Freiburg, Germany suggested it could be *B. variabilis* as seen in photos from Ruth Kiew's book *Begonias of Peninsular Malaysia*.

See page 57 of *The Begonian* March/ April 2011 for original article.

Proceedings of the Annual Business Meeting ABS

Tampa, Florida - August 13, 2011



President Cheryl Lenert opened the meeting and asked Virginia Jens to read the Aims and Purposes of the Society.

The proceedings of the last meeting in Oklahoma City were accepted as published in the *Begonian* and are thus upgraded to minutes;

President Lenert distributed copies of the annual financial report in the absence of the treasurer, Carol Notaras. The report covered the period August 1, 2010, to July 31, 2011. In addition, reports for the periods August 1, 2010, to March 31, 2011, and April 1 to July 31, 2011 were available for the record since they could not be presented at the Oklahoma City board meeting. In the annual report the general fund had income of

\$78,439.38 and disbursement of \$94,903.69. The beginning balance was \$31,926.85 and the ending balance was \$15,462.54. The seed fund began with \$1011.69 and ended with \$535.21 with income of \$725.61 and debits of \$1202.09. The savings accounts showed a beginning balance of \$70,108.53 and an ending balance of \$69,960.43. The combined savings and checking accounts totals were \$103,047.07 beginning and \$85,958.18 ending. The reports were recorded for audit.

Holiday Greetings Chair Wanda Macnair presented the results of fund raising for the *Begonian* thus far. A total of \$2931 was collected as of August 11, 2011, with more coming in.

National Director reports were presented from Buxton, Potomac, West Palm Beach, Astro and Southwest Region Branches.

President Lenert reminded National Directors that reports were due before the annual meeting and should be sent to the President, Secretary and the Branch Relations Director, Tom Keepin.

A motion to temporarily allocate \$6000 from the general fund for converting Jack Golding's files to digital format passed. The Missouri Botanic Garden has recently made the files available so we need to make the funds available to facilitate the digitization process and get bids on the conversion. There was a stipulation that the funds would be replaced either by a

Above: A beautiful specimen of the plant that the ABS logo is based upon, this *B. rex* was photographed in Merle Deland's greenhouse by Virginia Jens

bequest or donations.

A discussion of the ABS ballot showed that the practice of printing it in the Begonian should be reconsidered and other means of distributing it evaluated.

U Numbers Project Co-Director Mary Bucholtz reported that one additional U number was assigned since May, 2011, making the last number U613. The new edition of Unidentified Species Listing-August 2010 is now available from the ABS Book Store.

A preliminary financial report for Convention 2011 in Oklahoma City was presented by Linda Lawson in the absence of the Convention Chair. Projected proceeds of the convention were \$3387.37. The report recommended distribution of



A glimpse at the recent ABS meeting in Tampa, FL. Thanks to those who serve so our organization can exist. Photo by Virginia Jens

\$1355 (40 %) to ABS, \$1355 to Southwest Region (40%) and the remaining 20% to the Barkley Branch. In addition the \$2000 advance would be returned to ABS.

President Lenert announced that the next Southwest Region Get-Together will be in San Antonio, Texas, on May 16-20, 2012, at the Airport Hilton.

The special awards review committee recommendations to retain the Gene

Salisbury and Rudy Ziesenhenné awards and eliminate the Tim O'Reilly and Marge Lee awards was discussed. A motion to retain the Marge Lee award was passed with only two opposing votes. A motion to retain the Rudy Ziesenhenné award passed unanimously. A motion to accept the committee recommendation to retain the Gene Salisbury award passed unanimously. A motion to accept the committee recommendation to discontinue the Tim O'Reilly award passed

President Lenert announced the results of the recent election for the 2011 to 2013 term.. The following were elected: President Charles Jaros, First Vice President Virginia Jens, Second Vice President Mike Flaherty, Secretary Richard Macnair and Treasurer Carol Notaras.

At the end of the meeting the elected officers were installed by Mary Bucholtz.

Respectfully Submitted
Richard Macnair, Secretary

Proceedings of the Board Meeting ABS

Tampa, Florida August 13, 2011

President Charles Jaros called the meeting to discuss a few things he intends to accomplish during his term of office.

He reminded members that the ABS is a non-profit organization and donations to the Society are tax deductible. He intends to have this information inserted in The Begonian.

He would like to bring ABS closer to those who cannot attend national or regional meetings. One way to do this might be to make more items available

continued on next page



Begonia 'Island Magic' photo by Virginia Jens

Board Meeting Minutes
continued

to the membership through the Book Store. For example, a unique calendar or ABS T-shirts might be appropriate.

Newer members may not be aware of the life membership category of the Society. He intends to try to promote the program by making information on it more available.

Respectfully Submitted,
Richard Macnair,
Secretary

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The Margaret Lee Branch
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Please self-pollinate your species begonias, collect the seeds and send them to the seed fund. We depend on your contributions of seeds to make a wider variety of species available to the members.

► New seeds from Ed and Phyllis Bates:

B. rajah
Begonia mixed seeds

► New seeds from Mary Fugua:

B. robusta (red form) collected by Scott Hoover July 2011

► New seeds from Joan Campbell:

B. acaulis
B. foliosa
B. subvillosa (B. U008)
B. U613 from China (collector's number B.C. 11)

Packets of seeds are \$2.00. Very rare seeds and newly collected seeds will be \$3.00 or more per packet when noted. California residents please add 8.75% sales tax. All orders must be accompanied by check or money order, payable in US funds ONLY to the Clayton M. Kelly Seed Fund.

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Cost 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.

DISCLAIMER: The seeds distributed by the seed fund are identified as received from the donors. The species names (in italics) reported here are correct based on the latest information from *BEGONIACEAE, Ed. 2*; Golding, and Wasshausen. Hybrid

names are made consistent with the *ABS Check List of Begonia Hybrids* edited by Howard Berg dated 9/13/2005.

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Begonias In The Back Country

By Kit Mounger, Afton, TN

One of the interesting things about this life is how often surprises can brighten a day—at any rate, certainly the unexpected. Like discovering that there are a few begonia growers where you'd least expect to find them - the hills and hollows of Appalachia.

I did bring my own collection of begonias when we moved here 17 years ago. But over time, life intervened, you might say. My collection dwindled and I had too much on my plate to take care of them all. But I did find a friend who has a commercial greenhouse business nearby and, over time, found a few begonias among her offerings, which started, I think, with my giving her cuttings of my own collection rather than just letting them expire. However, when I “waxed enthusiastic”, as it were, she shook her head. She liked the begonias, although she didn't know much about the genus, but they didn't sell well, she said, in this corner of the East Tennessee Mountains.

“When I have a lovely hanging basket of a “Dragon Wings” begonia full of red blooms hanging by the counter, it's much admired,” she explained. “But people are reluctant to buy it... they think it's lovely. But it's *different* and people are inclined to stick with what they know.”

