



THE
BEGONIAN

September/October 2012



B. U074-closeup
Plant grown and photographed
by Kit Jeans Mounger

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.

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Front cover: *Begonia barsalouxiae* - see pg. 183

Back cover: A delicate herbarium specimen showing the preserved peduncles of *Begonia octopetala*. See: A Word with You: Peduncle pg. 173.

The Botanic Garden and Botanical Museum Berlin-Dahlem, digital image site at http://ww2.bgbm.org/_herbarium/cite.cfm offers visitors a beautiful array of digital herbarium images of begonias and a world of other plants. It's well worth a look.

Image courtesy of Röpert, D. (Ed.) 2000- (continuously updated): Digital specimen images at the Herbarium Berlinense. - Published on the Internet <http://ww2.bgbm.org/herbarium/> (Barcode: 0 / ImageId: 243177) [accessed 29-Jul-12]. © Botanischer Garten und Botanisches Museum Berlin-Dahlem, Freie Universität Berlin Seitenverantwortliche, Stand (diese Seite): 18.

When you receive your Begonian the 80th American Begonia Society Convention and Show will have been history. I want to thank all those members (and spouses, too) who put in all the hard work in making this convention a success. A full report on the convention will be in the November/December issue. Conventions are fun and a great way to meet new begoniacs, obtain new plants to add to one's collection and learn more about our favorite plant family Begoniaceae. We are looking for a site for the 2013 convention and beyond, so if you're interested in hosting a convention and show let me or your Executive Board know. We are here to answer your questions and assist.

The new "U" number update is now available via the ABS Bookstore on the ABS website. The update has information on new "U" numbers as well as updated information and updated pictures on existing "U" numbers. This update is a must to have if you already have the "U" number book. Of course if you don't have the "U" number book it is available as well through the ABS Bookstore. By purchasing the "U" number book you will automatically get the

President's Message

update or you can just purchase the update.

Another feature is a new website created by Johanna Zinn and Branch Relations Director Tom Keepin. This website is for Branch National Directors and is a forum for sharing information between branches within the ABS. Need ideas for programs, speakers, ideas to raise membership, or if you need to speak with your executive officers, this website, though Yahoo, is where all this can be done. Now National Directors have the capability to communicate with each other. This website is by invitation only, so if you are an ABS National Director contact web moderator Johanna Zinn at jazinn@cox.net. Branches please be sure to let Johanna know your National Directors and when they change.

Now is the time that many of our members are beginning to take their plants in for the winter. Pruning back is often essential so that begonias will fit in their winter homes. Even though I can wait much later than most of the country we will get at least one freeze - sometimes more in Central Florida - so I can empathize with those that have to move

their collections in. It is not always an easy task, especially when our plants have flourished during their spring and summer growth. But don't despair, it won't be long until in my President's Message I am talking about spring.

Good Begonia Growing!
Charles Jaros
ABS President

THANKS!!

The Branches of San Diego would like to thank all those who attended the ABS 2012 Convention in San Diego. And thanks to our Local Legends for allowing us to celebrate their service not only to our local Branches but also their work and support for the American Begonia Society. They truly made this event possible. Thanks to all. The DVD of all plants entered in the show is still available through the ABS Book Store. We look forward to next year's Convention.

-Dean Turney ABS 2012 Convention Chair



Begonia fischeri

A couple of years ago, when the Mid America Begonia Society branch was just starting, Cheryl Lenert was kind enough to send us quite a lot of *B. fischeri* seeds from her garden in Houston so we could have a seed planting program. Above is a plant that came from those seeds. It was planted last year on the northside of this condo. This *B. fischeri* is special in that it survived a Kansas City winter. While this winter was milder than most we did have several weeks of single digit temperatures. Now this plant is standing up to 100°+ heat everyday. Plant grown and photographed by Alvin Schneider



Letter to the Editor

Begonia U560?

I was just reading the article on *Begonia* U560 (March-April 2012) in which Johanna Zinn mentioned a request for photos of the flowers on U560. I'm attaching a couple of photos (left) of what I think is the same species. The photos were taken of my plant, that was flowering here a couple months ago. I look forward to any findings on this plant's identity that may come from them.

Most sincerely,
Darrin Norton, Mountain Orchids
8 Pierce Rd, North Springfield, VT 05150

Begonia cinnabarina Rediscovered in the Wild

Article and photos by Mark C. Tebbitt,
California University of Pennsylvania, PA

Until recently the identity of *Begonia cinnabarina* had for me been an enigma. A beautiful watercolor painting of this species appears in volume 75 of Curtis's Botanical Magazine (Fig. 1), along with William Hooker's original description (Hooker, 1849). It was obvious from this painting that *B. cinnabarina* was a very distinct, as well as beautiful plant. Hooker was clearly enamored with this tuberous species for he writes: "The contrast between the green stem and



Fig. 1 *B. cinnabarina* from Curtis's Botanical Magazine courtesy of Julie Vanderwilt

Fig. 2 A cliff near Vallegrande in the foothills of the Andes

Fig. 3 A closer look at the cliff reveals many scarlet flowers of *B. cinnabarina*



darker green leaves...together with the red or rather deep large cinnabar-coloured flowers, is very striking, and renders this...the most desirable of all the species for cultivation.” (Hooker, 1849). Why then after several years of researching the tuberous begonias had I been unable to locate any specimens of this plant in the dozens of herbaria that I had visited? After years of searching I was starting to think that perhaps it might be that the painting was inaccurate and that such a plant didn't exist in nature.

So it was with great delight that I stumbled upon a wild population of *B. cinnabarina* in Bolivia this past January. A Bolivian botanist and I located this wonderful begonia near the town of Vallegrande in the foothills of the Andes (Fig. 2). One rather wet and gloomy afternoon we came to a towering sandstone cliff

upon which hundreds of these plants were blooming. It was a magical place with lots of other interesting and garden-worthy plants including cuphea and puya, as well as huge fuchsias taller than me. But it was days later when we revisited this cliff now with the sun shining (Fig. 3) that the true beauty of *B. cinnabarina*'s scarlet flowers were revealed (Figs. 4 and 5).

