

The BEGONIAN

Devoted to the Sheltered Garden

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The BEGONIAN

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158 So. Oxford Ave., Los Angeles, Calif.

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Anent Promises

• We have made several promises to our members. So far, we have been fortunate in being able to keep them, until this issue, but this month seems to have caught two or three of our featured writers a little short of time, and we have to give a little explanation herein, so that all who will miss these features will know they are not stopped, but held in abeyance until the next month's issue, the while other pressing duties are attended to. Most of us understand how this can be, in these times.

It is not as easy as it appears to draw a growing plant faithfully in a short time, as it takes many hours of assiduous work as well as research to do this and write articles for a publication, especially as everyone knows we

want to be right with what we send out in our "Begonian" to our members.

We are so eternally grateful to all who give us of their valuable time, effort, ability and artistry, all gratis, that we are sure you will not mind the disappointment too greatly this time. We shall appreciate their full worth more when they return to us. (In any case, how do you like "The Begonian" this month?)

We believe in letting our contributors know how much they mean to us, and we are sure you join us in this sentiment, and wishing them a welcome return to us.

"SENTIMENT is nothing but thought blended with feeling; thought made affectionate, sympathetic, moral."

— J. F. Clarke

Your Editor

Research Notes and Announcements

HARRIETTE W. BRIDGES
Director of The Clayton M. Kelly
Research Department
Oakland, Calif.

• Your Research Department has been busily engaged since the first of the year principally in being re-organized. With the resignation of the former Director, Mr. Ziesenhenné, it became necessary not only to secure a new directory, but also to divide the work.

Your new Director was appointed last January by Mr. Baily but since that time, along with other duties, has been busily engaged in securing the best possible people as to knowledge and ability to take care of our important division of Nomenclature.

After considerable discussion and correspondence it was decided that the job was too big for one individual to undertake under our present volunteer system. It has been decided to divide the work into two sections, each headed by a Chariman of Nomenclature. These will be the Rex Division and the Fibrous Division. There are other groups of Begonias not included in these two groups, but there are few Nomenclature problems involved in them.

As your new Director of Research's principal experience in the past has been with the Tuberous group, and only in recent year or so has she had any experience with the other two major groups, it was necessary to locate people who were willing and able to take over these other groups.

Fortunately we have been able to secure two excellent and well qualified people in the persons of Mrs. Helen K. Krauss as Chairman of Nomenclature for the Fibrous Division, and Mrs. Claude E. Woods as Chairman of the Rex Division.

Mrs. Krauss resides at 405 Cotswold Lane, Wynnewood, Pennsylvania. We have been very fortunate in securing her consent to carry on this important work for us because she is an authority on Begonias and possesses one of the largest and most complete libraries in this country. In addition to the Fibrous Division she has consented to undertake the building up and maintaining the Society's Herbarium. All in all I feel that she will be an invaluable asset to the Society in these capacities also.

Mrs. Woods resides at 4542 Altadena Avenue, San Diego, California, and is an active and "livewire" member of the Society. She was the first president of the San Diego Branch and it was due to the splendid start which she gave it that this branch is such an active and aggressive section of the Society.

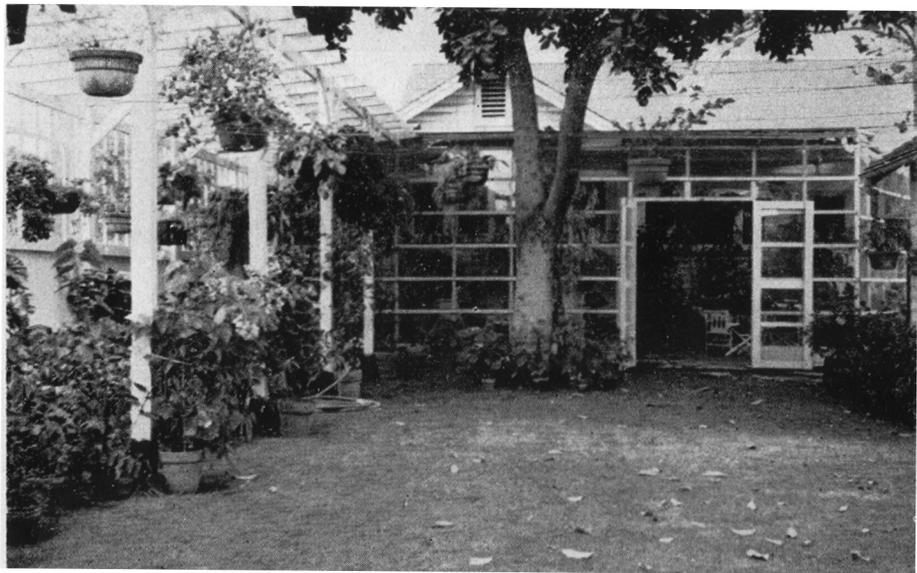
These two additions to the Department strengthen the already strong group now carrying on the work for the benefit of the society. Mrs. Clarissa Harris and Mrs. John G. Crowder both remained with the Department as Seed Fund Distributor and Librarian respectively. These two have carried on in their usual efficient and effective manner and their help has been much appreciated by me.

Requests for information come in from time to time and the Director is answering them as best she can. Where there is no answer available, the information is being sought from reliable sources. From time to time some of these requests will be sent to the membership through the Begonian for the assistance of the membership as a whole. In such cases any information the members may have on these subjects will be gladly received and kept in the files as part of the ABS records.