Oddly, however, there is always one exception to this “rule.” No matter where I've lived, more often than not, I've spotted a tall



Above: *B.* 'Withlacoochee'

Opposite page, top: *B.* 'Sophie Cecile' Center: *B.* 'Lana'

Bottom: *B.* 'Fascinatin' Rhythm'

cane on a farmhouse porch. Wherever someone out in the boonies has houseplants, there's usually an "Angel Wings" among them. This has brought a smile to more than one serious grower, this penchant for labeling canes—no matter what the cultivar—as "Angel Wings." That, sadly, seemed to be about as adventurous as any plant lover here in the mountains was willing to go.

However, my friend, Ann Gaut, has persisted in attempting to educate her customers without seeming to, and dotting her display area with canes, rhizomatous and scandent begonias.

Ann is also on the local county fair board and some three years ago asked me to judge the horticultural entries. I did and I enjoyed it. Even if I was disappointed in the few number of begonias among them—the ubiquitous "angel wings" notwithstanding. That year I think there were two other types entered. One was, although unlabeled, *B. UOO2!* Obviously, he/she must have been an immigrant to Appalachia like me.

At last year's county fair, there were a few more begonias, again unlabeled, but very well grown. Ann's attempts, it seemed, at subtly educating her buyers in this small town were beginning to pay off. And, to my delight, her own interest was growing.

In the meantime, I made another discovery. A friend from Nashville was looking to buy a home here. One Sunday morning, I tagged along. While strolling about the backyard of this particular house, I found a glorious big bed of *B. evansiana* [= *B. grandis* var. *grandis* -nomenclature ed.], covered in blushing pink!

Unfortunately, the home's seller was a lady in her 90's who could not tell me who or when someone had given her a "start" of that plant. And of course, she had no idea it was a begonia ("But this lovely thing is *hardy!*" she ex-





Above: *B. U002* Below: *B. "Lana"*

the floor and sprinkled all over with snowflake-sized white blossoms: *B. 'Withlacoochee'*! And as I worked my way through the various divisions with the fair's volunteers setting plants out for me, there was a *B. 'Christmas Candy'*, several offerings of "*Dragon Wings*" (unlabeled, of course) covered in fiery red. There were even a couple of tuberous varieties and, in this climate, the tuberous begonias generally do not grow well at all. Another pot contained *B. 'Little Miss Mummy'*, oddly blooming white on one

claimed, "and begonias aren't - they're annuals!") I could not dissuade her from thinking all begonias are semps, but at the same time, I was encouraged.

Just this August, it was Fair time again and I don't think I'd walked three paces down that long aisle before, to my utter astonishment, I came face to face with a hanging basket almost five feet tall, cascading to

cane and pink on another, even though both came off the same stem. One big rhizomatous entry was unlabeled but with the help of the online begonia list at yahoo groups, knowledgeable members quickly identified it as *B. 'Fascinatin' Rhythm'*. Two more *B. U002* and a whole row of well grown semps came next. I was walking in fairyland. It just kept getting better and

better.

A huge pot of *B. 'Sophie Cecile'* almost blocked the aisle. That old-timer, *B. 'Lana'* seemed to have just materialized in front of me. Where had *she* been hiding all this time? And wonder of wonders: a hanging basket of *B. boliviana* was showing off all its slinky red blossoms on a tall hanger beside one of the display stands. I had this eerie feeling that Ma Nature was looking over my shoulder and laughing at me for my *hubris*. No begonias in Appalachia indeed!

I would have to say that begonias, in one form or another made up a fourth or more of all the varied horticultural exhibits, which ranged from orchids and bromeliads, through herbs, annuals, perennials and an eclectic collection of houseplants. And one "Elephant Ears"

so large it had been planted in a child's wagon and trundled into the hall.

And while the competition was fierce and I really had my work cut out for me, in the end there was simply no way any exhibit could beat that majestic hanging basket of *B. 'Withlacoochee.'* (Its owner didn't know which begonia it was—but she recognized that it was named for a river in Florida; we do, it seems, have a few well-traveled folks around here.)

In awarding this begonia Best in Show, I crossed my fingers that Greene County's plant lovers in this obscure corner of Tennessee, more notorious for its "moonshine" whisky than its horticultural ambitions, would soon be more motivated to try, as Ann Gaut remarked, "Something different."

And I'm really looking forward to next year's county fair!

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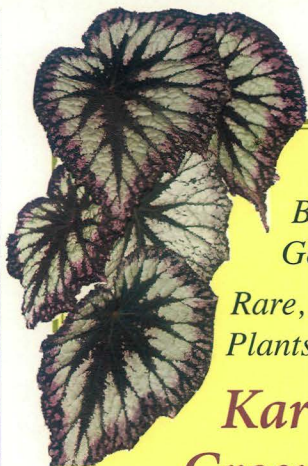
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B. hatacoa Hamilton ex Don

Four varieties 'New' for Arunachal Pradesh

Article & photos by Rekha Morris, Pendleton, SC

Jack Golding wrote an article on *B. hatacoa* [Platycentrum] in the Nov./Dec. 2006 issue of *The Begonian* in order to correct the misidentification of the several forms of this species in cultivation. He assigns variety names for three forms in cultivation on the basis of the forms of *B. hatacoa*, which I had documented in the wild until then, i.e., from 2005 to 2006 in Arunachal Pradesh for the first time. *B. hatacoa* [syn. *B. rubro-venia*] had previously been documented in the Khasia hills now in Meghalaya, Sikkim, Bhutan & Nepal but not for Arunachal Pradesh until my documentation of *B. hatacoa* in three districts of Arunachal, W. Kameng, Pap-

umpare and Lower Subansiri [*The Begonian*, Nov./Dec. 2006, 211 -212].

Since 2006 I have made an additional five trips to this northeastern state of India in the course of which I have been able to explore six additional districts of Arunachal, Upper Subansiri, West Siang, East Siang, Lower Dibang Valley, Lohit and Anjaw. In my 2006 note accompanying Jack Golding's discussion I pointed out that *B. hatacoa* is most prevalent in W. Kameng, and this conclusion has not been altered despite the six additional districts which I have explored since then. Aware that begonia species are often encountered in widely disjunct areas, I have nevertheless been surprised to have encountered *B. hatacoa* in two of the eastern most districts of Arunachal,

Above: *B. hatacoa* var. *hatacoa* with *B. hatacoa* var. *viridifolia* in upper left corner. **Opposite page:** *B. hatacoa* var. *hatacoa* in SC.

Lohit and Anjaw, and in none of the four intervening districts between Lower Subansiri and Lohit.

This brief note on *B. hatacoa* is a follow-up to the note I wrote in 2006.

In order to substantiate and add to the information on *B. hatacoa* based on the more extensive botanical explorations in Arunachal I have been able to undertake since December 2006.

In revisiting W. Kameng, Papumpare and Lower Subansiri on each return trip since December 2006 to document species begonias in Arunachal Pradesh, I have been able to ascertain that the most frequently encountered form is the variegated *B. hatacoa* var. *hatacoa*. This may well be due to its variegation, which is more visible among the predominant shades of green.