This population may well represent the same site where the species was first collected and then eventually sent to William Hooker at Kew Gardens. At least it is quite likely that the plant's original collector passed through Vallegrande since in the 1800's this market town provided an important staging post for trips into the surrounding mountains, just as it does today. We know from Hooker's description that the species was introduced: "from seeds sent by Mr. Bridges from Bolivia." (Hooker,

1849). However, Thomas Bridges, was notoriously lax in his record keeping (Johnston, 1928), and on this occasion characteristically failed to provide any details regarding where in Bolivia he had found this plant. We will, therefore, never know for sure if this is the original collection site. Though this is not the only place where *B. cinnabarina* grows, we found three more populations, all of which were much smaller and less than ten miles away from the original one. In all cases when we saw *B. cinnabarina* it was growing on steep grass-covered sandstone cliffs in very well drained conditions. But most interesting to me was that these popu-

lations spanned a remarkably wide range of altitudes, from 4525 to 8000 ft. That the species is found as low as 4525 ft is intriguing since none of the other tuberous begonias from this area were recorded at such a low altitude. It may well indicate that *B. cinnabarina* will prove more heat tolerant in our gardens than the other Bolivian tuberous begonias have. Regardless of whether this proves to be the case, after seeing this plant in the wild I must say that I agree with William Hooker - truly it is the most beautiful of all the tuberous begonias.

Acknowledgement:

This expedition was made possible by the generous financial support of many ABS members and branches. I also wish to thank Mr. Alexander Parada for accompanying me in the field and Drs. Michael Nee (NY) and Luzmilla Arroyo (USZ) for their advice and support.

References:

- Hooker, W.J. 1849. *Begonia cinnabarina*. Curtis's Botanical Magazine 75: tab. 4483.
- Johnston, I.M. 1928. The Botanical Activities of Thomas Bridges. Contributions of the Gray Herbarium of Harvard University 4(81): 98-106.



Fig. 4 The true beauty of *B. cinnabarina*'s scarlet flowers Fig. 5 *B. cinnabarina*

When Begonias Move Inside for the Winter: What Insects Might We See?

By Dr. Paula M. Shrewsbury, Department of Entomology, University of Maryland

Begonias are a diverse group of plants that are loved by many. Unfortunately, they are also loved by an assortment of insects that find them to be tasty food. In general there are insects that commonly become problems on begonias growing outdoors, those that become pests on begonias indoors, and some are pests indoors and out. At this time of year many of you are moving begonias from their outdoor locations into the house in hopes they will survive the winter. This is a critical time in a begonia's life. If plant feeding insects (herbivores) are brought in with the begonias there is a good probability those insects will increase in numbers and cause damage to the plant. This phenomenon is not uncommon because outside there is often a diversity of natural enemies that feed on herbivores and prevent them from reaching "pest" or damaging levels. In the house, you likely have few to no natural enemies so insect populations often reach damaging levels. I will discuss likely culprits you are likely to encounter indoors, their diagnostic signs and symptoms, and measures to control these little buggers.

Insects that feed on begonias are diverse. Depending on the species of insect and where it feeds, there are distinct diagnostic characteristics that help in identifying a problem. There seems to be a general trend that many insects that become problems indoors are those with sucking mouthparts, along with a few others, whereas outdoors we see more insects chew on the foliage or

roots of plants.

Sucking insects often encountered indoors include aphids, whiteflies, and mealybugs. To feed, these insects insert their straw like mouthparts into phloem vessels which transport plant sap from the roots to shoots of plants. Phloem sap is relatively poor in nitrogen and high in carbohydrates. Insects must ingest large quantities of sap to get enough nitrogen for growth and development resulting in the excretion of large quantities of a carbohydrate rich substance referred to as honeydew. The presence of honeydew, a clear sticky substance, on foliage is a diagnostic sign that phloem feeding insects are on your plants. Often a black sooty mold will grow on the honeydew. There are several species of aphids but in general they are ~ 1/16" or less in size, pear-shaped with two cornicles (pipe-like structures) at the back of the abdomen, vary in color (often green, red, or yellow), and may be with or without wings as adults. Also characteristic of aphids are the abundant white shed skins they leave when they molt to later life stages. Aphids are often found in large numbers on the newer foliage (underside), buds, and stems of plants which provide more nutritious resources than other plant parts. Feeding from aphids often results in distortion of the new foliage. In general most whitefly adults are small (~1/16") and look like tiny white moths and fly when disturbed; and immatures (nymphs) are immobile, oval, flattened against the

foliage, and sometimes produce a white waxy substance. Both adults and nymphs are found on the underside of new or mature foliage. Mealybugs are oval, wingless, light yellow to pink in color, and many species produce cottony-like wax in which they lay their eggs. Mealybugs seem to like the nooks and crannies of the plant and are found in leaf axils and other "tight" places. This makes them difficult to find and contact with pesticides.

The first step to pest management at this time of year is a thorough inspection of all plants brought into the house from outside. Be sure to search under the leaves, on the stems and flowers, and even the soil for signs of insects or their damage. Control measures for aphids, whiteflies, and mealybugs are similar. Avoid high nitrogen fertilizers which make plants more nutritious and therefore pest populations build up faster. Next, physically remove infected plant parts, and gently wipe insects off of the plant with a soft wet cloth or cotton swab for the tight spots. Biological control agents can be purchased and released onto infested plants. There are species of parasitic wasps that attack whitefly nymphs or aphids, and the predatory mealybug destroyer, a lady beetle, which feed on mealybugs (obviously). Lastly applications of pesticides such as horticultural oil or insecticidal soap should be used. Oils and soaps must come in contact with the insect to kill it. There are also systemic insecticides that are applied to the soil and move up into the plant that are available. Be sure the insect you are trying to control is listed on the pesticide label and always follow label directions.



Fig. 1 Aphid feeding on sap

Photo courtesy of Sanjay Acharya <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aphid-sap2.jpg>

Fig. 2 Mealy bug

Photo courtesy of <http://www.forestryimages.org/browse/detail.cfm?imgnum=1265116>

Fig 3 Brown fungus gnat

Photo courtesy of Peter Rühr <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Trauerfliege.JPG>

Another insect that sometimes becomes a pest of begonias are fungus gnats. Fungus gnats are flies and the size and body shape of adults are similar to mosquitoes (also flies). Adult fungus gnats are often seen flying just over the soil of potted plants.



