

THE

# BEGONIAN

January/February 2016





*B. versicolor*, a blue ribbon winner at the recent ABS 2015 Convention. Grown and exhibited by Johanna Zinn. Photo by Craig Boyajian

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# 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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**Cover photo:** *Begonia crispula*, an unusual species originating from Brazil, was described in 1950. It has a delicate rhizome, crinkled foliage, and does best under terrarium conditions. Plant grown and photographed by Tony Pinto

**Back cover:** *Begonia pseudopleiopetala* from northern Peru was described by Dr. Tebbitt in 2015.

## President's Message

At the beginning of this New Year, I offer all of you only the very best wishes, not only for a pleasing life among your begonias, but in all things.

Winter is here, and though it can be a challenging time for many begonias and their growers, we are starting the year in good

shape. And, without a doubt, your individual ABS branches have an excellent variety of programs and speakers lined up, with good friends, great raffles, nice refreshments and warm monthly greetings. Please make 2016 a year when you participate in our Society's activities. Be an attendee. Be a volunteer.

continued on next page



## The Astro Branch

The Astro Branch meetings are usually well attended - on average 25 to 35 members. If we are having an event such as our Annual Christmas Party or our Spring or Fall Picnics, these attract significantly more members with guests. We keep our business meetings as short as possible to provide more time for our programs. Our programs are designed to teach our members everything they want to know about begonias and more. Many of our programs are hands-on workshops. For example, our November 2015 meeting was Growing Begonias from Seed. Attendees were taught how to harvest seed and prepare them for planting, then actually planting seeds we received from the Seed Fund. Several members reported they have had 80 percent germination of all the seeds that they planted! This gives them the confidence to grow more plants from seed. The photo above was from the Astro Branch's August 2014 meeting and our program was the Annual Plant Swap.

Photo and information from Tom Keepin.

## Begonia Magic 2016 Convention

The Branches of the Southern California Region are in the process of making your stay a memorable one for the convention. Tentative tours may include excursions to members' gardens, a day at the Huntington Library/Gardens, a visit to a popular California mission, exploring the Sherman Gardens, and a possible trip to some of our favorite nurseries. Don't hesitate to make plans now to visit the American Begonia Society Convention in beautiful, sunny, fun Los Angeles, California. This information will be firmed up with more details about speakers at the beginning of 2016.

**Dates: September 7<sup>th</sup> thru 11<sup>th</sup> 2016**

**Location: Ayres Hotel, 14400 Hindry Ave., Hawthorne, California, 90250.  
(310) 536-0400**

Use **ABS916** to make reservations. Cost is \$139 a night for single thru quad. Rates are good 3 days before and 3 days after. Parking is free for those staying overnight at the hotel. High speed internet is complimentary. Stay tuned for more details.

President's Message continued from page 4

Resolve to have fun at your meetings and with your plants.

For our Society and its members, it is a New Year of opportunities and enthusiasms. While we all enjoy the benefits of belonging to the American Begonia Society (ABS), we members of the ABS need to see what each of us can give back to keep the Society vital and active. Yes, I know we're all busy, with demands and distractions leaving us little time to spare. So in this case, we need to make the time. Make time, for example, to draw in and interest new members in the wonderful variety of begonias and their culture.

Bring in at least one new member this year. When you're sharing with friends and neighbors, tell them about our organization and invite them to come along with you to one of our meetings. If you have a friend



or family member with some interest, consider giving them a gift membership, which will always include stunningly beautiful issues of *The Begonian*, filled with informative articles and special stories from around our nation and the world. Engage them and remind them. And once you finally do get them to a meeting, introduce them all around and make sure they're properly welcomed. And once they're there, at a meeting, we ALL need to make them feel welcome, and make them want to come back. Make your branch meetings social as well as informative.

So the best in 2016, and may this year bring you happiness, prosperity, and especially beautiful begonias to reward you throughout year.

In friendly contact,  
Martin E. Delgado, President  
American Begonia Society

## Southwest Region “Challenge” Fund Drive Update

The Fund continues to grow with donations now up to over \$4,794. Some may have missed the original article about the Fund and its purpose so here it is briefly. SWR will match up to \$10,000. Half will go to the ABS general fund and half to the Begonia collection at Fort Worth Botanical Gardens. If you would like more details email me at [douglasbyrom@gmail.com](mailto:douglasbyrom@gmail.com).



At the Ft. Worth Begonia Species Bank. Photo by Jim Landers

The following is a list of donors and the level of their donation. If you donated and I failed to list your name just let me know. Send your check to Carol Notaras today.

**Remember, if we all give a little just think how much a 1,000 people could raise.**

### Bronze \$1–\$150

Nelda Moore; Sandy Justice; Bobbie Price; Lynn Sissney; Martin Delgado; Johanna Zinn; Jim and Linda Lawson; Charles Jaros; Johnny and Donna Williams; Tom and Jane Anderson; Eric and Irma Challain; Fort Worth/Dallas Branch; Bill Rose Alamo Branch; Don Miller; San Francisco Branch; Johanna Zinn; Orange County Branch; Bob Hamm; Cindy Moran; Dot Miller

### Silver \$151–\$300

RL and Freda Holley; Doug Byrom; Kenny and Dianna Wilkerson; Kay Jennings

### Gold \$301–\$499

Potomac Branch; Leslie Hatfield Branch

### Platinum \$500 plus

Valerie Morris; Austin Area Begonia Society Branch; Rudy Ziesenhenn Branch

### From Carol Notaras, Treasurer of the ABS

To all the branches and members of the ABS that have donated to the SWR'S Challenge Fund, spearheaded by Doug Byrom, I want to thank you with my most heartfelt gratitude in what all of you have sent to the ABS. This, plus the Boston Convention, will make sure that we will be able to carry on all our many financial objectives through to the next convention scheduled for September 2016 in beautiful Los Angeles.