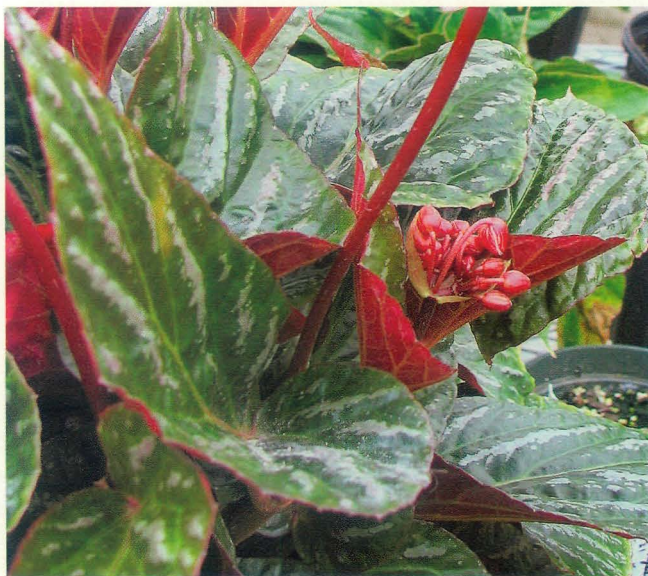
When this species was first described by Hooker as *B. rubro-venia* the variegation on the upper surface of the leaves was described as “marked and dashed with white blotches”. This somewhat uncomplimentary statement fails to convey the striking qualities which make this species stand out in landscapes of unparalleled richness and variety. Moreover Hooker’s phrase ‘white blotches’ is not only strongly suggestive of some discoloring disease or fungal infection, but it also ignores the variations in the combination of green and white in the innumerable examples of *B. hatacoa* var. *hatacoa* which, I have seen in Arunachal.

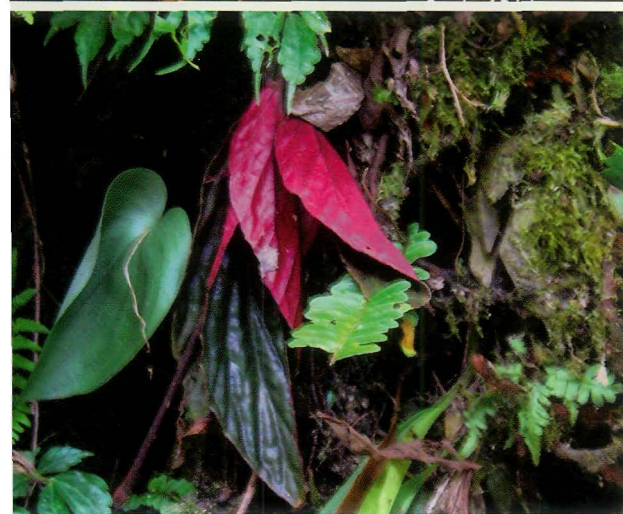
In some examples of this variety the white markings are minimal, but in examples which most enliven and enhance the monochromatic green of their habitats, it is

the white which is dominant while the green is reduced to a fine linear definition of the veins. Whether they grow on moss covered slopes, bare rock sides or amongst a medley of ferns, aroids, and a host of other plants massed in near impenetrable layers, *B. hatacoa* var. *hatacoa*’s opalescent leaves articulated by the green veins add a bright and sparkling vivacity to their backdrops.

B. hatacoa var. *rubrifolia*, Golding & Morris, is, as its variety name suggests, distinguished by the vivid shades of red varying from ruby to garnet of the underside of its leaves. The upper surfaces of the leaves in shades ranging from dull green to glossy bronze are often lost in all the shades of green surrounding it. However, when one of its leaves is flipped over to reveal the brilliant underside, the effect is stunning.

B. hatacoa var. *viridifolia*, Golding and Morris, is the most difficult to pick out from the intense verdure of its surroundings. However, whenever it is seen growing on mossy banks its dark green lanceolate leaves create contrasting ripples of color and texture. On the rare occasions that I have seen blooms on any





of these three varieties, the alternating white and pink striped and white tepals of the flowers held just above the foliage have an inimitably luscious quality rare among the begonia flowers I am familiar with.

During the last three trips to Arunachal I have encountered plants, which extend the color palate of this species. The foliage of this form is distinguished from the three varieties described above by being an unusually deep shade of aubergine. The first time I came across *B. hatacoa* with this dark foliage I assumed that this was an aberration, possibly the result of some nutritional imbalance. If this unusual foliar coloration is the result of nutritional imbalance, then this is a widespread phenomenon. I have encountered *B. hatacoa* of this aubergine color in W. Kameng, in Lohit, and most recently in Sikkim. The scattered yet widespread occurrence of this form of *B. hatacoa* indicates that it deserves a variety name. This is especially the case when considering the example of assigning variety status to *B. rubrovenia* [syn. *hatacoa*] var. *meisneri* [syn. *B. meisneri*] by C. B. Clarke in his 1879 coverage of Begoniaceae.

This form is described on the basis of a single sample collected by Wallich in the Khasia mountains, and its description is quoted by Jack Golding [*The Begonian*, 2006, p.208]. The linear-lanceolate leaves are described as being “very tomentose [matted wooly, curled,

Top: *B. hatacoa* var. *viridifolia*
 Center: *B. hatacoa* capsules
 Bottom: *B. hatacoa* var. *rubrifolia*

Opposite page: *B. hatacoa* var. *aubergine*

and appressed hairs] on the nerves beneath”, and the petioles as “pubescent, tomentose.”

In exploring the Khasia Mountains in 2008 I located a very small colony of approximately a dozen plants of *B. hatacoa* clinging to a gigantic boulder, and all of these were *B. hatacoa* var. *viridifolia* documented by me in Arunachal Pradesh without any sign of being “very tomentose” on the nerves beneath or having pubescent, tomentose petioles. Wallich’s example was collected in the 19th century, and since then there appears to have been no record of another example of *B. hatacoa* matching the description of var. *meisneri*.

Since a variety name was assigned on the basis of a single example not recorded in the Khasia Mountains or elsewhere in India since the 19th century, it would be justifiable to assign a variety name to the form with aubergine foliage, which I have documented several times in several districts of Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim. Regrettably we no longer have Jack Golding among us to assign a variety name to this form. However, since Jack generously involved me as a collaborator in assigning variety names to the three forms described above, I continue his work on this species, and name this form *B. hatacoa* var. *aubergine*.