Begonia leprosa

Begonia leprosa, is easily recognized when in fruit, notes Mark Tebbitt in *Begonias: Cultivation, Identification and Natural History*, because "it is the only cultivated species with pink, pendulous, sausage shaped fruits..." This plant is native to southern China where it grows in moist, shady areas in thick, tropical forests. This beautiful plant was grown and photographed by Kit Jeans Mounger.

Begonia Pests *continued from pg. 171*

Adults do not cause damage to plants but they are considered a nuisance. Larvae (immatures) of fungus gnats are maggots that live in the soil of potted begonias, especially potting mixes that are damp and high in organic matter. Larvae are translucent with black heads, and are just visible to the naked eye. Larvae feed on fungi, organic matter, and young roots and stems. They may girdle young seedlings, facilitate root and stem decay by fungi, and stunt growth. Cultural control includes keeping potted plants on

the drier side. Biological control has been demonstrated to be as effective as chemical control. Entomopathogenic (insect killing) nematodes can be purchased commercially and applied to the soil targeting the larval stage of the fungus gnat. Be sure to purchase nematode species specifically for fungus gnats (ex. *Steinernema feltiae*).

Regular monitoring is the best way to catch problems early when they are easier to control and prevent problems from occurring. Focus on cultural, mechanical, and biological controls first, and chemicals only as needed.

A Word with You: Peduncle

By Claudia Goodridge, New Haven, CT

"It's a type of Cape Cod clam. You'll only find them at a local Cape raw bar. Delicious with a touch of lemon juice." So went the conversation with my husband about peduncle. My gardening friend wasn't much more enlightening – "A Mediterranean herb." So, Mr. Webster* to the rescue again ... a flower stalk; the stem of an inflorescence. It comes from the Latin *pes*, *pedis*, the foot. The *-uncle* part is a diminutive, so I guess it really means little foot. Peduncled, peduncular, or pedunculate are the adjectival forms. Try using those in a sentence without bursting out laughing.

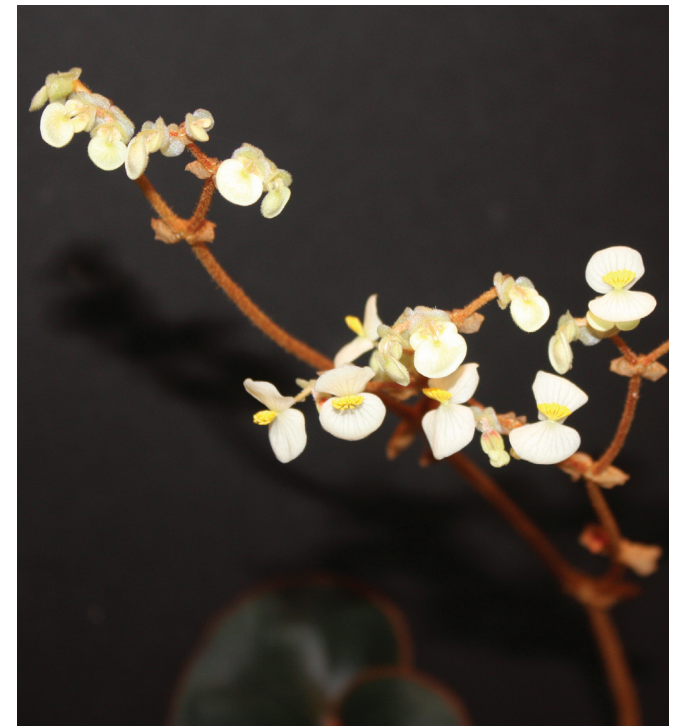
Also, in anatomy, the peduncle is a stalk like bundle of nerve fibers connecting various parts of the brain, as in brain stem; and in zoology, it's a slender, stalk-like part, as between the abdomen and middle section of an insect. I watched a praying mantis working on a bumble bee the other day; there was some perverse peduncular action going on there. It wasn't pretty and it wasn't working out for the bee.

Usually there are multiple flowers and one peduncle in our begonias. Each flower is attached to the peduncle with its own separate stem, or pedicel - one more example of the complexity of botani-speak. On some begonia peduncles, the vestiture or indumentum (remember these two?) is dense as on *B. crateris*. The peduncle of *B. bowerae* is hairy too.

The stalk of a flower; the stem of an inflorescence, and by extension and fertilization, the handle on a pumpkin or other garden fruit. I always look for a pumpkin with a good peduncle! Such curvaceous peduncles on those gourds! But my dahlia peduncles aren't as long as I'd like; nor are my begonia peduncles.

Alliteration, word play, limericks, and word fun in general are here. Pitiful peduncle; petulant peduncle. I wonder if a carbuncle has a peduncle. Pedantic but fun. Play with it.

*A side note here – Noah Webster is buried in the Grove St. Cemetery here in New Haven, CT.



B. epipsila has a rather tall, and slight hairy, peduncle.
Photo by Jem Wiseman

New Cultivars Official International Registration 1005

Gene Salisbury, Nomenclature Director

Applications to register begonia cultivars may be obtained from Gene Salisbury, PO Box 452, Tonkawa, OK 74653. Forms must be typed or printed in ink and accompanied by a \$2.00 check payable to the American Begonia Society. Clear photos for publication in *The Begonian*, drawings and dried specimens are requested. ABS is the International Registration Authority for begonia cultivar names. In the listing of the cultivar parents below the female (seed) parent is given first.

Begonia 'Angel Glow' No. 1005

Originator: Ross Bolwell, PO Box 432, Round Corner 215, NSW Australia

Cultivar developed 2000; Year of first bloom 2001; Year first distributed 2001.

Derivation: hybrid. Type: rhizomatous.

Parent or parents: seed parent 'Ruby'; pollen parent 'Red Glow'.

Previously published at ibegonias.com - 2010.

