

The BEGONIAN

DEVOTED TO THE SHELTERED GARDEN



Photography by Martha Green

H A A G E A N A

THE BEGONIAN

Monthly Publication of the AMERICAN BEGONIA SOCIETY

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THE new editor sends felicitations to the retiring editor for having foresight enough to get away while the gettin' was good—but why didn't he WARN us of the amount of work it takes to get an issue of the Begonian in the mails?

However, with the cooperation of the national and branch officers and friendly assistance from you and You and YOU, I will attempt to publish information each month of such interest to the members that they will take the time and make the effort to bring others into the Royal Hobby and membership in the ABS.

When copy is being prepared for next December's Begonian and we have less than 1500 members at that time, I will feel that somehow or other I didn't make the grade.

This is too big a job to do alone—can I depend on you?

DUES are DUE

Ventura News

On December 12 moving pictures of travel scenes and beautiful gardens from San Diego to Victoria, B. C., were given by one of our members, Mr. Walter E. Harrington. Election of officers, a plant sale and a Christmas plant exchange took care of the rest of the evening. The ladies thoroughly enjoy the December meeting, more from anticipation than realization probably, because the men have to take care of the refreshments. They did themselves proud this time, serving hot individual turkey pies, with hot rolls, fruit salad, tea and coffee. We are ending up the year with a nice cash balance in the bank, and 1940 looms up as a busy year, with a Spring Flower Show planned for April, another in the fall, and the Society Convention and allied Begonia Show for November.

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Dues Deadline: January 15

Our Cover

The young lady who graciously consented to pose with Beg. Haageana for our cover this month is Dolores Sim, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Sim of Manhattan Beach.

Submitted by C. M. KELLY

A Naturalist In Brazil

In a book by this name, the author, Konrad Guenther, says: "In the wilds, no plant or animal lives unto itself alone, but only in community with others, in a delicately balanced natural condition, one depending upon the other." He develops this theme at some length, and shows that all forest life partakes somewhat of the appearance and characteristic of its neighbors, a harmony of life disturbed only by the intrusion of man and his so-called improvements.

The Brazilian territory of which he speaks is not the hot, humid tropical jungle along the rivers, but a more open, upland forest in which there exists a metallic motif. He says, "The leaves and flowers of many tropical trees look as though stamped out of sheet metal and painted with glossy lacquer. The plumage of many birds glistens like bronze, and insects have gold and silver blended in the colors of their bodies."

The brilliant sun is reflected by these shining, metallic surfaces of leaf and stem, flooding the forest floor with light as though directed there by mirrors.

He continues, "To this external aspect of the tropical country, the metallic voices of its singers is attuned. And rain, like a waterfall, gives a hard, metallic sound as it hits the tough, unresisting foliage of the trees. The metallic quality of the voice of the Brazilian fauna is attested to by the fact that the natives have given the name

Ferreio, the smith, to three different creatures, two birds and a frog."

From these observations, perhaps we can conclude that those of our begonias that have smooth, shiny leaves and metallic colorations perpetuate, in these characteristics, their association with a native environment like that described by Mr. Guenther.

In this Brazilian forest he found growing a climbing begonia, having shiny leaves and flaming red flowers.

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WEITZ BEGONIA GARDEN

Highlights from a Recent Talk
Before Inglewood Branch Members

Discussion Of Seed Planting

By LAMBERT DAY
Research Director

The growing of begonias from seed is simple if a few rules are kept in mind, and everyone following these ideas can have success. During the past few years the writer has tried out every method that has come to his attention and has found suggestions of merit in each. Tuberous begonias may be planted anytime from November until March, fibrous at anytime, if you have proper facilities to care for them.

Before planting begonia seeds they should be examined carefully under a microscope. Seeds that look well filled, plump and slightly pear-shaped put the odds much in your favor. If they appear dried up and shrivelled it is unlikely that they will germinate. All favorable looking seeds, however, will not germinate, as the seeds sometimes will develop fully even tho not fertile. They may have been picked before fully ripened or so old that the germ is dead. If no microscope is at hand, a few seeds may be put upon a piece of white paper. The paper is then held at a slight angle and tapped. Good seeds will begin to roll in much the same manner that an egg would roll down an incline.

The selection of soil in which to start the seeds and continue their uninterrupted growth is of utmost importance. If you can gather your own leaf mold, by all means do so, for then you have the opportunity of selecting the best. If unable to do this, be sure that you test with litmus paper or some other method to see that there is no alkali present. The sand to be used should be similarly tested.

The soil mixture is prepared by sifting all ingredients thru a 1/16 inch mesh screen such as a flour sifter. If you have bottom heat available, two parts each of leaf mold and peat moss are used to one part of sharp sand. Where heat is uncertain use only one part peat moss or none at all to prevent the mixture from holding too much water and becoming soggy.