Note on *B. hatacoa* as described in *The Flora of China, Begoniaceae*, p. 178:

The description of *B. hatacoa* in this publication appears to describe some



other species. *B. hatacoa* is not 30-65 cm tall as stated in this description, nor does it have “stems branching twice or more.” In the *Flora of China* the abaxial wing of the capsule is described as being falcate [sickle shaped, curved and tapering to a point], which it is not [see picture of capsules accompanying this article]. The abaxial surface of the blade is described as “brown pubescent” which it is not. The under surface of *B. hatacoa*’s foliage is glabrous as seen on several of the images accompanying this article. The bloom time given as “FL. Oct.-Nov, fr. Dec.-Jan.” is also incorrect. In the wild *B. hatacoa* blooms anytime from mid April to end of May. In W. Kameng where *B. hatacoa* is most abundant, the only begonia seen in bloom in Oct. – Nov. is *B. xanthina*.

One wonders which Chinese species is being described here as *B. hatacoa*.



Begonia prismatocarpa for Terrariums

Article and photos by Cindy Dicken, Wylie, TX

I have been building terrariums and vivariums for the past 12 years.

For those that are unfamiliar with the term vivarium, it is basically a terrarium designed and constructed to accommodate a specific type of animal. Like a terrarium with live plants, a vivarium can also have plants and animals.

In my situation, I raise dart frogs, so I house the dart frogs in vivariums.

In 2006 a friend introduced me to the wonderful world of begonias. He and I shared the same passion for gardening in glass enclosures, so I was fortunate enough to have him offer some experienced insight on some of the begonia varieties that would be 'happy' in the type of environment I was creating. In amongst my initial purchases of begonias was a small species with little bright green pointed leaves, and many yellow-orange flowers with small red markings. It was *B. prismatocarpa*!

Begonia prismatocarpa is a miniature

rhizomatous species originally discovered in the African countries of Cameroon, Ivory Coast, and Equatorial Guinea. In the wild it grows terrestrially or epiphytically. This small compact, humidity loving species can be found growing on the banks of small streams, rocks, and tree trunks. In addition to the green leaf form, there is also a variegated variety that has a thin, white margin around the outer edge of the leaf.

At the time I received the plant, I was unsure of the growth habit of *prismatocarpa*, I struggled with where to place the little jewel. After a day of moving it to a couple of different locations in the vivarium, I decided to try it along the bank of a small pond I had constructed in one of the vivariums. I was uncertain if the spot I had picked out would be too wet for *prismatocarpa*, and for the first few weeks it looked a little less than pleased with where I had placed it. After a month I noticed it



Opposite page: A dart frog looks right at home with *B. prismatocarpa*.

Above: What an excellent ground cover it makes in a vivarium.

was starting to perk up and actually put on new growth, yea! I have since found out that it really likes many different situations, as I have planted it on the wall in a planting pocket letting it drape down and trained it to cover pieces of wood in the vivarium, as well as using it as a ground cover. I really haven't found any place in the vivarium that it doesn't seem to adjust

and thrive, offering a bounty of non-stop blooms.

Over the years of growing *prismatocarpa*, I have been able to share cuttings with many of my friends in the begonia and dart frog hobby, spreading a little *prismatocarpa* beauty to others. I hope you will give *B. prismatocarpa* a try, you won't be disappointed!

A Word with You:

Pistil

By Claudia Goodridge,
New Haven, CT

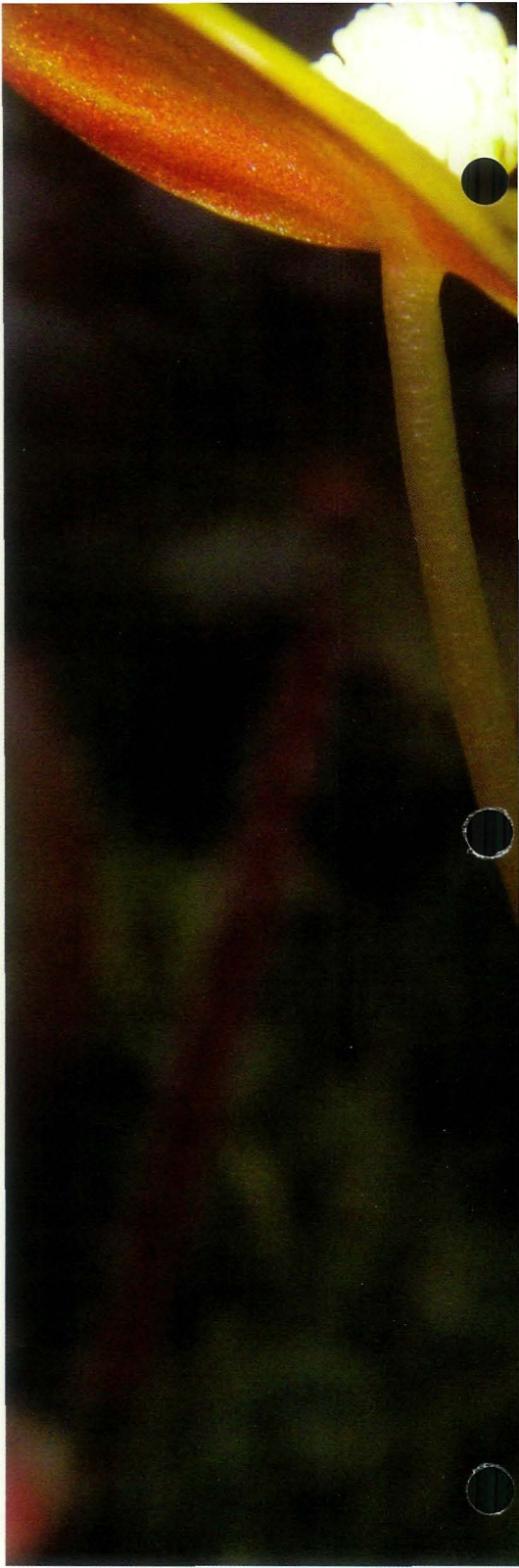
I'm glad I dug into the language of begonia flowers. It has taught me a lot and explained some things I never tried to understand, or assumptions I needed to look at to become a better gardener. I find myself in the garden now with my magnifier. It had been restricted to reading the phone book, but is now in my tool box. Do try taking one around with you. The detail in flowers is other worldly, the colors truly artistic.

I've grown gourds for years and years; multiple types, multiple vines. They can be overwhelmingly prolific, and I have dried a lot for my own uses, so I didn't plant any this year. But magically one vine appeared right where it should ... flowers, but no gourds. It got huge, even climbing way up into the one tall tree ... still no gourds. But recently a second vine has joined the display and now I have small gourds. They're too small to mature in this climate, and Irene beat them up a bit, but there are gourds and I think I know why. Pistillate and staminate flowers for starters; and this variety must also be dioecious. It gets better – gourds are in the *Curcubitaceae* family, which is closely related to the *Begonia* family. They share having separate male and female flowers. So I'll use the magnifier to study those flowers I can still reach.