Description of cultivar: creeping, distinctive foliage. Size: small. Leaves: autumn tones from orange-red to brown. Ovate with acute tip; spiral. Red reverse. 80mm x 60mm – 100mm x 80mm. Margin ciliate, slightly lobed, some serrations. Surface glossy. Main veins – 11. Petioles 140mm, pale green spotted. Hairs lay flat. Stipules pale green. Flowers: pink tepals. Three winged ovary. Male 25mm, 4 petals, many flowers; female 25mm, 5 petals, many flowers. Many flower clusters on 150mm peduncle. Season of bloom – late winter – spring. Blooms profusely with smallish flowers.

Description: This plant is very different from its parents, and other begonias, with its distinctive autumn toned colors and spiral leaves on a compact rounded plant with light pink flowers in spring. Striking in every detail.

This variety has been tested and recommended for registration by Mike Flaherty (1505 East Valley Road Santa Barbara, CA 93108). Date registration was applied for was April 29, 2012. Registration was approved on May 18, 2012. Description prepared by Ross Bolwell (listed above).

Variety available to the trade from Ross Bolwell Begonias, 226 Annangrove Rd., Annangrove, 2156 NWS, Australia.

Plant originally introduced into the USA by Mike Flaherty. Was incorrectly given another name by persons unknown as 'Amber Glow' – this is not a synonym and is completely incorrect.



Two new cultivars. Above: *Begonia* 'Angel Glow' registration number 1005. Below: *Begonia* 'Peter Sharp' registration number 1006 (registration information on page 176). Plants grown and photos by Ross Bolwell



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New Cultivars Official International Registration 1006

Gene Salisbury, Nomenclature Director

Begonia 'Peter Sharp' No. 1006

(Pictured on page 175.)

Originator: Ross Bolwell, PO Box 432,
Round Corner 215, NSW Australia

Cultivar developed 2001; year of first
bloom 2002; year first distributed 2002.

Derivation: hybrid. Type: rhizomatous.

Parent or parents: seed parent ('Ruby x
Red Glow'); pollen parent 'Griselda'.

Previously published in the NSW
Begonia Society newsletter

Description of cultivar: Creeping, dis-
tinctive foliage, medium size. Leaves
– purple brown, very distinctive. Ovate
with acute tip, shallow lobes overlap base.

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160mmx120mm. Margin entire, ciliate.
Smooth, satiny surface; red reverse. 9–11
main veins. Petiole 14mm. Flowers: pink
tepals. Winged ovary. Male flowers 30mm;
female flowers 30mm. Both male and
female have many flowers in a cluster.
Flowers stalk 170mm. Profuse flowering
in late winter-spring.

Description: Develops a nice rounded
shape with very distinctive foliage color on
compact plant. Very different from parents.
Slow growing.

This variety has been tested and recom-
mended for registration by Mike Flaherty
(1505 East Valley Road Santa Barbara, CA
93108). Date registration was applied for
was April 29, 2012. Registration was ap-
proved on May 18, 2012. Description pre-
pared by Ross Bolwell (listed above).

Variety available to the trade from Ross
Bolwell Begonias, 226 Annangrove Rd.,
Annangrove, 2156 NWS, Australia.

Additional comments: Stunning, satiny
foliage in a rare and unusual colour group—
purplish brown with rich red reverse and
small well-shaped plant.

Plant introduced into the USA by
Mike Flaherty.

The Gesneriad Society
www.gesneriadsociety.org

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Travel to Gabon Part 3 and The End

2010 May 24 / 2010 June 14

Article & photos by Jacky Duruisseau, Bois France

Monday 7:
We start at 7 am to climb the famous Mount Doudou to look for a very rare and endemic begonia of this mountain range, *B. dewildei*, dedicated to Professor De Wilde of Wageningen University in the Netherlands. Colette stays with Isidore to strike camp. Joly and Yaya don't know begonias and I hope I can show some to them! They take turns cutting shrubs to mark our way back.



We walk in splendid primary forest and the climb is difficult for three hours. We find some rocks on the ridge and I explore them: nothing, no begonias. We need several days! However, I do see many very nice unknown plants and flowers (Fig. 1). We return, but Joly loses the way! Yaya finds it again ... and we arrive back at camp about noon. Colette and Isidore have seen monkeys in the trees and Isidore frightened them off with a small branch with which he imitated an eagle in flight! A quick snack before going back to Doussala - we have walked for five hours! The weather is fair and shade is rare. I dream of a cool beer... We arrive at Doussala at 4 pm and leave with two youngsters who want to go to Tchibanga. At Mourindi, the gate is closed! But the guard is waiting for us. "Please show me your access authorization." No authorization. Negotiations for the next hour! A strong official report, a truly-strong fine: 50,000 CFA... (about \$75 US) into the guard's pocket. We are in Africa! We arrive late at Tchibanga after 100 km on a good road - but after dark. A cool beer and prawns from the Nyanga River at the Mohbitie restaurant, an air conditioned bedroom at the Gulf Hotel and we can forget this very hard day. Next time, for sure, we'll have access authorization! And we'll stay 3 or 4 days in



the Doudou Range for a better exploration.

Tuesday 8: Let's go north to Ndendé. We explore a small river at PK 60 and I find a begonia in blossom (yellow, of course...) on a rock: *B. atroglandulosa* (Fig. 2). I had met it in 2003, in the Igotchi area in the south Doudou range. It is another species endemic to the Doudou and Chaillu ranges of Gabon. We arrive in Ndendé at 2 pm and we settle into the Drugstore Motel: air-conditioned room, average comfort, and a big water leak in the shower! In the afternoon, we go toward Lebamba; the road is often detoured because there is much construction (Fig. 3). The Chinese are building a new road (apparently in exchange for mining or logging concessions). We stop on the Ngounié bridge, just before Lebamba. We can see a very nice kingfisher in a swamp and a colony of bee-eaters have dug nests in the slope near the road and in the dust!