Another important rule which is too often overlooked is sterilization of the soil to be used and the seed pans. The soil may be sterilized before or after sifting and mixing together. This is done by bak-

ing in an oven at 250 degrees fahrenheit for one hour or boiling for one-half hour over an open fire. If baked the soil should be in a moist condition when placed in the oven. It is well not to use the soil too soon after sterilization as the heating sometimes releases nitrogenous compounds in large enough quantities to be injurious to the tender seedlings in the same manner that large plants are destroyed by over-fertilization. Dry out the soil thoroughly in the sun and wind and place it where it cannot become contaminated for a week or so, and it is then ready for use. Just before putting the soil in the seed pans, mix in a liberal amount of powdered charcoal.

A good seed pan for use is a five or six-inch fern pan. After placing a large piece of broken pot over the drainage hole, fill the pot two-thirds full of a mixture of coarse leaf mold, bits of broken pots and the coarser sand that did not go thru the sifter when you were sifting the sand. Sift about an inch of your prepared soil over this and settle it down by gently tapping the fern pan on the bench. It is then put into a vessel of rain or distilled water until the soil has taken up all the moisture that it will absorb. Sift about a quarter of an inch more soil on top, being careful this time to make it level and avoid settling or packing it down, as it must be left spongy so that the tiny rootlets will be able to enter the soil; otherwise the plants will fall over. Now dust the entire top surface lightly with powdered charcoal and the pan is ready for the seeds.

A good method of sowing the seeds is to mix a small quantity of very fine sand with the seeds and placing the mixture in an ordinary salt shaker. The seeds can then be distributed very evenly with no difficulty. It is not advisable to try to sow the seeds by rolling them between the thumb and finger as they are easily crushed.

One method that has found much favor is the sifting of a layer of prepared soil three-quarters to one inch thick upon a porous brick. The brick is then placed in a pan and only enough water added from time to time to keep the soil moist.

[Continued on page 6]

December 7, 1939

Dr. W. N. Caseley, President
American Begonia Society
Long Beach, California.

President Caseley:

It is with great pleasure that I enclose a check in the amount of \$40.00 to be used to further the work of the Research Department, as a gift from the officers and members of the Inglewood Branch of the American Begonia Society.

Sincerely,
(Signed) FRANK M. HARRISON
President, Inglewood Branch

Don't Put Us Behind the 8-Ball

A little matter of a dollar. Spare a thought for the officers who will have to spend HOURS removing names from the mailing list because you

**WE'RE NOT DIDN'T DO IT NOW
PSYCHIC** and HOURS putting the

names back because you thought a few days more or less wouldn't matter. If you want to receive your copies of the Begonian regularly, your 1940 membership fee must reach us by January 15. This money is used to pay for the printing of our bulletin.

We want to put out a BIGGER and BETTER bulletin, and if your dues don't come in on time you leave us squarely behind the eight-ball.

Dyckman Branch Meetings

By Mrs. Rush T. Lewis

The Herbert P. Dyckman Branch met Tuesday, December 5, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Erlewine, 4007 Elm Avenue, Long Beach. Forty-two members and friends were present. New officers were elected for 1940. After a splendid program there was an exchange of Christmas gifts.

The January meeting will be held on the 2nd at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Harry B. Ailman, 2366 Linden Avenue, Long Beach.

On February 2, the regular monthly meeting will be held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert P. Dyckman, 141 West 53rd Street, Long Beach.

December 14, 1939

Mr. Frank Harrison, President
Inglewood Branch of American Begonia Society
Inglewood, California

Dear Mr. Harrison:

I hardly know what to say to you and your live-wire members in thanking you for the \$40.00 for the research department. It is a splendid thing. I fear without new specimens some members might grow weary, but so long as we have nice people like the Inglewood folks backing up the research department and other departments I see no chance of anybody growing weary.

I believe I have in you a splendid successor and if I can be of any assistance to you be assured I am at your service.

Very truly yours,
(Signed) W. N. CASELEY, President
American Begonia Society

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Discussion Seed Planting

(Continued from Page 4)

Another idea is to construct some small flats about 1½ inches deep by 6 inches wide and 8 inches long. A piece of copper window screen is tacked over the bottom to keep the soil in. This will give ample drainage. Two pieces of glass are cut the correct size to fit over the top and bottom of the flat. The bottom glass is used to prevent too rapid drying out of the soil when bottom heat is applied. By removing the bottom glass partially, some control of the moisture content can be had. A half-inch of drainage material is first put in the bottom of the flat and three-quarters of an inch of the prepared soil is then sifted over the top as described in preparing the seed pan.