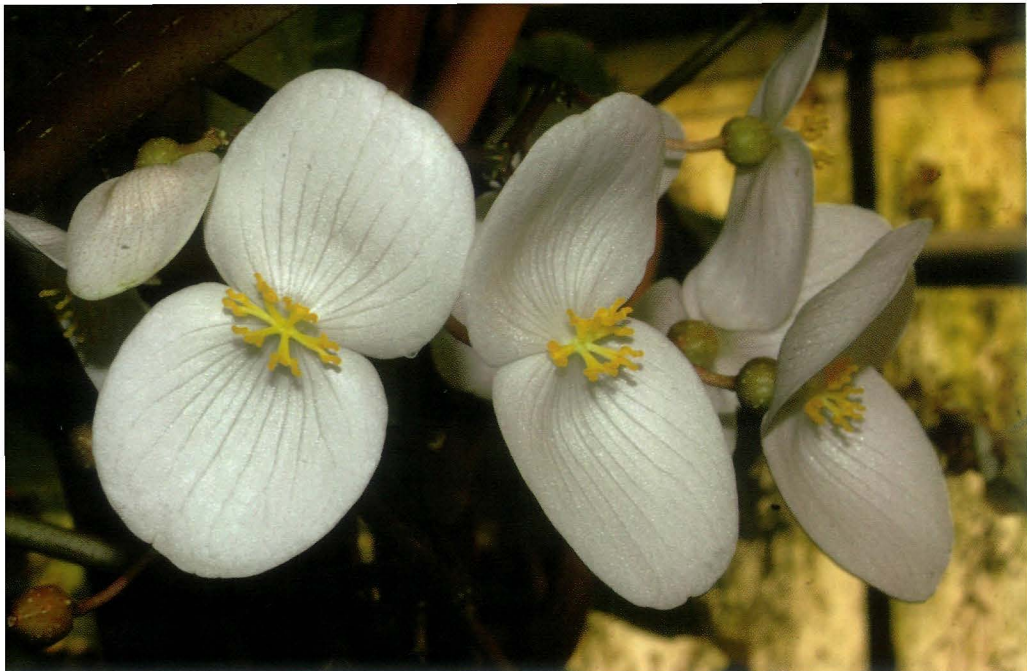
Back to vocabulary. The female flower – the *pistillate* flower – is defined mostly by the *pistil*, the botanical engine behind seeds and the survival of the species. The *pistil* has three parts; 1, the *stigma*, which receives the pollen; 2, the *style*, which connects the stigma to 3, the *ovary*, where seed is produced, provided that flower gets pollinated. Webster says the vocabulary goes back to

B. quadrialata var. *quadrialata*: female flower (elongated ovary) and male one.

Photo by Jacky Duruisseau


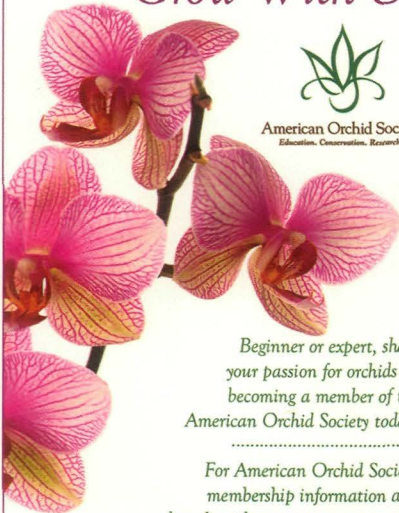






B. salaziensis: female flowers; the ovary will become a berry.
Photo by Jacky Duruisseau

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Latin – *pistillum*, meaning pistil (not very helpful), *stigma*, meaning “a prick with a pointed instrument,” (Webster’s words, not mine), *stilus*, meaning “an iron pointed instrument for writing on wax tablets,” and *ovum*, meaning egg.

How those resulting seeds are disseminated is another story, which will come later. I still wonder how any gourd from last summer escaped my notice and then survived our horrible, cold, deep snow covered winter of 2010-2011. That whole mystery speaks to the adaptability, efficiency, even the will to live in the plant world.

In the last issue I said I’d dig deeper into the number of tepals/petals per female or male flower type. I did, and find that generally (and unscientifically) the female has more tepals than the male. In a small percentage of the cases they have the same number, and I found only one or two instances where the male flower had more. SO, for the amateurs among us, I think it’s safe to assume that female flowers have more tepals than male. Doing this research also showed me that most literature on botany puts discussions of male flowers ahead of female flowers. This may be an old botanical convention, which modern writers choose to follow. Are you surprised?

January 2012 Will Mark the 80th Birthday of the ABS!



B. 'It'

Give this begonia high light along with high humidity and warm temperatures.
Grown and photographed by Charles Henthorne.

The Gazebo Show: Art in the Garden

By Mike Flaherty, Santa Barbara Photos by Gary Hunt

A: Mural of Santa Barbara mountain in back of Mike's Begonia garden. **B:** Voted the favorite in our show, B. 'Fred Martin' was named after the late President of the British National Begonia Society by Blackmore and Langdon. **C:** Gazebo Begonia Show entrance **D:** *Hydrangea* 'Lime Light' with non-stop tuberous **E:** Buddha and B. 'Red Fred' on left. **F:** Mike's Shack In The Back. **G.** B. 'Allen Langdon' next to lantern.

Check out the fascinating time-lapse pictures documenting the set-up and breakdown of the Gazebo Show plus more beautiful photos in Gary's blog at:

<http://birdcamoncheltenham.blogspot.com/2011/09/gazebo-flower-show.html>.





Begonia lacunosa Warburg 1894

Section: Scutobegonia

Article & photos by Jacky Duruisseau, Bois France

One more yellow flowered begonia! We saw this small jewel in November 2003 in the Doudou Mountains (South Gabon) and in May-June 2010 in the Crystal Mountains (North) and Chaillu Range (Center). Marc Sosef, in *Begoniaceae, sections Loasibegonia and Scutobegonia*, shows the distribution of this begonia in Equatorial Guinea, western Cameroon mountains, Gabon, southwestern Congo, western Zaire and Angola (Cabinda). It is a locally common species and we have often seen it in the Mountains of Gabon, especially during the last trip in 2010.

The main feature of *Begonia lacunosa* is its quite variable blade. One amazing feature more: in one place, we found a particular form of *B. lacunosa* and only that form; at some kilometers away, we saw another form and only that one! Never did we see the two forms together! We have seen about 6 forms of this begonia. This means we cannot use leaves for identifying the species! As you know, flowers and ovary are decisive for that.

B. lacunosa grows up to an altitude of 700 m (2300 ft), sometimes terrestrially, sometimes on mossy rocks or rotting trunks, on slopes or banks of rivers, in moist places near rivers and in the spray of waterfalls. It grows in shady places of primary or old secondary rain forest.

A very beautiful recollection from the last trip to Gabon: near Ndjolé, in central Gabon, in a ravine in the Chaillu Range, on the bank of a small stream, was a place with about a hundred *B. lacunosa* in blossom! Yellow flowers? No! White! Sometimes the flowers of *B. lacunosa* may be white! Unfortunately, I didn't have my camera! I must

go back here with it! (You can see pictures of the ones I grow at home.) We should add that we have seen a few *B. lacunosa* with yellow blossoms.