Wednesday 9: From Ndendé, we have two aims: today, reach the Chaillu Range from Lebamba towards Mbigou, and then tomorrow we go to Mimongo, with a stop there. We again drive on the Lebamba road with the same detours and the same police control. We have a little chat with these two likeable policemen, the same as yesterday. We explore two rivers at PK 32 and PK 42 but they too are closed and not very accessible. However, we find two begonias near the river: *B. sciaphila* and *B. elatostemmoides*; these two members of the Filicibegonia section grow on the ground in primary forest. During this walk, a kingfisher comes along with us. Not the same one as yesterday, this one has an incredible metallic blue color! I think we disturbed it and it lets us know. When we return to a slope near the road - I feel begonias! *B. mildbraedii*, with a fruit on one!! In fact, this begonia has white flowers and when Marc Sosef visited at home the previous April,

Fig.1 Unknown plant in Doudou Mounts
 Fig. 2 *B. atroglandulosa* Fig. 3 Between Ndendé and Lebamba
 Fig. 4 *B. mildbraedii* Fig. 5 *B. macrocarpa*
 Fig. 6 Stop!
 Fig. 7 *B. lacunosa* with white flowers in cultivation

it was in blossom and he thought it was maybe *B. anisosepala* (Fig. 4) and not *B. mildbraedii*. A very nice begonia with very dark leaves, slightly iridescent. At PK 3, a bridge crosses over a torrent-like river and it is impossible to get down there except by a long trail. Too late! When we return to the motel, the water leak in the shower is worse and it overflows. Help! But we must disturb the porter who is watching a cartoon on TV. Later, some people turn off the water heater...and the problem continues, of course. We'll sleep with the waterfall in the bathroom. Fortunately, the noise of the air conditioner drowns the noise from the waterfall...

Thursday 10: We leave Ndendé under a grey sky. After Lebamba, I drive towards Mimongo. This area is in the middle of Gabon and very sparsely populated. We are at the beginning of the Chaillu Range. At PK 18 I can see *B. lacunosa*, *B. macrocarpa* (Fig. 5) and *B. eminii* on the slopes of the road. We cross over the Ngounié River on a very long and unsteadily bridge. We are very surprised to see no cars on this road and the answer appears: a big tree has blown down across the pavement (Fig. 6). Impossible to continue! Go back! Not enough fuel (and not enough money!) for a long excursion towards the east by way of Mbigou. We give up. Lebamba and Ndendé again and we move north towards the Chaillu Range by another way, by Ndjolé. Stop at Fougamou. A tick operation in the evening: Colette maintains a very nice brood of these insects, caught at Doussala, in the tall brush of the savannah...

Friday 11: Today, we again go north, from Fougamou to Ndjolé through Lambaréné. This town is very famous thanks to Doctor Albert Schweitzer who treated leprous people in the hospital of Lambaréné. When I came to Gabon in 1966, he had just died. Ndjolé is a big village on the Ogoué right bank where we





8



10



11



9



12

book a room at the “Auberge Saint Jean.” This once was a very nice hotel, but now... What a pity! In the afternoon we go east, following the Ogoué. This road goes to Mitzic and we can see the mountains far off, the beginning of the Chaillu Range. From Dr. Marc Sosef we learned that these mountains along with the Cristal Mountains and Doudou Range (and other ones in Cameroon, Congo, etc), were possible glacial lowland rain forest refuge areas for the *Scutobegonia* and *Loasibegonia* plants during the Pleistocene era, 2.5 millions years ago. The first kilometers are very difficult for us and for the car: the road is loose gravel and corrugated. Fortunately, after 10 km, we find asphalt again. We explore a side road with some begonias on the dusty slope: a new one, maybe *B. aggeloptera* (I’ll know later that this one is a form of *B. hirsutula* with long leaves and spots with hairs on the blade). Farther, the road is collapsing; the enormous logging trucks, even so, go over, and so do we... I climb down the ravine: at the bottom, a carpet of a begonia species is in blossom, not yellow, but white ones: a rare form of *B. lacunosa* (Fig. 7) Unfortunately, I forgot my camera in the car and I don’t plan coming back here - too dangerous with the trucks that pass above my head... Surely someday a truck will plunge into the ditch along with 40 tons of wood. We pause near the river where we can see the unloading of logs: the water is too low and they need to take timbers to Ndjolé (Fig. 8) where they will make new rafts to use on the Ogoué. On our return trip, we explore a small river, a begonia-type river! Very nice! Many begonias: *B. lacunosa* but no flowers (Fig. 9). Rich area to which I plan to return, especially for finding *B. wilksii* which grows here! But the forest is too big to discover all species in only one day...

Saturday 12: After shopping (Fig. 10), we come back to Libreville. Too much bush meat on sale on the roadside: monkey, eagle, antelope, caiman, pangolin, etc - all protected animals! It is totally forbidden but we are in Africa! A pause at Kango to remember forty years ago, when I was a teacher in Libreville, we crossed the river Komo (Fig. 11) here with a ferry ... we can still see the jetty. Now, there is a bridge. Arrive at Libreville about 4 pm. The begonia expedition is finished!

Sunday 13: Today we rest! We go to the Esterias Cape (Fig. 12) 30 km from Libreville; walk along the beach and taste stuffed crabs in a cheap restaurant: it is a specialty of Gabon. Good! In the afternoon, another walk at Military Cape, an old military base where we reach the

Fig. 8 A timber lorry; Fig. 9 *B. lacunosa* in situ
 Fig. 10 Colette goes shopping; Fig. 11 On the Komo River
 Fig. 12 The beach to Esterias Cape

mangrove (Fig. 13). A nice forest trail with amazingly large trees because we are near the sea. We return the car to the Avis Agency in the evening. We were very lucky: no breakdowns, no flats, no trouble with this 4x4. It was for the better, because if we had had a breakdown in middle of Gabon, that would be a true problem! No network, so impossible to use a mobile phone in the bush. Think of a breakdown on the road to Mimongo where nobody drives!!!

Monday 14: Waiting all day because the plane takes off at 9 pm, we visit a souvenir shop in Libreville and the French Cultural Center to kill time. I would like to visit the library to consult some books on Gabon vegetation, but it is closed on Monday! In the garden of the Center is a shady place where we find our last begonia: *B. loranthoides* var. *rhopalocarpa*. It is not an endemic species of Gabon, but an interesting epiphytic one which grows on the top of trees for maximum light.