One such inquiry that has not been answered yet concerns the experience of members in growing Begonias by the Hydroponic method—types of tanks, solutions, formulas, experiences with them. One member has requested such information, but although I have written to authorities on the subject of Hydroponics no answer has been received. Perhaps some of you have had experience in this line and would share them with us all. Let your Research Department become the clearing house for such material. Material so gathered can be passed on in the form of notes or articles. Perhaps some one has had experience in these fields and would care to write them up in the form of an article. I know the Editor of the Begonian would appreciate such material. The Research Department will be glad to receive and forward such article or articles.



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The Patio Pergola with Entrance to Conservatory

ARCADIAN PARADISE By GONDA HARTWELL and PEGGY DODSON, Monrovia, Calif.

Happy the man whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound
Content to breathe his native air
In his own ground.—Pope

THE extensive and colorful collection of plants found at the home of Arthur E. Nelson, 506 Le Roy Ave., Arcadia, genial President of the San Gabriel Valley Branch, American Begonia Society, proves anew the old adage that "Tall oaks from little acorns grow." Mr. Nelson has a natural love for flowers and after he built his Arcadia home, he decided to plant a little flower bed that would be all his own. Since planting that little bed, he has grown successfully and successively gladiolus, dahlias, roses and the various types of Begonias. His first floral love was the stately gladiolus and under his tender care they constantly improved until 1927 when they rewarded him by going to the Biltmore Flower Show and garnering fourteen ribbons for the beauty and perfection of their flowers. Then the dahlias had their day, and a beautiful day it proved to be. The beauty and fragrance of roses could not be resisted so they came next and it seems they came to stay. The numerous ribbons and other awards that have been won at the various rose shows are proof of the success of this venture.

After these successes, Mr. Nelson began to look about for new fields to conquer and one evening in 1937 he spied the well filled lath house of a commercial grower of exotic plants and stopped to admire, and left with a few small Begonias. At that time the Rex, with its richly hued leaves, was not as well known as the less tender Fibrous, so it was quite natural that the small purchase contained only one Rex. Along with the Rex—the name of which Mr. Nelson has now forgotten—the purchase contained four Fibrous Begonias, Nellie Bly, Scharffiana, Corallina Delucerna, and Haageana, with a few small ferns for variety, the whole totalling the small sum of \$3.50.

Knowing that these plants would need a sheltered spot, in order to thrive, Mr. Nelson built a tiny lath house at the south side of his garage. The plants prospered in this location and soon filled their quarters to overflowing, so the tiny lath house was replaced by one extending the full width of the double garage and was about 12 feet deep. In order to accommodate as many plants as possible, several wooden shelves were built. These were placed one above the other somewhat like steep stair steps and extended entirely around the inside. Mr. Nelson is a firm believer in liberal feed-



From the Inside Looking Out Through Glass Shelves and Young Orchids, to Preceding View, Page 92
— All Photos by A. E. NELSON

ing to promote rapid and luxuriant growth, so an outstanding feature of this new lath house was the Food Tank. This was a wooden tank placed on a high platform near the back of the lath house and could be reached with a ladder. It was filled with water from a garden hose and the proper amount of commercial plant food added. To an outlet of the tank was attached a length of flexible hose long enough to reach all the plants. A valve in the hose controls the amount of liquid allowed to flow in each pot. (This tank has proven so satisfactory that it is retained as a permanent fixture.) Growing shade plants of many kinds from leaves, cuttings and divisions proved such a fascinating pastime that soon the new lath house was full and new locations were provided for the surplus plants, and they were increasing so that there are now more than 75 varieties of Rexes and about the same number of Fibrous; many Tuberous including the basket types as well as the upright growers. There are also 35 or 40 varieties of Fuchsias and about 50 different kinds of orchids. The artistic arrangements of all these gorgeous plants make the Nelson home a place to be remembered. As one enters the driveway, the startling beauty of the planting begins to unfold. To the left of the driveway is a large velvety green lawn that extends from the curb to the back of the grounds.

Near the center a large deodar tree with the lower branches removed, provides shade for a circular planting of red flowered semperflorens with their highly polished green leaves, and Saxifraga with its lovely dark rich green foliage. In a space between the lawn and a border hedge, beginning near the street is a small garden of choice roses; then a round-headed kumquat tree hanging full of small orange colored fruit midst the shiny green foliage pleases the eye; and from this extends a row of avocado trees, trimmed high, and furnishing dappled, and dependable, shade for tall Fuchsias so full of bloom, white double Syringas heavy with fragrance, Rehmannia angulata with flower stalks 2 feet high and full of rose colored bells, Saxifrages, Ferns of many kinds, Calla lilies with their lively white flowers, Nicotiana, brilliant flowered Cannas, Camellias and Azaleas also find a home here and scattered here and there are semperflorens and fibrous Begonias. Truly a beautiful picture. And the background for all this is the dark green boundary hedge. To the right is another lawn, with border hedge, that extends from the curb to the planting of Camellias, Daphne, Gardenias, Brunfelsia, and some bush Fuchsias in a border near the front of the house. Farther back, the driveway passes between a row of White Birch trees and beds of shrubs and flowering plants—Gardenias, Camellias and Fuchsias so



Corner of Conservatory with *B. Scharffiana* Lording It Over Rexes, Orchids and Fern Baskets

lovely they hardly seem real—at the side of the house.