## Southwest Region Get-Together 2016

What's Old is New Again May 5–7, 2016

Plans are underway for the SWR 2016 Get-Together! It will be held at the Holiday Inn Richardson located at 1655 North Central Expressway in Richardson, Texas 75080. Richardson is just north of Dallas. The hotel has just been completely remodeled. Room rates are \$99.00 per night which includes breakfast. Call 800-465-4329 for reservations and be sure to tell them you are with the American Begonia Society.

Our tentative schedule will be:

### Thursday, May 5

Trip to the Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden. It is on 66 acres on the shores of White Rock Lake in East Dallas. The Arboretum is composed of 19 major gardens. Go to their website for more information. <http://www.dallasarboretum.org/>

### Friday, May 6

Judging and free time to visit with begonia friends or see sites in Dallas. The light rail station is near the hotel and will take you into downtown Dallas.

### Saturday, May 7

Trip to the Fort Worth Botanical Garden to see the Begonia Collection and the Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT), the Herbarium contains over 1 million specimens from all over the world and the Research Library contains 130,000 volumes. Visit their website for more information <http://www.brit.org>

See the ABS website for more information and updates.



Clark Gardens, Fort Worth Botanic Garden. Photo by Karl Gercens, III, courtesy of Garden Social [http://www.garden-share.com/photo/clark-gardens-fort-worth-4?commentId=3193295%3AComment%3A1092297&xg\\_source=activity](http://www.garden-share.com/photo/clark-gardens-fort-worth-4?commentId=3193295%3AComment%3A1092297&xg_source=activity)



*Begonia pseudopleiopetala* from northern Peru was described by Dr. Tebbitt in 2015. Pictured, *B. pseudopleiopetala* with hoverfly pollinator.  
Photo by Mark Tebbitt.

## Call to Join ABS Conservation Efforts

Dear ABS Branches and Members,

The ABS Conservation and Research Fund is pleased to award a grant to Dr. Mark Tebbitt for a research expedition to Ecuador, May 2016, allowing Dr. Tebbitt to continue his in-depth study of *Begonia* sections *Gobenia* and *Eupetalum*.

Through the Conservation and Research Fund, the ABS has supported this expedition and many other important activities and studies over the years. However, because this important fund has finite resources and to avoid the risk of eventually being depleted, Dr. Tebbitt's current request has not been fully funded. In an effort to maintain the ongoing viability of the Conservation and Research

Fund, ABS branches and members are asked to support the Fund by making a contribution.

Contributions should be sent to the ABS Treasurer, Carol Notaras, at 2567 Green Street, San Francisco, CA 94123. Donors may have their contribution directed toward the unrestricted support of any future Conservation and Research Grants Awards or may indicate on the memo line of the check if the contribution is to support an individual researcher. Donations made out to ABS and sent through Carol Notaras, ABS Treasurer, are tax deductible.

Your support is valued and appreciated  
Sally Savelle, Chair  
sally.savelle@gmail.com

Charles Jaros and I would like to congratulate new judges Virginia Jens, Sandy Justice, Kathleen Murphy, Sharon Rosenzweig, Jocelyn Sherman, Elizabeth Szymczak, and Donna and Johnny Williams, and Senior Judge Freda Holley. We look forward to working with you in the future.



In this column, we will try to answer questions about judging from judges and exhibitors. We will send answers to your questions to you as we receive them, and hope to publish some of your questions and our answers in *The Begonian* a few times per year.

One frequently asked question pertains to the requirements that need to be met to become a judge or become a junior or senior judge. The requirements listed below have recently been approved by the ABS Executive Board.

### ABS Requirements for Accredited Judges

#### Sophomore Judge:

- Be a current ABS member
- Complete the judging course and test
- Clerk at least one ABS National, Regional, or Branch show

#### Junior Judge: Accrue 25 points

- Be a current ABS member
- Judge at least five ABS National, Regional, or Branch shows
- Work on entries plus classification or placement at one ABS National, Regional, or Branch show

#### Senior Judge: Accrue 50 points

- Be a current ABS member
- Judge at least ten ABS National, Regional, or Branch shows
- Instruct at two ABS judging schools, and/or write two articles for *The Begonian*, and/or present two lectures or seminars at an ABS National, Regional, or Branch show

#### Point Earning System:

- 3 points for completing the judging course
  - 3 points for each year an ABS National, Regional, or Branch show is judged
  - 2 points for instructing at a judging school, writing a *Begonian* article, or presenting a lecture or seminar at an ABS National, Regional, or Branch show
  - 1 point for working entries and classification or placement at an ABS National, Regional or Branch show
  - 0.5 point for judging begonias at other society, garden club, or flower shows
  - 0.5 point for serving as a clerk at an ABS National, Regional, or Branch show
- Each judge is responsible for submitting his records to Charles Jaros or Johanna Zinn  
Johanna Zinn jazinn@cox.net; Charles Jaros cjbegonia@yahoo.com

# New Cultivars: *Begonias* ‘Sweet Caroline’ and ‘April Love’



From Priscilla Purinton, Hybrid Registrar

## Official International Registration 1014 *Begonia* ‘Sweet Caroline’

Seed parent: *B.* ‘Di-Erna’

Pollen parent: unknown

Propagated more than 100 times. No previous publication.