During this trip we have encountered about 20 species, some very rare (*B. vittariifolia*, *B. erectotricha*, *B. erectocaulis* and *B. lacunosa* with white flowers) and we will bring back some seeds for the people who helped us (American BS, Japan BS, Queensland BS and Afabego). Moreover, we will carry back great memories of this still well-preserved area where we found a fantastic biodiversity.

Map of Gabon courtesy of http://www.vidiani.com/maps/maps_of_africa/maps_of_gabon/detailed_tourist_map_of_gabon.jpg



Fig. 13 Mangroves to the Military Cape

Begonia barsalouxiae

by Joe Romeo, South Australia

I was attending the 2008 Australian Begonia Conference in Brisbane Queensland, when I first saw *B. barsalouxiae*. Friday night was meet-and-greet night, with viewing the trading table being part of the proceedings. It was strictly hands off, sales would begin on Saturday and there was no reserving of plants. There it was like a brilliant emerald shining in a sea of semi precious stones, *B. barsalouxiae*. I had to have one! I put it at the top of my list. Saturday, being an early riser, I was near the head of the line waiting for the doors to open. To cut the story short I got my plant and a few more besides, it felt like being a boy in a lolly shop, yum yum!

I got home without any idea how to grow it. I put it in my greenhouse and treated it like all my other begonias. Winter came along and *B. barsalouxiae* seemed to sulk so I decided to put it into intensive care - a temperature controlled enclosure with a minimum temp of 18°C (65°F). It hung on and grew some new leaves while it lost some old ones as well. This went on for a few years and eventually it was big enough to take a piece of rhizome off to start a new plant. Now I had two plants so I could experiment.

I noticed on the original label that the grower of my plant was Carmel Browne. I had met and stuck up a good friendship with her at the conference so I rang her for some advice about my plant. Carmel assured me that *B. barsalouxiae* was easy to grow; she grew it in her shade house along with her Rexs. Her place gets cold at night in winter but her plants get through all right. This gave me food for thought; maybe my plants do not really need artificial heat over winter. This year, in early summer, I put one plant in my new greenhouse [garden room], the other one I put in my homemade hot box (Fig 1). This is made from two foam boxes glued together with the top cut to provide a slope so when I put on a glass sheet lid I do not get any condensed water dripping on the plants. I make sure there is a vent at the top so I do not cook my plants. The unit is kept under 70% shade cloth. A layer of peat moss goes in the bottom of the box and is kept moist to provide humidity. Holes are made in the bottom of the box, at the level of the top of the peat, to prevent drowning the plants when I do overhead watering. I used liquid fertilizer on both plants while they were making new growth.

At the start of winter, the plant in the foam box was bursting to get out with its beautiful large leaves that had a nice flat surface. The plant in the greenhouse also had large



1



2

Fig. 1 *B. plebeja* var. *barsalouxiae* in its foam box.

Fig. 2 Plant grown in my greenhouse without special protection showing mildew.



Fig. 3 Plantlets struck from a whole leaf laid in sphagnum moss in an aquarium.

Fig. 4. *B. plebeja* var. *barsalouxiae* in its foam box



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leaves which grew during spring /summer. These attracted spots of mildew (Fig. 2), which I promptly treated. The new leaves, when exposed to cold nights, show curled under leaf edges, which to me is a sign the plant does not like low temperatures.

A couple of days ago, at the beginning of winter, the minimum temperature was 5°C (40 deg. F). I will keep a close eye on the greenhouse plant and as a last resort will put it in a foam box. While my plants were growing vigorously, I took out insurance. Any leaf with a blemish I used for propagation. Small leaves I put in damp sphagnum moss in a terrarium until roots formed at the base of the petiole. I then potted them up in a small tube and put them back in the terrarium till they took off. Some larger leaves, with long petioles, I laid down horizontally in a fish tank and made little nicks in the stem approximately every 40mm. Little plants grew from these nicks (Fig. 3).

I took my *B. barsalouxiae* to one of our meetings and I was informed by an older, more learned member that the name should be *B. plebeja*. I looked this up in Dr. Mark Tebbitt's book *Begonias Cultivation, Identification and Natural History*. In the photo I saw, the leaf had a shiny surface and indistinct darker coloring while mine had a matte textured surface with very distinct crisp darker markings on a paler green

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background (Fig 4 and front cover). My begonias - two plants grown in two different conditions and light levels - still look the same in the leaf-coloring department. I wonder? Is it possible that in the wild there are populations containing plants with varying colors and varying patterns on their leaves? Should my plants be labeled *B. plebeja* var. *barsalouxiae*?

B. 'Gryphon' Revisited

Article and photo by Kit Jeans Mounger, Afton, TN

In an attempt to bring myself up to speed, I spend my morning coffee time reading and re-reading a collection of back issues of *The Begonian*. As a result, I came across an article by Cindy Moran of Baton Rouge, LA about B. 'Gryphon' in the March/ April 2011 issue and read it with great interest.

As it was with Cindy, I acquired a specimen of B. 'Gryphon' late last summer from the local DIY store and garden center, brought it home and set it on a plant stand in my sun room, which was an add-on to the living room many years ago. (It's heated just like the rest of the house but a bit cooler since three sides of it are windows.) Not long afterwards, I found a number of B. 'Gryphons' in the commercial greenhouse in town.*

Location, I know, has a lot to do with the success or failure of growing certain cultivars and species of begonias. Cindy spoke of growing her 'Gryphon' in Southern Louisiana and remarked that it had never bloomed for her. Having gone to college in New Orleans not far south of Baton Rouge, I know how hot and humid her climate can be.

But, I live on the edge of the Appalachian mountains in East Tennessee at a higher elevation, although it's hardly extreme. We do not have the humidity of Louisiana or even, say, Middle Tennessee, where summers can be confoundingly hot and humid or hot and dry. Last summer's heat here was much more temperate. However, while now it's May of 2012, all my begonias, including B. 'Gryphon' are on my deck, which is overhung by tall hickories and ancient maples. Last year, however, 'Gryphon' was kept in

the window of my sunroom facing NE. The room was air conditioned and is bright in spite of all the shade. (The back yard rises some 40' on a 45 degree plane and the light hitting the grass as the sun moves, reflects a lot of light back onto the deck.)