A little further along we see the door in the end of a conservatory that is built across the rear of the house. We enter this door and are breathless as we look about. Right in front of us hangs the now five year old *Scharffiana* with its many, many runners reaching almost from the ceiling to the floor—a gorgeous sight and in our estimation would win the sweepstake prize in any show. Pink *Rubra* is trying to hide the 8 feet high trellis to which she is fastened; *Lake Louise*, a Rex, with its green and silver leaves sits nearby. *Midnight* and *King Edward* compete for royal purples; *Capt. Nemo* of lighter leaves but spiraled so attractively; *Rajah* and *Cordoza Gardens* each with their vivid green, purple and silver leaves; *Jessie*, a Fibrous, tall and stately and blooming profusely. Wall baskets full of Rexes; hanging baskets full of ferns; ivies; *Ceropegias*, variegated applemint, and *Nepeta*. On the glass shelves we find young orchids;

Saint Paulias of lovely foliage and full of flower; young Rexes just getting their roots firmly established in 3 inch pots; blooming *Cattleya*; *Campanulas* with their dainty blue flowers. Here and there a *Cymbidium* with long sprays of delicate orchids so lovely they seem unreal. *Corallina Delucerna* also is trying to "hit the ceiling." *Rexes: Lesoudii, Modesty, Magnifica* make for beauty and color. Well arranged wall baskets, hanging baskets, and flower tubs make just the right space for the inviting lunch table and chairs and fortunate indeed is the foursome meeting here.

We open another door and step out into what seems to be a patio in Fairyland. This wonder spot is enclosed by a pergola that begins at the corner of the conservatory and runs along the west side for some 50 or 60 feet; then across the south end where it turns and connects with a corner of the lath house, which, joined to the garage, closes most of the east side. The few feet remaining between the front of the garage and

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Sheltered Corner with B. Pink Bubra, Jessie and Lake Louise Luxuriating in the Soft Light

the east corner of the conservatory is closed with a glass partition and completes the east wall. To give added protection to the plants, the space between the gleaming white beams of the outside wall and the roof of the pergola, have been filled with glass. A neat lawn covers the center space with an avocado and sycamore tree for additional shade. We see a Birdnest Fern fully a yard across sitting so serenely in a corner while all around are colorful Rex Begonias, Fibrous Begonias so heavy with bloom they have to be supported; blooming Fuchsias making a beautifully arranged bouquet in themselves; Houghtonii stands nearby fully 3 feet tall and two feet wide; Picta Alba 18 inches tall and well branched; metallica 3 feet tall; Marjorie Daw, with her pretty ruffle-edged leaves 5 feet tall and full of dainty flower; Haageana of vigorous growth and full of bloom, a second Scharffiana well on the way to rival the Mother plant, verschiefeltiana asking for larger quarters than a 14 inch pot, multiflora so full of bloom and

standing at least 5 feet high, and so on. Further along we see even tomatoes in hanging baskets and also garden peas all showing the same vigorous growth; a Strelitzia has a place to her liking judging by the rank, healthy growth; Epiphyllums show their appreciation of this beautiful setting by covering themselves with huge flowers of delicate texture and rare coloring; the original lath house still is filled with plants and along the garage we find more treasures; more tall Fibrous in full bloom; young Tuberosus with vivid green foliage; lower growing Fuchsias full of bright bloom and suspended from rafter ends above are baskets of plants, some blooming and some for their foliage. This makes a picture worth traveling far to see and demonstrates clearly what understanding care plus liberal feeding will do.

An Orchid to Mrs. Nelson, who carries on so beautifully while the top gardener travels afield on frequent business trips.

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Let's Identify That Unnamed Rex Begonia

Nadine Woods

Nomenclature Chairman, Rex Division
San Diego, Calif.

• By your membership in the American Begonia Society you have indicated a more than casual interest in the fascinating hobby of growing Begonias. You are interested enough to want to know the correct names of your plants and if you have had my experience, friends' advice about that unnamed plant has often been more confusing than helpful.

The writer does not pretend to be an infallible expert in the matter of identification and classification of the almost inexhaustible variety of Rex Begonias, but, with your cooperation we should be able to identify most of them. You are invited to send a specimen of that nameless or disputed plant to the writer at 4542 Altadena Avenue, San Diego, California. We will do our best to name and classify the Rex Begonia, and give you some information about it.

A leaf, together with information about the particular characteristics of the plant, is usually sufficient to identify a Begonia. A tracing of the leaf showing veins and markings will be of great help in case the leaf does not arrive in good condition. To insure that the specimen is not damaged in shipment, the following suggestions for packing are given.

If packed too wet, the leaves and cuttings will rot; if packed too dry, they will arrive dead. The stems of cuttings should be wrapped in damp moss, then

in wax paper, and the whole rolled firmly in newspaper. They should be packed firmly, for while they will stand squeezing, they do not like shaking.

A single leaf should be carefully placed in a fold of cellophane or wax paper, and the whole wrapped in wet newspaper, or packed in damp moss.

A leaf or cutting without further information about the plant will oftentimes be unrecognizable because of the great similarity among many Rex Begonias. The sender should, if possible, tell of the growing habit of the plant, whether tall, intermediate, low, or dwarf. Also, the texture of the leaf as hairy, dull, thick, shiny, or tough, together with the color of the leaf back and face. To insure proper identification give the distinguishing marks on stems and rhizome, the color and size of blooms, and any other unusual markings or characteristics of the plant such as grouping or form of leaf, and so on. The location of the plant, whether in semi-shade or full shade is important, since location will affect the color of the leaf.

This will not be too complicated if you will first write down the items about which you are to furnish information. For example:

1. Type.
2. Growing habit (tall, intermediate, etc).
3. Texture of leaf.
4. Color and size of blooms, and so on.

After you have made this tabulation, you will find that the information is easily filled in, and it will be in such form as to be readily understood. Incidentally, if you are one of those orderly persons who would like to catalogue his plants, this system of classification is recommended.