Originator is Walter Dworkin, 8 Rugby Road, Westbury, NY.

Developed in 1990 from a chance seedling and first distributed in 1992. Registration applied for August 15, 2015; approved November 12th, 2015.

*Begonia* ‘Sweet Caroline’ is cane-like, reaching about 14” in height at maturity. This plant is a vigorous but compact grower, excellent for hanging baskets with its mounding habit. The

leaves average 5.5” by 1.75” with the upper part of each leaf forming a high, rounded edge that tapers down to the tip. With a glossy, smooth shine to the deep green surface, the irregular silver dots and splotches really stand out, especially as many of the leaves have silver tips. There is one main vein in each leaf, and the margins are smooth with a slight wave. The glabrous, maroon petioles are ½”. The pale green stipules are 1” by ¼”.

The flowers are small (¾” both male and female) and pink in color, with 6 male and 8 female flowers in a cluster. There is a 2” peduncle. The oval tepals (male 4, female 5) are pink. The male tepals have a white blush. Ovaries are pink as well. Spring/summer bloom time.

This cultivar has been tested by Greg Sytch of New Port Richey, FL and is available from Taylor Greenhouses, Portland, NY.

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## Official International Registration 1015

### *Begonia* ‘April Love’

Seed parent: *B.* ‘Fabulous Tom’

Pollen parent: unknown

Propagated more than 100 times. Originator is Walter Dworkin, 8 Rugby Road, Westbury, NY.

Developed in 1991 from a chance seedling. First distributed in 1992. No previous publication.

Registration applied for September 23rd, 2015 and approved November 15th, 2015.

*Begonia* ‘April Love’ is cane-like.

Oval, apple green leaves are covered with silver spots and speckles. They are rounded at the top and sharply pointed at the bottom with one main vein. They mature to 2.5” by 6” with a smooth, softly glossy surface. Leaf margins are wavy and rounded.

Green petioles are 1” and hairless, stipules are 1.5” by .5” and are pale green.



The abundant floral clusters contain 14 (male) to 18 (female) flowers on a 4” peduncle. Tepals are oval and light pink with a pink ovary. Both male and female flowers have a diameter of 1⅛”. Male flowers have 4 tepals and the female flowers have 3 large tepals and 2 very thin and narrow ones.

*B.* ‘April Love’ has a semi-trailing habit that makes it a great candidate for a hanging basket. It will not grow much higher than about 15”. The full, rounded form means that you can barely see inside the planting. The silver circles, splotches and freckles and the large pink flowers make *Begonia* ‘April Love’ a plant to love all year round!

This cultivar has been tested by and is available from Greg Sytch of New Port Richey, FL. It has been part of the collection of the Ft. Worth Begonia Bank for over 20 years.

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# In search of *Begonia polypetala*

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

I expect that I spend more of my time looking at dead begonias than do most members of the American Begonia Society. It's not that I'm a particularly bad grower, it's just that my scientific work involves studying dried, pressed specimens of begonias that researchers have collected and stored in special museums called herbaria.

As you would expect, a begonia that has had its living juices squeezed out of it and has then been glued to a piece of card lacks much of the beauty of the original living plant. Dried herbarium specimens are utilitarian scientific objects. They allow large numbers of plants, collected over vast areas of the globe, to be compared in a single place, any time of year. For taxonomists, like myself, they are immensely valuable. Valuable they may be, but objects of beauty they are not. However, very occasionally these dead, dried specimens show us glimpses of what once must have been beautiful living plants. This was the case with a dried specimen of *Begonia polypetala* that I saw in 2000.

Alphonse de Candolle described *B. polypetala* in 1878 based on a plant that had just been collected in Peru and which was being grown in a Swiss nursery. Later it would be pressed and preserved in the herbarium in Geneva, Switzerland. When I saw this same plant over 100 years later, it was dry, flat, and had lost all of its original color. Even so, it was obvious to me that the original living plant must have been stunning. It had large, densely hairy leaves, numerous petals, and, as de Candolle tells us,



Figure 1. *Begonia polypetala* is known only from this single mountain in northern Peru. Figure 2. *Begonia octopetala* was common along the grassy roadside verges.

vivid scarlet flowers. Looking at the dried specimen and reading de Candolle's brief description made me want to see a living plant. However, this was not immediately possible. Outside of the species' native country of Peru this species was unknown except for a handful of dried preserved herbarium specimens.