This begonia did get leggy in the fall but my guess would be that this was due more to its ancestry than mere change of season. Obviously, Pan American Seed is not going to reveal the parents of B. 'Gryphon' but my guess would be that somewhere not too far back would be *B. crassicaulis* and/or *B. carolineifolia*. This is a guess only; I'm no botanist. My specimen merely 'acted' a bit like *B. crassicaulis*. It didn't go leafless but it did rest. Then in February, it put up a number of tall peduncles and by early March, was a shower of males with the females coming along shortly afterwards. The blossoms were about an inch across and the females a very pretty pale green to ivory in color.

As an old hybridizer, I was delighted. But all went for naught. I attempted to self it and then use the males on nearby rhizomatous as they were the only other begonias in bloom. (well, when do you play a crooked wheel? as the old say goes: "when it's the only game in town.") Needless to say, all my attempts failed. Either the cultivar is sterile or, as the old Southern expression goes: "I didn't hold my mouth right."

However, for all my failed efforts at setting seed on B. 'Gryphon', I have to say that as a "houseplant", it requires no special coddling on my part. (and thin-leaved or not, no winter blah's of mildew) and its flowering was a very enjoyable and hint-of-spring treat. So my advice to those



Begonia 'Gryphon'

begonia enthusiasts who have no access to deck or garden, do not be put off from acquiring B. 'Gryphon' and keeping it strictly as a houseplant.

*The specimens of B. "Gryphon" I discovered at Ann's Greenhouses, after buying mine at the DIY store in Greeneville, Tennessee, also froze in December at the time she had a power failure (see 'The Comeback Kid' in the May/June 2012 issue) in

her greenhouses. But like her *B. barsalouxiae*, *aconitifolia* and all her other begonias, B. 'Gryphon' is now putting out new growth and flourishing. Since there have been hints in various publications that this one might be hardy as far north as I am, I hope to get one of Ann's and plant it directly into my flower bed and see if this is true in my neck of the woods.

Stay tuned!



The Herbarium at the Kew

Article courtesy of Kew Gardens The Herbarium
<http://apps.kew.org/herbcat/gotoKewHerbarium.do>

The Herbarium contains over 350,000 type specimens – the original specimens on which new species descriptions have been based. These specimens, some dating back to the 18th century, are the ultimate reference point for a species, fixing a plant name for all time. They are invaluable to researchers and they represent a major and irreplaceable international asset. Type specimens are vouchers for plant names, so they are the essential reference point for a name that botanists consult in seeking to apply names correctly.

Dried and pressed plants (or parts of large plants) attached to a sheet of archival paper with a label attached in the bottom right hand corner to indicate origin, collector, number and identity. Additional information, such

as local uses, is often included in the label information. The specimens are filed in systematic order, according to characteristics of their flowers, leaves, stems, fruit and roots. The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew is moving towards arranging its collection according to their affinities as revealed by DNA analysis combined with classical morphological studies, which groups plants into families according to form and structure, and then these are subdivided into genus and species.

Some dried specimens are stored in boxes such as palm fronds or large fruits. These are plant parts that are too large or awkwardly shaped to be pressed and mounted, such as palm fronds or large fruits. The Herbarium also holds a spirit collection,

preserved in liquid, containing plants that cannot be pressed, preserved in liquid. Fleshy fruits and intricate flowers, such as orchids, are preserved using a mixture of methylated spirit (to stop mould and fungus from attacking the sample), formaldehyde (which fixes the plants as they are), glycerol (to prevent the specimen going brittle) and water. The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew spirit collection is probably the largest botanical spirit collection in the world. The preserved collection has been built up over 150 years and it is now one of the world's most comprehensive. It is actively used as a reference for the accurate identification of plants, scientific studies including plant biochemistry, DNA sequencing and surveys of plant diversity to assist conservation, together with studies of plant uses including use by local people for medicinal and nutritional purposes.

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew is also home to the world's largest and most comprehensive collection of fungi – over 1.2 million specimens including mushrooms, moulds and other microfungi. It is estimated that only 10% of the world's fungi have been named. Kew mycologists have pioneered research into tropical and equatorial fungi from the Amazon to Australia.

More than 100 people work in the Herbarium, including expert plant taxonomists, digital map experts and scanning technicians. In addition to staff who specialise in particular plant families (such as Legumes, Palms,



Opposite page: The new wing of the Herbarium at RGB Kew
 Photo by Tim Soar **Above, top:** Interior of Herbarium Wing C
Bottom: Fungi specimen collected by Darwin from
 Tierra Del Fuego Photos courtesy of RGB Kew



Coffees or Grasses) there are five regional teams that study the floras of dry Africa, wet Africa, South America, temperate regions and South-east Asia.

The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew has started digitising and barcoding its Herbarium specimens and 171,000 specimen images are already accessible online to researchers around the world. Each record includes information about where and when a plant was collected together with its present name and any past variations.

Geographic information from satellites is being combined with specimen data to analyse plant life in new ways. These digital maps are generated by a dedicated team, the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Unit. GIS enables botanists to cross-reference information such as altitude and soil type to see where they are most likely to find species, and can inform conservationists and poli-

ticians to determine which areas are in most need of a protected status.

For more information visit:
Herbarium collection www.kew.org/collections/herbcol.html

Electronic Herbarium catalogue <http://apps.kew.org/herbcat/gotoHomePage.do>
The Spirit collection www.kew.org/collections/spiritcol.html

The Mycological Collection <http://www.kew.org/about-kew/press-media/press-releases-kew/fungicollection-reaches-1-million/index.htm>

Right: Herbarium specimen *Dypsis brevicaulis*, dwarf palm. A critically endangered plant endemic to Madagascar, fewer than 50 mature individuals known to occur wild.
<http://www.kew.org/plants-fungi/Dypsis-brevicaulis.htm>

Opposite page, top: Botanist collecting specimens to take back to the HLAA.