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Branch News

The San Gabriel Branch: Mrs. N. H. Powell reports that the June meeting will be held on the 27th, Sunday afternoon at 2 p. m. with Mr. Ferd Neels as speaker. Everyone will want to be there, therefore, since the place of meeting is not yet decided, please contact Mrs. Powell for definite address.

East Bay Branch: This Branch met with a long list of questions on Victory Gardening to be answered by a speaker who at the last moment could not be present, therefore, an open forum was declared, in which everyone told of his or her experiences in the Victory Garden. Please send this Secretary suggestions for Programs. They will be appreciated. Mr. D. G. Goodnow, 2519 Milvia Street, Berkeley, Calif.

Margaret Gruenbaum Branch: Will meet on Tuesday, June 22nd, at the home of Mrs. Anna Oehrle, Hatboro, Pa.

Glendale Branch: This meeting will be dedicated to the showing of special pictures issued and edited by the University of Southern California along the lines of flower culture and propagation. This ought to interest every member and friend who can make the time to take advantage of the open invitation. See Calendar for address.

Heard indirectly: That the San Gabriel Branch has issued a challenge to Glendale Branch:—Who can bring in most NEW members between now and the Annual meeting? Just about that time, Glendale was prepared to issue a like challenge to San Gabriel We shall see. Of course, you do not need to be reminded, the regular Begonia show will be held during the Annual meeting. It is up to you to be there with something pretty fine.

North Long Beach: Too late for last month's news, came the announcement of a membership drive contest to be concluded in July by these enthusiastic Begonians. Since then we have heard of other Branches doing the same thing in different ways. We wish them all happy times and good results. See elsewhere in this issue for important news regarding the meeting of this Branch on June tenth, at the Odd Fellows Temple, 728 Elm Ave., Long Beach. Mrs. Cuyler, President, reports the Branch has greatly enjoyed the good fortune in hearing the following speakers this year:

George McDowell, of Shadeland Gardens, Inglewood; Mr. Rapella, of the Rapella Orchid Farm in Hawthorne; Mr. Chitwood, of Vigoro Co., Los Angeles, and Mr. Carter of The Camellia Gardens, Monterey Park.

The Secretary, Mrs. Van Hook, has resigned, for special work. A new Secretary is appointed, Mrs. Claire Jackson of Long Beach.

Mrs. Cuyler has been promised some fine plants for the Robinson Memorial in Los Angeles.

Riverside Branch: We did miss their regular report last month. In June, on the first, at the usual time, they will meet at the home of Mrs. R. C. Smith, 3784 Arlington Ave., with Mesdames Topham and Porter as co-hostesses. Last month's meeting at Mrs. Topham's netted a clearance of \$5.61 through the sale of Victory Garden produce plus the auction of a Begonia donated by Mr. Twomley. Mr. Topham, the host, was persuaded to go out and dig more of his beets for these had especially fine beet tops for use as greens. We would like to know if he planted these beets in the "light" of the moon? The regular attendance seems to be about 21 members just now, but as soon as the weather is warmer, there will be more joining these, in the visiting of the various gardens.

San Diego Branch: We feel down in San Diego that we are keeping up the good work of not only informing our own Begoniaites as to what to do, but we are taking over the city as well. Mrs. Russell T. Bailey was appointed chairman of the Civic Begonia Exhibit, as Mr. Allen Perry, park director, had cooperated by giving us the big shaded entrance to the Horticultural building in Balboa Park for our permanent exhibit. Mrs. Bailey had the gratifying response of seventy-five plants and money to buy outstanding varieties, but, alas, the armed forces were forced to take over all space for hospitalization of our wounded so we shall await better days.

Naturally, we are proud, too, in having three of our members serving our "Begonian. Mrs. Eva Marguerite Fewkes will write on Fibrous Begonias with Mrs. John G. Clark, president of the Alfred D. Robinson branch as artist and writer and Mrs. Claude E. Woods, our past president, will write about Rexes, as Nomenclature Chairman of Rex Division.

(Continued on page 105)

Cultural Hints For June Begonias

By FERD P. NEELS
El Segundo, Calif.

FIBROUS. Check up on these Begonias. If they are slow in starting new growth one of three things may be the cause—location, soil or watering. Too much shade will hold them back. If soil does not contain enough nourishment for fast growth, the condition can be remedied by adding fertilizer or by transplanting into new rich soil. Lack of humidity will also cause poor growth. As we know, most of our Begonias come from countries where there is considerable rain fall, and it is well to try to imitate this condition by watering with a fine spray. With a good circulation of air there is little chance for producing too humid an atmosphere. As for potted plants there is danger of the soil becoming soggy if the drainage is poor or soil too compact.

TUBEROUS. Some of the first potted tuberous Begonias should be watched that they do not become pot bound. In transferring from a pot to bed it is necessary to dig a hole considerably larger than the plant. Fill with your favorite tuberous soil mixture. For successful growing in beds there should be a strong broken light. Too much sunlight tends to blight the flowers, and too much shade produces straggly

growth with few flowers. If you have not grown any of the species you have missed a real thrill. *B. evansiana* comes in pink and white and can be used very effectively as a background. *B. pearcei* has a beautiful mottled leaf and produces exquisite yellow flowers. *B. sutherlandi* is a fine basket type with small orange flowers.