Fifteen years lapsed before I had the chance to see a living plant of *B. polypetala*. In 2015 I visited the only mountain in Peru where this species is known to grow. The purpose of my trip to this mountain was to confirm that *B. polypetala* was a distinct species. The original description of *B. polypetala* is very brief and consequently it is difficult to tell from it how, or even if, this species is distinct from *B. octopetala*. *Begonia octopetala* is common throughout northern Peru and occurs on the same mountain as *B. polypetala*. Because very few herbarium specimens of either species are available from this area, I couldn't even use them to learn more. So in order to





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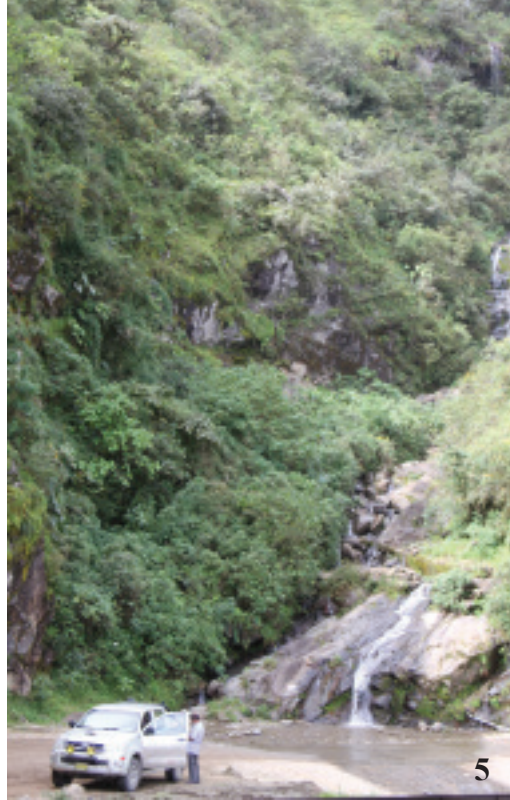


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Figure 3. In this location the reverse side of the petals of *B. octopetala* were more deeply pink flushed than we had observed elsewhere. Figure 4. *Begonia octopetala* photographed 140 miles further south has less deeply pink flushed petals. Figure 5. *Begonia polypetala* grew close to waterfalls in much wetter habitat than *B. octopetala*. Figure 6. Wet, moss-covered cliff habitat of *B. polypetala*.

gather more information I visited the Piura region of northern Peru.

Once our botanical team reached the mountain where these two plants grow (Figure 1) we soon found *B. octopetala*.



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This species was common all along the grassy roadside verges (Figure 2). In this location it was a little bit different from plants we had seen elsewhere. It had slightly more pink-tinged petals (Figures 3) than we had seen previously (Figure 4). The leaves were also slightly hairier than usual and the hairs more silvery in color. But still these plants were clearly just part of the natural variation found in *B. octopetala*.

We drove higher up the mountain stopping and collecting herbarium samples of *B. octopetala* every few miles. Then we reached the first of a series of waterfalls that run down the mountainside (Figure 5). And there, in a completely different habitat, was *B. polypetala* growing on wet, moss-covered cliffs (Figure 6). Instantly I could see that it was distinct from *B. octopetala*. For one thing it grew in much wetter and more exposed locations. But more impor-



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Figure 7. A plant of *Begonia polypetala* destined to be a new herbarium specimen Figure 8. The peltate leaf base of *B. polypetala* with a dense cover of long, silver hairs on the leaf undersurface. Figure 9. Female (upper) and male (lower) flowers of *B. polypetala*. Figure 10. Beautiful star-shaped male flower of *Begonia polypetala*.

tantly, now that I had living specimens to examine, I could see that it had a totally different appearance. Unlike *B. octopetala* the leaves were peltate, had much denser and slightly longer silver hairs on their undersurfaces (Figures 7 and 8), and the flowers, well... they were amazing. They were huge and had long, pointed, scarlet petals (Figures 9 and 10). We spent that afternoon further exploring the mountain. We consistently found that the two species could easily be told apart. *Begonia polypetala* was clearly a distinct species and, as

I had suspected from my earlier examination of the herbarium specimens, is an incredibly beautiful plant. I am excited to be able to share with you my photographs of this wonderful species, the first, as far as I know, that have ever been published.

**Acknowledgement:**

This expedition was made possible by the generous financial support of the American Begonia Society, as well as several ABS members. I also wish to thank Mr. Aniceto Daza Yomona of the Universidad Nacional Agraria La Molina, Lima, Peru for his assistance in the field.

## *Begonia 'Oteka': A Begonia Princess from Oklahoma*

Article and photos by Don Miller, Dallas, TX

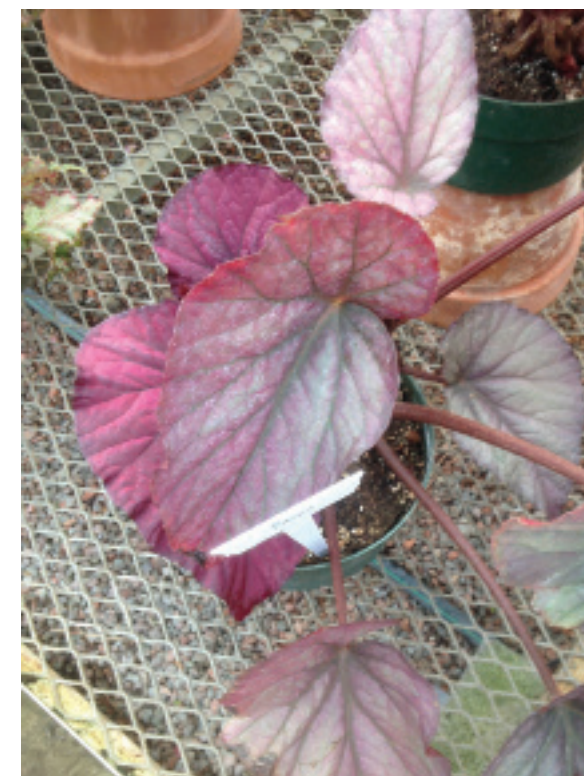


Dianna Wilkerson has been growing begonias for over 20 years. She and her husband, Kenny, have been active in The Fred A. Barkley and Southwest Region Branches. They also work with the Fort Worth Botanic Gardens and are liaisons between the gardens and Southwest Region providing timely reports on the Fort Worth Begonia Collection for the Region.