In all the above methods of planting seeds, a glass cover should be placed over the seeds. This is to assure a more uniform temperature and humid conditions. As soon as the seeds are well germinated, give some ventilation and gradually increase until, within a few days, the glass may be entirely removed. Some growers suggest placing a paper over the glass to exclude the light while the seeds are germinating, yet the writer feels that weak light is beneficial, especially if the seeds are old. During the time that the glass is in use it should have the moisture removed from the underside once or twice daily.

Still another procedure that is quite successful, is the growing of seeds in agar agar solution. This is prepared by mixing one-third ounce of dry agar per quart of distilled water and enough chemicals from any of the prepared chemicals manufactured for water culture to equal a quart of their standard solution. It would be better to use slightly less chemicals than recommended rather than too much. The solution is sterilized for half an hour and then poured into sterilized pyrex or other glass dishes that have glass covers. The solution is then covered until cold. Clear glass ice box dishes may be used. The agar agar solution should be about one-half to three-quarters of an inch thick. When the solution becomes cool and solid the seeds are planted, the covers put on and sealed around the edges with cellulose tape so that they are virtually air-tight. The covers are not removed until the seedlings are ready for transplanting into flats. Advantages to this method of germination are proper control of moisture, humidity, and freedom from soil fungus and larva.

Begonias seem to germinate over quite a wide temperature range. Some authori-

ties feel that 55 degrees fahrenheit is quite satisfactory as the minimum while others recommend no lower than 65 degrees. Most everyone agrees, however, that the maximum should not go above 75 degrees as higher temperatures cause the seedlings to grow rank and leggy, making them susceptible to damping off fungii. Should this difficulty arise, give more ventilation and treat with Semesan solution according to the manufacturer's directions or spray with a four percent solution of chlorox.

Begonias send up one or two seed leaves before the first true leaf appears. When this true leaf begins to make its appearance it is well to transplant as soon as possible because the single rootlet is beginning to branch out making it difficult to remove without injury to the root. The young seedlings will generally grow if damaged, but it takes them much longer to get started. Watering with Vitamin B1 at intervals will add much to the sturdy growth of your plants. The flat for transplanting the seedlings the first time should be about an inch and one-half deep with the other proportions to suit the individual. A little coarse drainage material is first put in the bottom of the flat and the remainder filled level with the top with the same soil mixture that they were started in. Mix in a liberal amount of charcoal. Soak the flat thoroughly by standing it in an inch of water and then allow it to drain. The seedlings are then transplanted about three-quarters to an inch apart each way and covered with glass for two or three days until they are established. Subsequent transplantings should contain coarser materials. Try to keep the seedlings growing steadily by giving proper light and heat, being careful at all times not to over water, yet never to let them suffer from lack of it.

DUES are DUE

Your secretary-treasurer is a grand person—don't turn him into a bill collector!

Due: One Dollar

For Your Convenience

You don't have to waste time hunting for last June's copy of the Begonian in the future. You will note that the Begonians are now punched; so, go to your favorite dime store and for about twenty cents you may purchase a notebook cover (outside dimensions 7½ x 10 inches) and as your bulletins arrive file them at once.

Do you like the new Begonian? The editor will appreciate constructive criticism and suggestions for its improvement. It is YOUR magazine. It is to assist you in the enjoyment of YOUR hobby.

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California 1940 Calendar

HERBERT DYCKMAN BRANCH

Tuesday, January 2 — 7:30 P.M.

2366 Linden Avenue, Long Beach

INGLEWOOD BRANCH

Friday, January 5 — 8:00 P.M.

Odd Fellows Hall, 159½ N. La Brea Avenue

THEODOSIA BURR SHEPHERD BRANCH

Tuesday, January 9 — 7:30 P.M.

Coca Cola Hall, Thompson Blvd., Ventura

LONG BEACH PARENT BRANCH

Thursday, January 11 — 7:30 P.M.

Community Hall, 9th and Lime, Long Beach

GOLDEN GATE BRANCH

Wednesday, January 17

1060 Francisco Street, San Francisco

EAST BAY BRANCH

Monday, January 22

School for the Blind, Berkeley

★ The National Board of Directors will meet at the home of the Vice-President, H. P. Dyckman, 141 West 53rd Street, Long Beach, 7:30 p.m., Thursday, January 18. All Branch representative directors are urged to attend. Make a note of the date, as no further notice will be given.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS

Copy for the Begonian must reach the editor by the 15th of each month. Address all correspondence to 3112 West 81st Street, Inglewood, California. Use one side of paper only, typewritten, double-spaced if possible.

Watch for the BIG February number of the Begonian. Due to a change in the editorial staff and the publication date being advanced, effective with this issue, lack of time did not permit the printing of a New Year's bulletin that would have started 1940 off with a Bang! **WATCH FOR THE FEBRUARY NUMBER.**