BEDDING. These small, low-growing Begonias are used extensively for outdoor beds and borders and also for potted plants by the florist trade. Most of the varieties never become very tall or woody. They are associated very largely with *Begonia semperflorens* and its hybrids. The roots are fibrous, even in hybrids with *Begonia socotrana* as one parent. One of the loveliest hybrids is *B. Carrierei*, a cross between *Begonia schmidtiana* and *semperflorens*. The plants are compact, about a foot in height, and the flowers are pure white. Another worth mentioning is *B. Gigantea Rosea*, a cross between *Begonia roezli* (*lyncheana*) and *semperflorens*. The yellow stamens contrast well with the red blooms. It is not too late to start seeds, and you will be well rewarded for your efforts.

REX. The good care given these Begonias during the past few weeks is producing results now. However, remember that slugs and other chewing pests like Rex Begonias too, so keep them under control with a good stomach poison spray.

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Begonia Dichotoma

• *B. dichotoma* has long been known to the world of botany. A native of the warm, moist woods near Caracas, Venezuela, it was introduced in 1800 by

Photo by Courtesy New York Botanical Gardens
Description by Bessie R. Buxton, Peabody, Mass.

Thomas Hoy. It is a stout, shrubby plant, which will grow to great size if it can be planted in the garden, instead of
(Continued on page 105)

SOME NOTES ON SOILS AND FERTILIZERS FOR TUBEROUS BEGONIAS

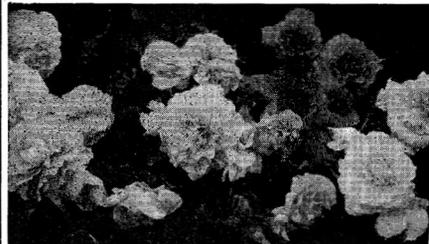
By DR. RICHARD S. FRENCH, Oakland, Calif.

THE FIRST requisite for all good gardening, and particularly for good shade gardening, is a compost pit. The common European practice of composting organic materials in piles or heaps is good but requires more space and longer periods of time. In either method the use of chemical reducers such as permanganate of potassium is desirable but time and weather are the safest and most effective decomposers. In no case where the ultimate product is to be used with acid-loving plants should any considerable amount of lime or other alkalizing agents be used. Sensitivity to alkalinity is very variable and the presence of certain acids seems more important than the absence of alkalis, but great care should be exercised not to produce a compost that will injure Begonias and other acid-lovers; and the best way to accomplish this end is to keep all lime and most sodium compounds away from your composts, soil mixtures and liquid manures. The use of acid phosphate of lime and bone meal and a limited use of nitrate of sodium are exceptions. In all cases the reaction of the plants must be closely watched and in cases indicative of an overabundance of alkali there should be an immediate application of a corrective such as a moderate dosage of sulphate of aluminum or increased waterings with weak solutions of the other acidifying salts.

Everything that will decompose readily can be thrown into the compost pit, leaves, vegetable waste, soft prunings, grass clippings, weeds that have not gone to seed, anything organic (including animal waste) which is not woody or too fibrous. The pit should be large enough to permit the easy working over of the materials composted. The walls should be porous, preferably of brick, to permit natural moistening, and dry materials should be wet down but the pit should be well drained and water should never be allowed to stand on the composted materials. The reduction of all materials is hastened by the addition of small amounts of sulphate of ammonia, 2 or 3 ounces to the cubic yard, applied at intervals of two or three weeks and dissolved by watering, or a weak solu-

tion of permanganate of potassium, $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce in 55 gallons of water, applied directly to pit or compost pile. As indicated above, nature's reducers, time, moisture, and bacterial action, while slower, are really preferable. In a large pit accumulations can be left undisturbed for one year but in smaller pits and piles turning is desirable.

Since my own pit holds over 12 cubic yards I will speak in terms of years. At the end of one year of accumulation, the recent additions should be removed and set aside; preferably in September, before the Fall rains. Then the bottom $\frac{2}{3}$ rds should be piled apart, with a complete turnover. The top accumulations should be returned to the bottom of the pit and the part which has been rotting from 5 or 6 months to a year should be piled, preferably on a concrete or brick floor surrounded by board walls, allowing complete ventilation, and in full sun. This second composting should continue from September until the following May or June. The compost, then between a year and fraction and nearly two years in the ageing process, should be turned



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completely and mixed as turned with about $\frac{1}{4}$ its mass of good garden loam or loamy peat (not pure peat or mossy peat), an equal amount of forest duff or old leaf mold, with the addition of seed-free sheep or cow manure, 100 lbs. to the cu. yd., and a generous upply of fish meal or cotton seed meal, say four 100-lb. sacks to 10 cu. yds. of total mixture.

This last pile will get quite hot and should be wet down frequently. About 3 weeks of ripening will finish the process. If a coarse soil is desired the less screening the better. However, if much fibrous material has been put in the pit, screening BEFORE the last stage is desirable and sometimes imperative. When the last composting or third stage is complete the compost is ready for use. If the method of successive piles is used the maturity of the compost will have to be tested; if all materials are friable or break up readily or pass easily through a $\frac{1}{2}$ in. mesh screen, the compost can be used, with the admixtures indicated above. The one safest criterion for begonias is that of the friability of the soils used. If they compact readily and stay compacted they require loosening either by further ripening or by proper additions of peats or manures or peat loams or any combination of these.

It should be remembered in dealing with composts and soils that the presence of non-decomposed organic materials such as half-rotten wood or pieces of bark or even straw does little or no harm and is even beneficial to Begonias. Over looseness of soil may add to watering problems and over damp organic masses may produce hyperacidity. Constant vigilance is necessary to determine the proper physical condition of Begonia soil.