DESCRIPTION:

this rhizomatous begonia is about 15-20 cm high, with small scattered glandular hairs, more or less on all the plant;

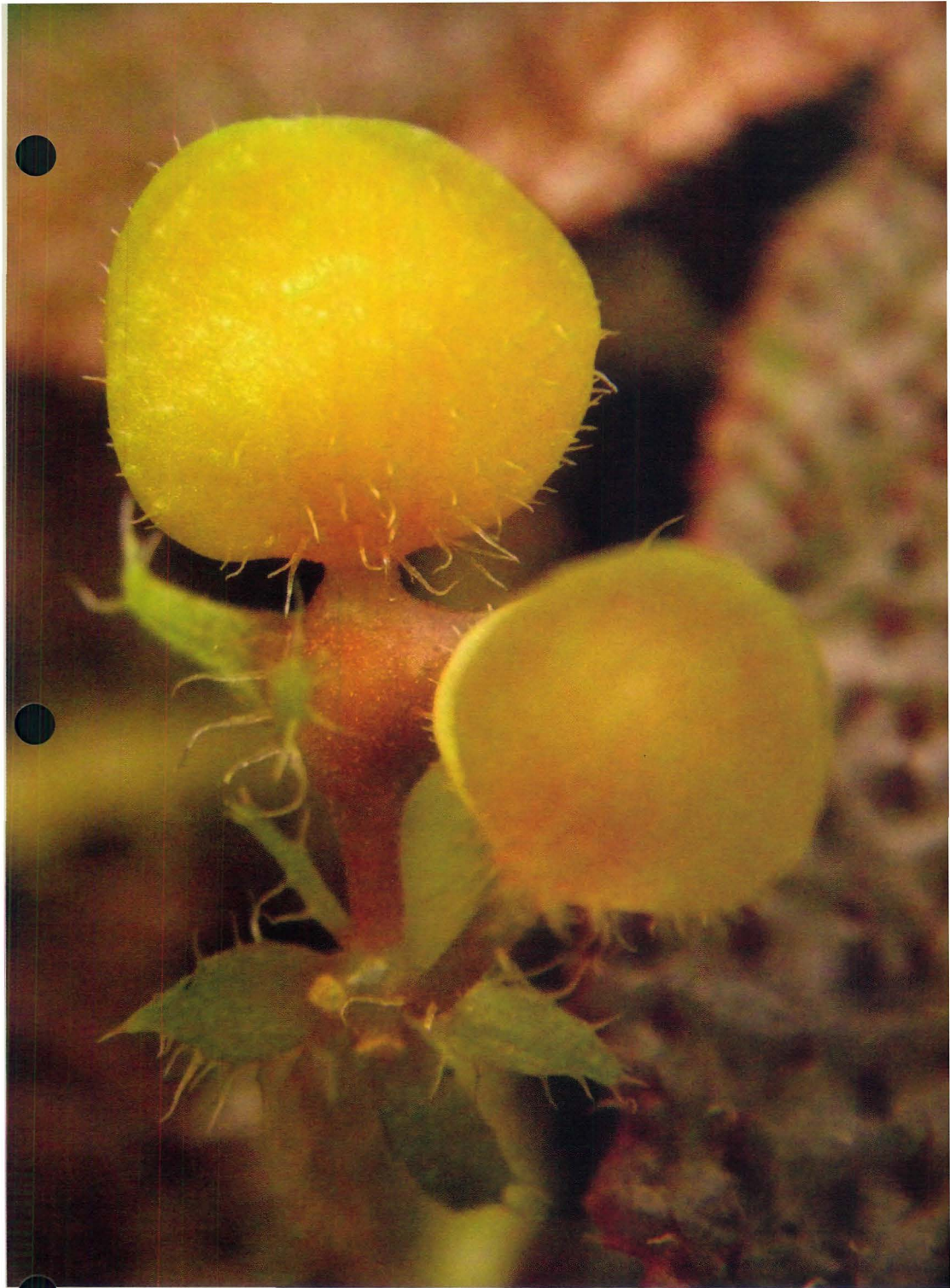
the **rhizome** is variable in size, hirsute or not, the terminal part not or slightly ascending;

the **stipules** are triangular or ovate, usually acuminate, 3-8 mm long, green, glabrous to sparsely hirsute, margin more or less entire, usually ciliate;

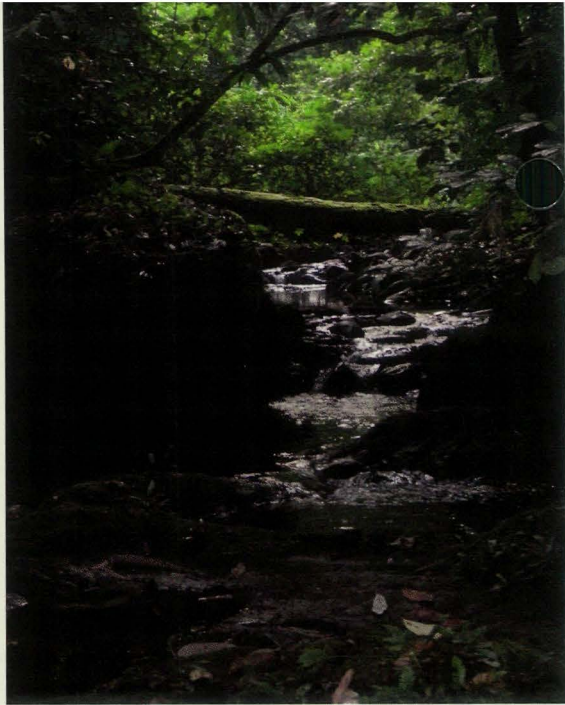
the **leaves** are peltate;

the **petiole** continues into the midrib with a distinct angle ; it is inserted 5 to 20 mm from the margin; it is 1,5 to 11 cm long; it is firm, fleshy, green or brown green to dark red, often very hirsute with wavy to curly red hairs;

the **blade** is more or less horizontally, asymmetrical, ovate to elliptic-ovate, sometimes kidney-shaped, usually gradually tapering to the tip or slightly acuminate; it is 4-12 x 2-8 cm in size; it has about 8 palmate main nerves, the midrib is slightly pronounced; the margin is entire; the upper surface is very variable in color: uniformly green to brownish green or purplish green; sometimes green in the center and along the nerves with a broad dark purplish brown marginal zone; sometimes green with a large dark purplish brown spot in the center and along the nerves; shiny or not ; very variably bullate, each bulla with one stiff white or red hair; if not bullate, the upper surface is densely hirsute; the lower surface of the blade is usually pale green; nerves prominent