They live in Choctaw, Oklahoma where one day Dianna decided to cross *B. 'Lalomie'* with *B. U508*. The seedlings grew fast and one looked particularly interesting. In 2011, the Barkley Branch hosted the ABS Convention in 2011 in Oklahoma City, OK. Dianna was convention chair, and one of the tours was to Dianna's greenhouse. At her greenhouse, Charles Jaros admired one of her seedlings. Dianna told Charles "take it and see what it does."

Charles took this promising seedling to Florida and then to Harmony Foliage. Harmony grew it and it turned out to be a very beautiful and easy to grow cultivar. It was initially called U508 x 'Lalomie'.

The leaves are large and have a thick texture like U508 and when young and growing in cool temperature are bright purple, or also depending on growing conditions the leaves can be grey with shades of pink and purple. It grows into a large tight mound. The back of the leaf is red. The flowers



*Begonia 'Oteka'* at "finishing school" (top). Photo by Charles Jaros. *B. 'Oteka'* showing the more usual leaves and the new spring leaves under paler old leaves (bottom).

continued on next page



*B. 'Oteka'* fresh new growth in spring with high color

on this rhizomatous hybrid are white and it blooms most of the year.

When shown how beautiful her little seedling had become, Dianna named it *B. 'Oteka'* and says, "Oteka is our 8 year old granddaughter's middle name. We understand the name Oteka comes from the Chickasaw tribal language and means "Sun Princess" or is an affectionate term for a young lady."

We must give Dianna credit for making this interesting cross, raising this beautiful begonia, and sending it off to finishing school in Florida to become a glowing begonia princess.

## Expedition to Madagascar 2015

March 22 / April 20 - Part 3

Article by Jacky Duruisseau, Bois France; Photos by C. Bridon, E. Bouquet, and J. Duruisseau

### Maroantsetra, at last!

We land at Maroantsetra at about 4 pm on Sunday, April 5th. Clement, our usual guide in this area of Madagascar, meets us at the airport. A taxi ride to the Cocobeach Hostel where we find Denise, Clement's wife, who is our cook for our explorations.

Next day, we have a briefing at the Cocobeach with Seraphin, who will go with us to Masoala because Clement is not free during this time. We draw up the supply list with Denise: food, water, chickens, bananas, charcoal, etc. Then, a day of rest and walking in town to recover from the previous difficult days.

Clement and Seraphin get in touch with a fisherman in Ambodiforaha, our first stop, in the middle, between Maroantsetra and Cap Masoala in the south of the peninsula. He'll take us in a very large pirogue [a long canoe] for the whole expedition. It is more expensive, but much surer than a regular boat...like the one we took in 2013 that was always overloaded!

Unfortunately, we'll wait to start for two days for the pirogue to come to Maroantsetra. More lost days!

So, we decide to go to Nosy Mangabe.

### Nosy Mangabe Island:

Nosy Mangabe is totally covered with forest; the whole island is a fauna and flora reserve. In 2009, only scientific searchers could come here. But in Madagascar, some sort of an arrangement can always be worked out...yes, we could land on the island. Now, the access is free... after passing the Angap office and paying the tax... Then there are negotiations with the owner of a small boat which will take us and wait for us. The weather is fine and the water is crystalline. It takes us half an hour to reach Nosy Mangabe (Fig 1).

Let's go! We find our first begonia: *Begonia erminea* L'Héritier. This tuberous species grows here at a low altitude (less 50 m) and we encounter it very often (Fig 2) on rocks (gneiss), in the streams, and sometimes as an epiphyte on tree trunks. The blade is varied, with a margin that's often red, and with red spiniform hairs, too. Flowers and fruits are present also. On the other hand, we do not find another species that we found in 2009 in the same place. Is this really the same place? In 2009, I didn't have a GPS device.

During our picnic, two White-headed lemurs (*Eulemur fulvus albifrons*) (Fig 3) keep us company. They seem used to visitors and are waiting for bananas.

We explore a second path and again find many places with *B. erminea* and as well as a small and nice frog (Fig 4). We leave this small heaven (Fig 5) in the evening.

### Masoala: near Ambodiforaha

Much rain during the night and many black clouds in the morning skies. We wait for the pirogue and depart from the Cocobeach about 7 a.m. in the rain. The two pirogue boatmen are

continued on next page



experienced and we cross without a problem. It is raining, but the sea is calm. We reach Masoala after 3 hours, at Ambodiforaha on the east shore of the Antongil Bay. We stay in two bungalows of Mrs. George – simple, but cosy...and we don't need our hammocks! No running water, no electricity, as usual...washing and toilets very primitive. We settle in and Denise prepares food.