The writer has tried a variation of additions to the original compost, but the one that has to date produced the finest plants and best flowers follows closely the above indicated formula. To repeat it in more exact terms, assuming 8 cu. yds. of original compost, add 2 cu. yds. of black Santa Cruz peat ground fine or 2 cu. yds. of prepared Delta peat, 2 cu. yds. of fully decomposed forest duff or leaf mold (oak preferred), 10 to 12 sacks of sheep manure or screened cow manure, 4 or 5 100-lb. sacks of fish meal or cottonseed meal, and one 100-lb. sack of green bone meal. Mix thoroughly and wet down at intervals of two or three

days until all heat disappears; then shovel the mix into a storage bin. For small gardens cubic feet may be read for cubic yards, with corresponding lessening of the added fertilizers. The completed and ripened compost is ready for the Begonia tubers or young plants. Keeping over for many months only adds to fertility if no serious leaching takes place. All non-soluble fertilizers are best mixed in the compost before storing. Soluble fertilizers, such as mineral salts, are best administered directly to the roots of plants in weak solutions frequently applied.

In potting tubers, pots or other containers should be filled to within three or four inches of the top with compost. If the containers are deep, they should have an inch or two of rubble or other coarse material for drainage and to save compost. Tubers with good root growth and well started foliage should be placed lightly on the compost and then the pot or container shaken gently, filled to the top, shaken again and watered with a Vitamin B solution, 8 drops to the gallon. With a rich compost mixture, no fertilizing will be necessary before blossoms are nearly fully developed. Watering at weekly intervals with vitamin B (special horticultural preparation), 2 drops to the gallon, will promote vigorous growth and good color.

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Just before the first flowers are fully developed and at intervals of from 10 days to two weeks throughout the blooming season thereafter, Begonias may be given a weak liquid fertilizer with excellent results. For some years I have used approximately the following formula and the results in plant health and the size, texture, color and lasting qualities of the flowers have been most gratifying. Use a 55 gal. drum, putting the mineral salts and other ingredients, except liquids, on the bottom. Use approximately 2 oz. each of sulphate of ammonia, chloride (crude) of potassium, the crude mixed nitrate of sodium and potassium, and phosphate of ammonia. Dissolve by playing a strong stream of water into the drum and stir with stream until drum is full. Add 110 to 120 drops of horticultural vitamin B solution and two heaping teaspoonfuls of soluble phosphate of iron, previously dissolved in 1 qt. of hot water. Nitrates should be used sparingly, as they tend to make luxuriant foliage growth, without the strong color and the marked vigor that result from the use of other salts in proper quantity. The use of the crude or commercial chemicals insures small amounts of the essential elements which are used only in minute quantities by the plant tissues, iodine, etc.

When given liquid fertilizers the plants should be checked closely for signs of over-feeding, rank leaf growth, lighter green coloring and greater length of stem. Fairly compact and vigorous growth and the setting of strong buds are signs of proper feeding. Any evidence of overfeeding should lead to reduced dosages or longer intervals between feeding. Dry feeding is undesirable but since it is much easier the grower may follow the custom of placing small quantities of the organic crudes, bone-meal, fishmeal or cottonseed meal, at several inches distance from plants and working the material applied into the soil to prevent loss by mildew or mold. Two such feedings of about a tablespoonful to the plant should last a whole

season. Mineral salts and ammonium salts should not be applied dry if liquid applications are at all possible. And all fertilizers should be so applied as to avoid the cumulative effect of soil poisoning which results when a concentration of salts or acids occurs through bad drainage or overdosage. Perfect drainage is absolutely essential in Begonia culture and WET soil, in contrast to DAMP, must be avoided.

A few other rules are essential to good culture. Broken (not filtered) light up to sixty percent of direct daylight lighting and in no case less than forty percent is the rule for all tuberous types except a few multifloras that will tolerate full sunlight. Even EVANSIANA likes partial shade. Watering should be frequent and light, with a thorough soaking at two week intervals, or oftener in dry, hot weather. After buds set leaves and floral parts should not be sprinkled or sprayed, except at rare intervals to remove dust or dirt. In no case should fully opened flowers be sprayed as spotting is sure to follow. All applications of water should be of such a nature as not to pack the soil either in containers or in the open ground. Loose soil is an absolute essential for the good growth of all tuberous Begonias, but more particularly of the large flowered South American derivatives. Anyone who says that tuberous Begonias will grow successfully in ordinary garden soils does not know Begonias or is content with very inferior results. In planting in containers or in beds, wide spacing is essential. There should be room for the spreading, shallow roots and for air and light between plants. One of the worst mistakes of the amateur is overcrowding. On the whole seedlings should be treated the same as plants derived from old tubers.

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"EASTERN HOME OF RARE BEGONIAS"

Two New Bulbs For Shade From South Africa

By **MARIA WILKES**
Los Angeles, Calif.

• From the land of "always something new" come two new bulbs that will lengthen our season of bloom as well as the variety of flowers. The *Lachenalias* are generally looked upon as the Cape Hyacinths. That common name immediately gives one the idea of their fashioning. They are usually small bulbs, yes, but of infinite variety of color and combinations of color. They are remarkable for their sturdiness and hardiness. Even when they are in full bloom they may be dug out of the field or the shade-beds, and potted for the house, without a single bit of fatigue being shown.