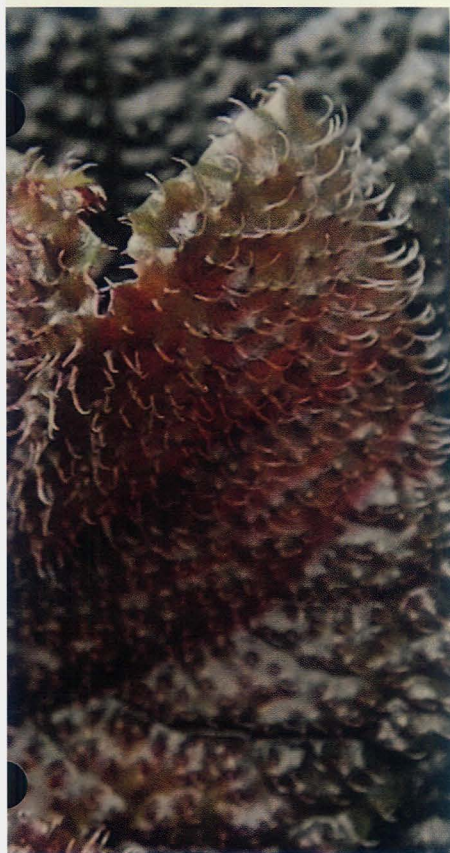
B. lacunosa flower buds



This page, above: *B. lacunosa* with white flowers showing the stiff red hairs. **Top; right:** A begonias river in Gabon, Africa. **Bottom, right:** *B. lacunosa* growing on a vegetative wall.

Opposite page, top: A form of *B. lacunosa* pictured in habitat.

Bottom: A better look at the stiff, curly hairs on the leaf surface of a reddish form.



and hirsute on the lower surface and not prominent on the upper one, but often darker.

the **inflorescence** has 2 or 3 male flowers and 1 terminal female; flowers are often at the same level as the blade or at the base of the petioles; the **peduncule**, usually simple, is 1 to 10 cm long, usually green to pinkish, glabrous or hirsute with white hairs; the 3-4 **bracts** are 2 to 8 cm long, ovate and green to reddish;

the **male flowers**: the pedicel is yellowish green; tepals (2 tepals as all the *Scutobegonia* species) are usually ovate, of about 10 x 12 mm size, outside yellow, sometimes white, with or without hairs; inside : the two tepals yellow or white, the upper one with or without red nerves in the base; androecium with 14-28 stamens;

the **female flowers** are the same; the styles are fused in the lower part; the **ovary** is very broadly obovate to broadly elliptic, rarely shallowly obtriangular and is 4 to 8 mm size, pale green or reddish to reddish brown; usually 3 locules and 3 wings in the apical part; usually with one wing distinctly suppressed, hirsute with wavy white hairs;

the **infrutescence** has a peduncule recurved towards the ground; the **fruit** is usually pendu-



Above: *B. lacunosa* with white flowers **Opposite page, top and bottom:** Two different forms of *B. lacunosa*

lous and broadly obovate-elliptic; sometimes without wings.

CULTIVATION

The cultivation is the same as for *B. letouzeyi* (see Begonian Nov-Dec 2010) and *B. hirsutula* (March-April 2010) but *B. lacunosa* is more delicate: it is not an easy growing species and it is difficult to keep as are all Equatorial Africa species.

- it needs use a terrarium or a warm greenhouse
- humidity above 80%
- temperature between 18°C (65°F) in winter and 30°C (85°F) in summer.
- roots need good aeration; in the terrarium, grow it in the soil (peat + perlite) rather than in a pot.
- for getting blossoms I use artificial light from September to April, 14 hours light per 24 hours. It blossoms easily.

I brought back some examples from Gabon: the ones from 2003 (two yellow flowers forms) have blossomed after

two years in July; the ones of 2010 (three forms: two with yellow flowers, one with white ones) have blossomed (white flowers only) one in June, the other one now (in July); the conditions in my greenhouse are better and I use vegetal walls with living Sphagnum in a large terrarium.

Sometimes, this begonia becomes flabby, I don't know why! Too dry, too wet? Nothing good will come of that! So, I always have several starts of this species in of all its forms. We can propagate *B. lacunosa* with leaves. It is easy but takes a long time.

As I talked about in my last article, the begonias of sections Loasibegonia and Scutobegonia are usually not self-fertile. Since I have several plants, I hope I can get seeds someday. Maybe! But, they have not bloomed together. I must be cunning...

Bibliography:

Marc Sosef / Begoniaceae, sections Loasibegonia and Scutobegonia



Smallest Waterlily in the World Brought Back from the Brink of Extinction at Kew Gardens

Photos and article courtesy of RGB Kew

The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew's top propagation 'code-breaker', horticulturist Carlos Magdalena, has cracked the enigma of growing a rare species of African waterlily – believed to be the smallest waterlily in the world with pads that can be as little as 0.16 sq. inch (1 cm²) in diam-

eter – bringing it back from the brink of extinction.

This 'thermal' waterlily (*Nymphaea thermarum*), so named because it grows in freshwater hot springs, was discovered in 1985 by German botanist Professor Eberhard Fischer of Koblenz-Landau

University. It was endemic to just one known location in Mashyuza, Rwanda, in the south west of the country. However, it disappeared from this location about three years ago due to over-exploitation of the hot spring that fed its fragile habitat. Water was prevented from reaching the earth's surface resulting in the desiccation of the small area where this species grew and no plant is known to have survived in the wild.

Luckily, Professor Eberhard Fischer realised that the species was in jeopardy and he transported a few specimens to Bonn Botanic Gardens and Mainz Botanic Gardens in Germany soon after its discovery. At Bonn, horticulturists were successful at preserving these valuable specimens and indeed they lasted for more than a decade. However, the species proved extremely difficult to propagate.

As a result of a conservation plant exchange between Bonn and Kew, a handful of seeds and pre-germinated seedlings reached Kew in July 2009. All



Kew horticulturist Carlos Magdalena



Nymphaea thermarum in the wild Photo by Prof. E. Fischer

other known waterlily species start life as submerged plants until large enough to send pads to the surface. Therefore *Nymphaea thermarum* seedlings were initially grown submerged like any other waterlily. But, at both botanic gardens, this method was unsatisfactory: seedlings were barely clinging on to life and did not develop to adult stages.

Carlos, who has a track record of bringing the rarest and most difficult plants back from the brink, took on the challenge of learning the secrets of successfully propagating *Nymphaea thermarum* over many months.

He ran a series of trials involving a range of temperatures, water hardness, pH and depth. Plants grown in harder water at shallower depths seemed to develop further. However, no plant reached maturity, which was disappointing; as it seemed that every possible permutation known to have an influence on aquatic plant growth had been tested. Everything except the concentration of carbon dioxide and other gases, such as oxygen,

which are found at different concentrations in water than in the air. Or, perhaps there was something crucial in the natural habitat of which he was not aware?

So the next step was clear: Carlos needed to start investigating ways of changing the concentration of gases and other chemicals in the water whilst gathering information on the plant's natural habitat.