Our first exploration is that afternoon. What a surprise! It is April, and usually April is in the dry season. I thought we'd have problems with the streams. Correct! It is impossible to go up them as we usually do, half in the water, half on the rocks. The Ambodiforaha River is now a furious torrent! However, we find two interesting begonias but no flowers, nor any mature fruit. The first species (Fig 6) is perhaps *Begonia nana* L'Héritier, with entire and somewhat succulent leaves, but not lobed as the one we saw in Marojejy. The other one (Fig 7) is an unknown species we found in 2013 with a very attractive leaf - lanceolate with red margin, spots, and spine-like hairs. These two species are tuberous and the tuber is firmly attached on rocks and cannot be swept because of the swellings.



We must follow the stream at a distance, and of course, at a distance from the begonias! We walk along the left bank and hope to reach the river. That's impossible because of very slippery vertical slopes. We find a path, which leads to a farm and an area where trees have been cut down! We are still near the Masoala Park border. The deforestation has gotten worse since 2013.

We get closer to the stream and, miraculously, I find *Begonia masoalensis*, recently described by Mark Hughes (Fig 8). This very nice tuberous species has an amazing habit, grows in shady

Fig 1 Nosy Mangabe in the distance; Fig 2 *Begonia erminea* L'Héritier on rocks; Fig 3 *Eulemur fulvus albifrons*, Sir?; Fig 4 A nice, small frog, *Mantella laevigata*; Fig 5 I love Nosy Mangabe!; Fig 6 *Begonia nana* L'Héritier; Fig 7 An unknown begonia species; Fig 8 *Begonia masoalensis* Hughes



9



10



11

places, on vertically sloped earth and that is strange - usually tuberous begonias grow on rocks. The leaves are flattened to the slope. Staminate and pistillate flowers are present but the fruits are not mature. The fusiform fruits are like those of the African begonias of the *Tetraphila* section. Maybe this species is a transition between African species (Mozambique is “near”) and Madagascar species? An expedition to Mozambique would give the answer? Another day, perhaps...

Yet more big showers in the night. Today we go to the Tampolo River, south of Ambodiforaha. We cross a coastal *Pandanus* forest where we see a superb bird, *Euryceros prevostii*. We visit a rocky area and find the one and only begonia of the day: it seems to be *Begonia nana* (Fig 9) with a succulent blade, in full sun (when there is sun!) but the blade is wider than that of the similar species we found yesterday. We arrive at an enormous waterfall. Impossible to cross! Too much water! So we have a picnic and we look at the rocks with binoculars. No begonias, but some orchids (*Cynorchis*) in blossom. We try to walk around the waterfall through the forest, but it is very difficult because of the vegetal jumble of prickles, wasps, and slope.

We only find another deforested area and now we are in the Park!

Still another rainy night! Today, we come back on the Ambodiforaha River but on right bank. This time, the path is a tourist one, a part of the Varygnana tour. We are

---

Fig 9 Another *Begonia nana* form?  
 Fig 10 *Begonia henrila-portei* D. Scherberich & J. Duruisseau  
 Fig 11 Unknown species - a jewel!  
 Figs 12–14: Unknown *Begonia* species near the Ambilosykelly River

---

the lone tourists.

We find a nice patch of *Begonia masoalensis* about 1 km from the sea and at an altitude of 70 m. Many have a pale green blade. And we again find the species with lanceolate blades that we had seen yesterday, on the rocks of a small and quiet stream.

**Near Ambanizana:**

In the afternoon, we leave Ambodiforaha towards Ambanizana, to the north. The sea is quiet and skies are clear. We reach the village after one hour at sea. Today, we stay in a bungalow of Mrs George’s daughter. We must set up mosquito nets above the beds. Here there is no laundry and no toilets! Only the river.

We start early on morning; the pirogue carries us 4 km to the south to rediscover a very rare species, *Begonia henrila-portei*. With a botanist friend, we have just finished describing this begonia dedicated to Henri Laporte, who discovered it in 1998 (Fig 10). It grows on damp rocks near the sea at an altitude of 25 m. We can see about 15 plants, but no flowers, nor any fruit. Obviously, it is not the best time to harvest seeds: the dry season is too late. Moreover, this species is quite endangered because the damp rocks are on a busy path

continued on next page



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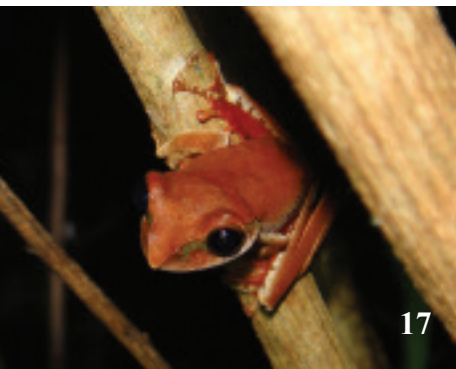
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17



18

between Ambanizana and Ambodiforaha. We even have seen zebus [a type of cattle]. With our guide, Seraphin, we explore in vain the surrounding area and upstream. Does *Begonia henrilaportei* grow only here? But, only 50 m above, we find a rice field! We are still in the Park!

We turn back towards Ambanizana and we waded up several small rivers we cross. We see *Begonia lyallii* var. *lyallii*, and a small tuberous species (Fig 11) that grows on vertical damp and shady rocks: a jewel with some flowers yet no mature fruits. This begonia is unknown.

We end the day as all the people of the village do - a very pleasant wash in the river.

**The Ambilosy Area:**

After the usual rainy night, the pirogue boatmen take us to Ambilosy, a small village one hour to the north. We had planned staying two days in this place, but the bad weather dissuades us from setting up the hammocks outside. Additionally, the captain thinks that because of the unfavourable wind, it would be better to return to Maroansetra after the exploration.