In California there are two or three varieties which have already made themselves very important during the Xmas season. As time goes on, more and more of these very delightful bulbs will be sent to us, and we shall be glad to have them to brighten up our window gardens, our porches, and gardens at various times, and by-the-way, they are charming in hanging baskets, and fine in dish-gardens, and they will naturalize well in the rock garden. Two that are especially adapted for shade-gardening are: *Lachenalia glaucina* and *L. mutabilis*. The first is quite one of the best of the blues. Its glaucous grey foliage is a perfect foil for the electric-blue flowers which rise on spotted stems, even the leaves are camouflaged with this spotting. The flowers are generally tube-like and hanging in bell-like form. *Lachenalia glaucina* is one of the most attractive and a mass planting is a lovely sight.

Lachenalia mutabilis is the one that is particularly nice for cutting. The flowers are in spikes of yellow, but the tips of the spikes carry the infertile flowers which are a bright blue. They are striking and pretty. Both grow easily from seed and will bloom shortly. The plants range from 6 to 12 inches in height. There are few bulbs that are so amenable to house-culture as the *Lachenalias*, and when they are done, they may be placed out in the garden for development and multiplying for next season's bloom with little care. They like a loose

Don'ts For Now

A. A. LONGMIRE
Carpenteria, California

1. Don't fail to plant perennial flower seeds now. Some will flower the first year.
2. Don't neglect potting your Rex Begonias. Use only clean leaf mold with a small amount of coarse manure.
3. Don't overlook pinching the terminal buds of French Hydrangea. They will make fine bushy plants for late flowers.
4. Don't let the left over pepper plants and Jerusalem Cherries dry out in their pots.
Plant them to store up stamina, then lift them in September for Christmas color.
5. Don't fail to divide old plants of *Billbergias*. (Now.)
6. Don't let *Pelargoniums* grow long and gangling. Pinch the terminal buds off and when these branch out, give them a second pinching. They will make fine plants for pot culture.
7. Don't move Dutch bulbs or the *Amaryllis* bulbs excepting only when necessary. They dislike transplanting.
8. Don't fail to plant a few dollar bills into War Bonds and Stamps as you plant seed. Watch them grow.
9. Don't lag with the V Garden. Plant lima beans and use a pole variety. You can produce more beans on less space used.
10. Don't fail to grow your tomato plants on single stalks. Remove lateral branches and pinch the top off after plants have set six to ten clusters of fruit.

• Do not forget that Mr. Frank Reinelt has promised a dozen of his best Tuberosus Begonias to one member of each branch who has the most outstanding display of tuberosus Begonias. Have you formed a committee to decide the winner from your Branch?

sandy soil with a lot of leaf mold or its equivalent. Among the species that are not so showy there are some with delicious scent. Someone is going to do some hybridizing with these some day and we shall have more variety yet, in this already very interesting group of bulbs from South Africa.

THE LORDLY REX BEGONIAS

By WM. ROSS, Glendale, Calif.

MY experience with Rex Begonias began some seven years ago. At that time I visited the lath houses of Mrs. Lewis, one of our well liked and popular Begonia growers. Up to that time; I had never seen Begonias to know what they were. I immediately fell in love with them and asked Mrs. Lewis for enough information to fill an encyclopedia. Her answer was rather short and to the point. First, where did I live? And what kind of a place did I have? I told her I lived in Glendale, which is in the interior, as she well knew, and that I lived in a valley with a great deal of shade. She said Rex and Tuberous begonias would not grow there because it was too dry.

Being somewhat Scotch and a little stubborn, I proceeded in my own way to find out why, and will try to set down in these articles what I have found out during the last six years as a grower of Rex begonias.

It has been my firm belief that all plants can be acclimated to any given location and this I have found out to be true of Rex^e Begonias. I read everything I could get my hands upon as to the habits and culture of these plants and then proceeded to have nature show me that in my location the books were all wrong. These plants love a full shade and as most of us know, absorb a third of their required moisture through their leaves when grown near the coast or where the humidity is high. We who live out of that climate and in the dry valleys have to supply the moisture through an enlarged root system, and anyone giving the Rex any kind of a break will find that it will provide its own enormous root system to make up for this lack of leaf moisture.

Our next problem is soil. And this should be as near to natural forest ground as possible, mainly leafmold. I estimate the amount of ground in my beds and to it add one-fourth well rotted barnyard fertilizer. Do not crowd your plants nor be afraid to use small plants in setting out your Begonia garden. Always remember that Begonias have a very fine hair-like root system and the ground should be light enough for these roots to spread out. The Rex Begonias if in the right location have a habit of

really making prize plants of themselves. You will be surprised at the amount of growth they will put on in one Summer's time and how much cold weather they will stand the following winter and still be beautiful plants and better plants the second year. By this time, my plants are about re-established after removing all of my Rex Begonias from their hill-side beds, laying them out on the ground a few hours to rebuild and refertilize their old beds. This, to a lot of people, seems rather hard and harsh, but I find that it gives me a better chance to look my plants over, trim them to the way I want them to grow, and replant in their new beds. They repay me a thousand fold.