Returning to the original German description of the species and its natural habitat supplied the final clue: "it grows in damp mud caused by the overflow of a hot spring. Water reaches the surface at 120 °F (50 °C) but the plant colonizes an area where the water has cooled to a temperature of 77 °F (25 °C)". This meant that, unlike all other known waterlily species, *Nymphaea thermarum* did not grow submerged in the deep waters of lakes, rivers or marshes. The revelation was that this small, extremely rare and unusual species, with a spread of only $\frac{3}{4}$ " to 3" (5 to 20 cm), grows in the damp conditions at the edge of a thermal

hot spring – and this was the vital clue needed to crack the code.

With this knowledge Carlos did one final trial. He placed seeds and seedlings into pots of loam within small containers filled with water, thus keeping the water at the same level as the surface of the compost, at a temperature of 77 °F (25°C). In this way, the last remaining individuals of the species could be exposed to the higher concentrations of carbon dioxide and oxygen in the air. And to his surprise and joy, soon the plants started to improve and after a few weeks, eight plants began to flourish, growing to maturity with thicker, greener and wider leaves. In November 2009, Kew’s collection of *Nymphaea thermarum* flowered for the first time.

Carlos Magdalena says “Waterlilies are among the most ancient of flowering plants. This species could provide information about the evolution of flowering plants as it is truly unique. Gardeners would love something like this, the advent of the ‘no-water-lily’.”

“The *Nymphaea* story also illustrates a broader biodiversity issue – the plight of ephemeral wetlands or temporary pools,

on soil or rock, worldwide. Typically, these places are small in areal extent and often targeted for uses that threaten biodiversity. Yet seasonal wetlands often are richer in endemic species of plants and animals than <traditional> wetlands of permanent water. Particularly in the face of global warming, it is vital for biodiversity conservation, and for human well-being in many places, that such seasonally wet havens are afforded every protection, and their biodiversity is nurtured back from the brink of extinction.”

Thanks to Carlos Magdalena’s breakthrough in propagating *Nymphaea thermarum*, Bonn Botanic Gardens have reported that they have now successfully started to propagate this plant too.

Article first released by RGB Kew for the International Year of Biodiversity 2010





Above: Nick Johnson holding *Nymphaea thermarum* next to an example of the largest waterlily in the world in Kew's waterlily house. **Below:** *Nymphaea thermarum* next to the larger *Nymphaea* 'Kew's Electric Blue'.

Opposite page: *Nymphaea thermarum* seedling.

Inset: *Nymphaea thermarum* in the wild shown with British penny. Photo by Prof. E. Fischer





Growing Begonias in Sweden

By Ann-Sofie Asplind, Va Tunhem, Sweden

My friend Susanne Hvegholm and I grow begonias in greenhouses as well as in terrariums, fish tanks and glass bowls. I have a conservatory behind the house. This is only used in the spring, summer and fall. Then my plants are put into my little plant room behind my husband's garage.

My begonias take a rest during winter. The temperature in my growing area stays about 12 C (54 F) during that rest and I keep them under about 8 hours daily of fluorescent lights. Susanne's growing area stays at about 8 C (46 F) and I don't think she gives them any extra fluorescent light. My season starts little earlier than hers because my plants stay a bit warmer than hers. At the end of May many of my shrubs go into my greenhouse (that I use mostly for growing tomatoes) where they will stay until the end of September.

Susanne grows many species and seems to be able to grow every begonia. She has many ideas and tips to grow wonderful plants. She uses plastic tents to grow rhizomatous begonias and is always testing new methods.

Last year we took an amazing trip together. We went to the begonia heaven in France - Conservatoire du Bégonia! There were so many species and hybrids; we never wanted to leave this place. Thanks to Daniel, Jacky and Colette. It was a dream come true for us. We love so much these wonderful begonias.

Thanks to all our friends in the USA. We are very glad to be members in the ABS. Now our dream is to visit the USA and attend a begonia convention.



Opposite page: A small plastic greenhouse keeps Susanne's rhizomatous begonias in tip-top shape.

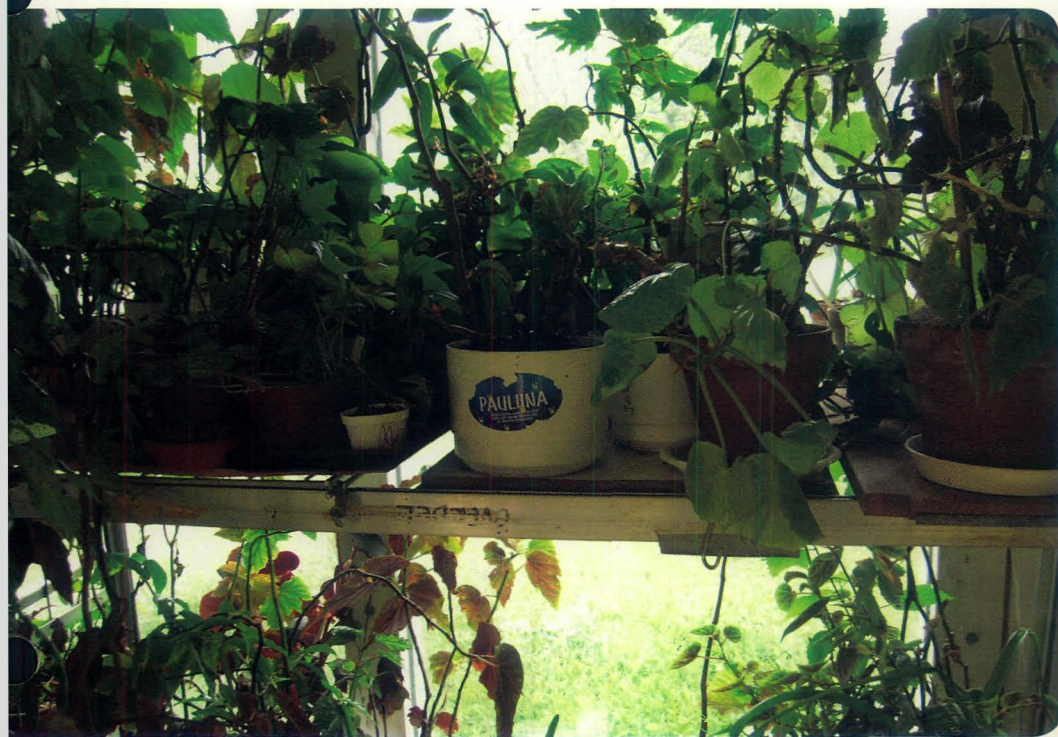
This page, top row, left: Notice the large greenhouse in the background.

Center: A communal terrarium. **Right:** Outside view of Susanne's plant room.

Middle row, left: Outdoor begonia accommodations. **Center:** Summer view of Ann-Sofie's plantroom.

Right: *B. bogneri* in one of Susanne's terrariums.

Bottom: A begonia jungle in Sweden.





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B. davisii Photo by Jacky Duruisseau