We look for the path we used in 2013 but we don't find it. So, we ask the villagers "Where is the path that runs along the river?" "Tsy misy" (there is not a path!). Very strange! I have a Way Point of the site where we found, in 2013, five begonia species. We start towards the east, through the forest with a machete, then towards the south and we find again the place. What a pity! The big rock where begonias grow is still here, and the begonias, too (Figs 12–15), but on the left, a big tree is down and cut up into lumber (Fig 16), while on the right we see another rice plantation! More light and less humidity. There is no hope for these begonias! Three are unknown; the other two are *B. masoalensis* and a form of *B. lyallii*.

Back at the village, Denise waits for us and cooks noodle soup. We come back to Maroansetra greatly vexed. We can not stay longer at Masoala because we must catch the plane. A day's rest will be best for us!

Fig 15 Unknown Begonia species near the Ambilosykyely River; Fig 16 What a disaster!;  
Fig 17 Another nice frog, *Boophis madagascariensis*;  
Fig 18 *Chrysidia ripheus* sleeping

**We are already thinking of our return...**

We come back the next day to Antananarivo. We have three days before flying back to Paris. We devote a morning to visit the Herbarium of the Tsimbazaza Botanical Garden. The dried plants collection is in bad shape, they haven't the means to maintain it. We know all the species that are preserved in the herbarium, but none of the unknown species we found are present.

In the afternoon, we start for the Vohimena Reserve, halfway between Antananarivo and Toamasina (ex Tamatave). What a disappointment! Not a begonia in the place. Yet, the site seems very favourable to begonias because of the river, gorge, rocks, forest and tropical atmosphere. On the other hand, a nocturnal walk allows us to see many small, nice, multicolored and noisy frogs (Fig 17) and a wonderful butterfly, the famous *Urania (Chrysidia ripheus)* (Fig 18) at rest for the night, and its caterpillar, as colorful as the adult.

With the rain, the Air Madagascar problems, the very serious deforestation, we ask

ourselves if we should plan another trip to Madagascar. Many problems this year and few seeds!

Think positively! We absolutely must explore the Makira forest... so, we'll go to Madagascar again - I love Madagascar.

This time, we found about 20 begonias species, of which eight are unknown, very rare ones. A big job describing them waits for me...

**Acknowledgements:** Many thanks to the American Begonia Society, the ABS Branches (Sacramento Br, Potomac Br.), all the ABS members, Dr. Yu-Min Shui of Kunming (Yunnan) University, Australian and Japanese friends who helped me. This travel was made possible by their generous financial support.


Unfortunately, I brought back few seeds - possibly no mature ones. I hope those I sent to you will germinate. Good growing and many thanks again.

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## *Begonia strigillosa*

### *The Bristly Begonia from Mexico and Central America*

Article and photo by Randy Montes Kerr, West Hollywood, CA

A very singular-looking plant, with creeping rhizomes. The leaves are fleshy, oblique, cordate acuminate, dark green on both sides, glossy above. Striking colors, don't you think? The leaf surface is studded with reddish glandular hairs, accompanied with the fringing, as seen in *B. manicata*. The petioles are thick, long, round, green, spotted with red. From each of the spots arise single scales, terminating in long white hairs, which gives the plant a bristly appearance. This species is easy to grow in the garden (though not cold hardy), or on a warm bright windowsill. This species seems happiest with bright light, even some sun, and slightly moist, but not waterlogged soil. Prefers not to dry out. Leaf propagation is not too difficult as customary for rhizomatous species and their progeny.



The female (left) and male (right) flowers of *B. 'Wanda Macnair'* showing the corollas. This is a Rex Cultivar that was entered in the ABS 2015 Convention Show by Stuart Hammer. Photos by Craig Boyajian

## A Word with You: Corolla

By Claudia Goodridge, New Haven, CT

And this vocabulary choice all started with Thompson's use of *papilionaceous* in their glossary definition of *wings/ala*e (last AWWY). *Papilio* is Latin for butterfly. I thought its presence there meant it would refer to specific begonias, but try as I might, I could not find one reference to a *papilionaceous* begonia flower in their book, in any of my reference materials, on the internet, or in my collection of begonias. I have limited patience for banging my head on walls. Turns out *papilionaceous* flowers are mostly legumes, and pretty shapes they are, complete with wings, banners, and keels. Great word.

That's a long introduction to this issue's focus ... *corolla*. Basically the *corolla* is the sum of the petals of the flower, the pretty part. All the petals form the *corolla*. It surrounds the reproductive parts, often in a circle or whorl (another great word), and the colors and shapes are meant to attract the pollinators. Just under the *corolla* is the *calyx* which is formed by the *sepals*. Altogether we're looking at the *perianth*... *corolla* plus *calyx*.

Mr. Webster says *corolla* is from "[L. *corolla*, a little crown, diminutive of *corona*, a crown, wreath] in botany, the petals or inner leaves of a flower. It is distinguished from the perianth by its fine texture and bright colors."

All that head banging wasn't in vain. It led me to <http://dept.ca.uky.edu/PLS220/Flower-shapes.pdf>

The site has great pictures, including a couple of begonia flowers, lots of useful vocabulary, and is the epitome of the idea that a picture is worth a thousand words.