Center: Exterior of the Herbarium, Library, Art and Archives before addition of the new wing. Photos courtesy of RGB Kew

Bottom: Wing C - the oldest wing in the HLAA dating back to 1877.

Photo by Edward Cullinan Architects



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B. sizemorea for Hybridizing

Article and photos by Bernard Yorke, Australia.

As I was extremely interested in the article in the March/April edition on *Begonia grandis* by John Boggan I decided to contribute some experiences with *Begonia sizemoreae* in Australia. Here in Queensland, we appear to have at least 3 different forms, light green markings, medium

and black.....so it is really a case of 'will the real *sizemoreae* please stand up?'

I am using it extensively in hybridizing since it grows extremely well here. I grow all my begonias under sarlon shade cloth all year, as our winters last approximately 8 weeks, with minimum temperatures around 4-5°C (39°F) most mornings, and a few weeks of frost as well. However, they all appear to be thriving in this temperature range - some more than others.

I have used *B. sizemoreae* as a pollen parent a few times and offer a few photos of its progeny when using *Begonia deliciosa* as a seed parent. On germination, I did notice that results were extremely quick and outstanding in number especially considering the limited amount of seed I had available. As you will see by the photos, no two seedlings appear to be the same, and all appear quite sturdy. By the variation at this stage, as well as the period of approximately one year having elapsed, I am quietly confident that none will revert to *sizemoreae*.

Another hybridizer friend of mine, John Clare, used *B. goe-goensis* as the seed parent and he had a good range of varying patterns in the seedlings, some with little pattern, mostly pebbled green. I was thrilled to acquire a dozen of these, but alas, after a period of twelve months, all appear to be straight *sizemoreae*. However, I am keeping these seedlings separate as I feel their chromosomes will be somewhat diluted and useful for future hybridizing. John also used *B. masoniana* as a parent plant and a couple of seedlings have appeared to be different - in fact outstanding - and do not appear to be reverting to *sizemoreae* at all.

Overall, I think *B. sizemoreae* has a strong influence over its progeny, whether it be pollen or seed parent. I have quite a few hybrids of it coming along with it as seed parent plant and will report further when I observe the various trends.

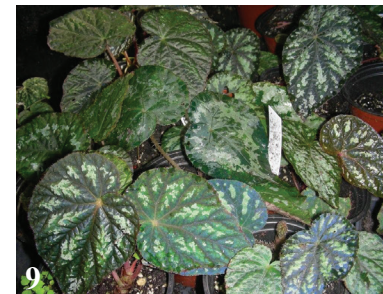
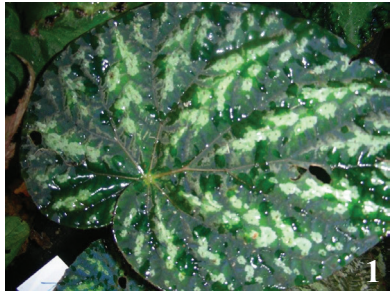


Fig. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 Seedlings of *B. sizemoreae* cross. Fig. 6 *B. masoniana* x *B. sizemoreae* seedlings. Fig. 7 *B. sizemoreae* pale green form. Fig. 8 *B. sizemoreae* dark form. Fig. 9 Seedlings from *B. deliciosa* x *B. sizemoreae* cross.

In the Mailbox

Propagating Begonias

by Greg Sytch, Horticultural Correspondent

Are you using a standard propagation mix all year round? If you are, you shouldn't! Just like my micropotting, propagation mixes should vary with the season and the region of the United States you live in. For example, if you live in Florida, as I do, go way up on the perlite during our warm, rainy season. This helps to prevent rot. During summer, Tampa Bay is hot, humid and often rainy. We average 29" of rain in the 4 months of summer. That combined with average highs of 90F and lows of 77F, it makes for a greenhouse outside! This kind of heat and humidity, combined with some wet evenings and nights, leads to quick rooting for leaves and stem cuttings. But be careful. Heavier mixes will easily rot cuttings. During winter, I increase the peat moss to hold moisture at a time when drying winds and lower humidity require the need to keep the soil moist. In areas where it is not quite so hot or humid, you still may want to increase the perlite, and higher temperatures require better drainage. If you are growing in a greenhouse, even in summer, this is important to ensure healthy cuttings. A suggested propagation mix could be as follows: SUMMER 3/5 perlite 1/5 vermiculite 1/5 dry peat moss throw in a handful of bone meal to assist in early root growth. I also add in charcoal bits. WINTER 1/2 perlite 3/8 peat moss 1/8 vermiculite and the bone meal Obviously, the need to water in winter is less, as it is during summer's hot, humid rainy spells. But, the additional perlite helps moisture drain through. I do foliar feed after 2 weeks with a diluted fertilizer that has some fungicide to protect the new, delicate roots. This has worked for me in my Tampa Bay climate. Now, go make more begonias!

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by Mary Bucholtz & Charles Jaros, Co-Directors

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Jack Golding & Dieter C. Wasshausen, 2002, Smithsonian Institution, Volume 43: 1-289

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Begonia species
Photo by Tony Pinto of the Buxton Branch

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B. dregei v. *suffruticola*
B. U014 (Kartuz form)

Open pollinated seeds collected at
Sherman's Gardens by Bobby West:

B. 'Dr. Jim'
B. 'Daisy'
B. 'River Nile'
B. 'Boomer'
B. vitifolia (open pollinated)

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 *BEGONIA-CEAE*, 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.



A lovely South American gesneriad, *Pearcea hypocyrtiflora*, sports foliage that seems to sparkle. The pouch-like, orange-red flowers are thought to be pollinated by hummingbirds. Plant grown and photo by Linda Tamblyn

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B. goldingiana

A new South American begonia species, *B. goldingiana*, introduced by L. Kollmann & A. P. Fontana. Named in honor of Jack Golding.
Photos from Michael Kartuz

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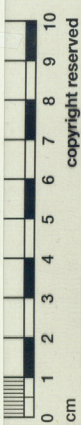
Research... vacant

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Mus. bot. Berol.

1340