

BEGONIAN INDEX 1996

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Survey Results

A survey of reader preferences was included in the September/October 1997 issue of the *Begonian*. By November 15, surveys from 72 members had been received including one containing only the last five items on page 181 and my address on the reverse with a note from a North Houston post office with an apology for a mutilated mail item. Surveys were received from all areas and a number from other countries including Canada, Japan, and the Netherlands. The results given here were tabulated on November 16.

After the survey was tabulated, a number of additional surveys have come in. Mindful of the lateness of delivery to many of the November/December issue which stated the November 15 due date, **I am going to extend the time for submission** and then retabulate the results in January. I wish to express my appreciation to all those who have responded. Many surveys came in with lengthy notes on the survey itself or with letters attached; these provide other helpful insights and ideas which will be accommodated where possible.

The low return rate is not unusual for mail-in surveys, and results still provide useful guidance on reader preferences. The highest priority items in terms of average ratings were:

1. Photos of species. 1.34 (1 = Want to Read/See Often)
2. Photos of new hybrids. 1.37
3. (Tie) Articles about species. 1.43
3. (Tie) Description of seed fund offerings. 1.43
4. Articles about new hybrids. 1.49
5. (Tie) Articles about general culture. 1.51
5. (Tie) Photos of seed fund offerings. 1.51

The lowest rated item was: Photos of begonia art/crafts. (2.48) Yet it is worthy of note that 5 surveys or 7% of respondents said it was not important to see photos of species and 9 surveys or 13% of respondents said they wanted to see photos of art/crafts often. Indeed, this indicates the diversity of interests in ABS membership. The one question not asked that would have provided additional insight into the results was whether respondents were members of a branch. Just from looking at the postmarks of the surveys, I would say it is likely that two major divisions of interest are based on those who do and do not have immediate access to other knowledgeable growers through branches. As editor, I will strive to place the emphasis where indicated without totally neglecting minority interests. I hope readers will also be patient with the magazine realizing that this wide range of interests exists.

In terms of the source of materials for the *Begonian*, an average rating of 1.37 indicates most people vary between wanting to see good articles taken from older issues of the *Begonian* often or sometimes. The average rating of 1.94 indicates a leaning toward seeing articles from regional/branch newsletters only sometimes, and 1.38 indicates a willingness to see items from other plant society publications when appropriate. Only 6 readers indicated that the *Begonian* should contain only original material.

Survey results in terms of percentages are probably most meaningful for the data yielded by this type survey. In the next issue percentages for all items will be given.