# Exploring for Begonias in Florida: A Tale in 3 Parts

Article and photos by Freda Holley, Choudrant, LA

When Virginia Jens emailed me earlier this year to invite RL and I to drive to Palm Beach so that I might speak to their branch, it took me only a few minutes to consult with RL and agree. This had long been a dream of mine! After all, the time was past when I could traipse over foreign mountains in search of begonias in the wild, but in Florida I could see begonias growing naturally in landscapes. We had agreed on October 5 as the speaking date and when we left on Friday, October 2 we expected a rather long and grueling drive. Actually, broken into 3 parts, it turned out to be a leisurely, enjoyable trip through begonia paradise.

## Part One

From our house near the north central border of Louisiana and Arkansas, we made it to Tallahassee, Florida by about 4 p.m., experiencing real traffic only in Mobile, which we hit at lunchtime. The next morning after breakfast, it was a short drive to the home of Joyce and Doug Pridgen who had invited us to stop by for a visit on our way.

The Pridgens had moved to this small town of Micanopy, Florida just off I-75 in the northern center of the state just three years ago from Miami. They've built a beautiful place on a long strip of land overlooking a peaceful horse farm. Our first surprise in Florida was finding how heavily forested this central region was and next at the amazing number of racing horse facilities all the way down and into Palm Beach.

Before lunch, we first explored their yard. For those of you who know long time ABS and SWR members Joyce and Doug, you already know them

Baskets suspended from oaks and a view of the front of the Pridgen's new house (Fig 1). *Begonia* 'Lana' on the front porch (Fig 2). A basket of *B.* 'Hallow's Eve', a Brad Thompson hybrid (Fig 3). Another basket, this is a beautiful *B.* U561 (Fig 4). Doug's own hybrid, the beautiful *B.* 'Miniperba' (Fig 5). Doug's clever device to water and feed his cuttings (Fig 6).

for their prize-winning begonias. In fact, their trophies amply decorated their new house. Still, it was amazing to see Doug's begonias (Joyce is currently not growing begonias) grown to such perfection that they constituted a show in themselves. The front of the house had many small oaks to which Doug had secured shepherd's hooks so that huge baskets could be suspended (Fig. 1). Doug had many large, lush cane begonias (Fig 2), which turned out to be rather unusual since rhizomatous seemed to be the dominant type farther south (Fig 3 & 4).

Joyce had prepared a wonderful lunch over which we caught up on their move from Miami. After lunch, we again toured the yard, this time with Doug giving us cuttings, which came back to Louisiana, where they have been potted up by the NCLA Branch.

Late in the afternoon, Doug led us to their guest-house, formerly an old house that had been on the property, but now beautifully remodeled by Doug and decorated to perfection by Joyce. It had not taken us long to see that Doug is an

continued on page 30



## How Do *Your* Begonias Grow?

Share your tips, tricks, success and failures, photos or questions with your fellow begonia lovers. Send your submissions to *The Begonian* at [begoniaskc@yahoo.com](mailto:begoniaskc@yahoo.com)

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Exploring for Begonias in Florida: continued from pg. 27

outside workaholic and Joyce a talented decorator. The guesthouse is set in the midst of enormous old oaks dripping with Spanish moss. We later learned from Charles Jaros that this moss is actually a bromeliad, *Tillandsia useneoides*.

When we had freshened up and rested a bit, we went to dinner at a great Florida fish restaurant. RL loves fish and having lots of fish was his dream for the trip. After such a dinner and our early start, we were ready to retire to the guesthouse for the night.

The next morning, we had coffee, packed up the truck, and rejoined our hosts. Doug took us to see an old shed that he is now slowly redoing as a lathe house/greenhouse. In summer, its sides of plastic can be rolled up. Here Doug keeps his terrariums and does all his propagation.

Doug has also invented an innovative way to keep his cuttings growing (Fig 6). He lays a metal strip, covers it with capillary matting whose end is then submerged in an end tray attached to the bench. This has his water, fertilizer mix which wicks under the pots. Each pot also has a string wick touch the mat. Temperatures do not typically freeze here, but they do often drop quite low at night.

After that, off for brunch at another typical Florida restaurant and a tour of a local historic village complete with lovely old homes. Then we drove home viewing the countryside's horse farms and old preserved country houses.

Finally, we said goodbye to the wonderful Pridgens and took off for Palm Beach Gardens where we had been invited to stay with Nancy Cohen.

## Glabrous or Hirsute?



According to Dr. Mark Tebbitts, in his book *Begonias*, *Begonia thelmae*, "... is so distinct, it has not yet been classified in a botanical section and may require its own new section." The plant was named for the ABS' own Thelma O'Reilly, who, according to Dr. Tebbitts, "...brought the species to the attention of the botanists who named it." This plant, shown above, was grown by Sharon Rosenzweig and was exhibited at the 2015 ABS Begonia Revolution convention in Boston. The photo was taken by Craig Boyajian.

Is *Begonia thelmae* glabrous or hirsute?

Watch for the answer in your next *The Begonian* brought to you by A Word With You!

Last month's answer to Picture Quiz  
November/December issue, page 224

## Dehiscent v. Lianescent

**ANSWER:** dehiscent. A seed capsule that dries at maturity then splits and drops or expels its seeds. See Vol. 80, March April 2013, p. 49.



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B. 'His Majesty' won the Windowsill Grown Division at the 2015 ABS Convention Show. Gloria Utzig exhibited this beauty. Photo by Craig Boyajian

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