Our next consideration should be drainage. If the bed does not have good drainage, make it. For Rex Begonias like lots of water but don't like their feet wet. In other words, don't let the roots stand in water. As to the feeding of these plants, ours are fed a liquid fertilizer every ten days for thirty days; on the fortieth day, I use a good commercial fertilizer following the directions of the manufacturer for the use of the same, then going back to liquid fertilizer for three applications and following in that order until late in the fall when the plants show a tendency to go dormant. This feeding can start around the first of May. These plants, you will find, are heavy feeders if given room to grow in. Any commercial liquid fertilizer, my own preference being Pestless Likwid Gro, or make your own as follows: One sack well rotted dairy fertilizer to 50 gallons of water, let stand ten days, if your neighbors don't kick too much, and use after thoroughly watering your plants and you will find that this is a treatment they respond to very readily. Note: In case neighbors fuss, use same amount of fertilizer, cover with scalding water, when cool, add enough water to make

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50 gallons, and use at once. A 50 gallon vinegar barrel is just the thing for a container. You can use a smaller container but in the above proportions. This general rule will hold good with most growers but we should all try and study the needs of our plants because soil conditions may be entirely different from that of a friend three blocks away. There are several of these plants that do not follow this set rule, mainly the Fireflush, which loves a reflected heat and does not take to the open ground like it does to a pot. If you grow your plants under oak or other trees, try and keep the trees well pruned and cleaned out for anything dropping from these trees onto the begonias may cause you to blame a snail or slug for said damage. Protect them well from high winds, but above all, furnish them with the moisture they demand. During the heat of the summer, I water morning and night, overhead or irrigation whichever system you may be using.

BEGONIA DICHOTOMA

(Continued from page 99)

being cramped in a pot. Kew Gardens has a record of a 3 year old plant which grew 12 feet high, with stout stems 6 inches in circumference a foot above the ground, and leaves 12-15 inches across. California should be able to better this, with a climate which permits out-door growing the year around.

The stems are rough and channelled, the leaves shining green, with a red spot at the sinus. The under side is paler green and pubescent. The small white flowers, golden centered, are borne in large clusters on long stems. Best of all, it is a winter bloomer.

B. scabrida, also a native of Venezuela, is very much like *Dichotoma*. It has the same bushy habit of growth and similar white flowers, a little larger than those of *Dichotoma*. But the leaves differ in shape. The botanist will find dif-

BRANCH NEWS

(Continued from page 97)

I have been commissioned to supply an article on Begonias each week to one of the local papers. The material I have from all copies of the Begonian since and including 1940 will be a great help and inspiration.

We have well attended meetings every month, and we are attracting new members right along. Our meetings are cheerful and Mr. Russ Eaker, president, keeps them moving right along, with a short business session; a speaker; a hint on what to do this month by Mrs. J. A. Hegel, vice president, followed by a satisfying plant raffle and refreshments.

MRS. CLARENCE E. MOORE,

Inglewood Branch: The next meeting will be held on the second Thursday in June at 8 p. m. at the Woman's Club in Inglewood. Unfortunately the same evening as Hollywood. Most of the members of the National Board were guests of the Inglewood Branch last meeting with many friends of the regular members. For this meeting, Mr. Clarence Hall, the President Elect, came from Ventura with the speaker of the evening, Mr. Austin Perley, Supt. of Ventura Parks Department, who spoke on "Common Sense Gardening," illustrating his talk with many leaves and plants as well as sketches on the blackboard.

Mr. Le Pla was appointed the Inglewood Representative for the Robinson Memorial.

ferences, but to the amateur Begonia grower, one or the other will suffice. The surest way to study the difference in two similar plants is to grow them side by side and compare them daily. Then you will be sure just where the difference lies.

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115 Tenth St., Baraboo

Meeting Dates and Speakers

It would be much appreciated if the Secretaries of the Branches would send meeting data to reach the Editor **NOT LATER THAN THE TENTH OF THE MONTH.**

Note: The June (2nd Monday) American Begonia Society Board Meeting will take place in Board of Directors Room, Retail Merchants Credit Assn., 417 So. Hill, Los Angeles, Calif., June 14th, 7:30 p.m.

PHILOBEGONIA CLUB BRANCH

Tuesday, June 1st, 10:00 a.m.
Mrs. Albert H. Gere, Secy.-Treas.,
362 Brookway, Merion, Pa.

THEODOSIA BURR SHEPHERD BRANCH

Tuesday, June 1st, 7:30 p.m.
American Legion Hall.
North California St., Ventura, Calif.
Mr. George Fitch, Secy.-Treas.
70 So. Hurst Ave., Ventura, Calif.

RIVERSIDE BRANCH

Tuesday, June 1st, 7:30 p.m.
Home of Mrs. R. C. Smith,
3784 Arlington Ave., Riverside, Calif.
Mrs. Harriet E. Meyer, Secy.-Treas.,
4219 Sunnyside Dr., Riverside, Calif.

BELLFLOWER BRANCH

Tuesday, June 1st, 8:00 p.m.
Home of Mrs. H. F. Haney,
666 E. Artesia St., Bellflower, Calif.
Mrs. L. D. Thalheimer, Secy.-Treas.,
222 S. Woodruff St., Bellflower, Calif.

SAN FRANCISCO BRANCH

Wednesday, June 2nd
1060 Francisco St.,
Harry F. O'Donnell, Secy.-Treas.,
1575 31st Ave., San Francisco, Calif.

ORANGE COUNTY BRANCH

Thursday, June 3rd
Geo. A. Barrows, Secretary
1111 Louise St., Santa Ana, Calif.

DOMINGUEZ BRANCH

Thursday, June 3rd
Mrs. R. L. Warren, Secy.
21718 So. Alameda, Long Beach, Calif.

NORTH LONG BEACH BRANCH

Thursday, June 10th, 7:30 p.m.
Odd Fellows Temple,
728 Elm Ave., Long Beach, Calif.
Mrs. Claire Jackson, Secy.,
6017 Olive Ave., Long Beach, Calif.

LONG BEACH PARENT CHAPTER

Thursday, June 10th, 7:30 p.m.
Odd Fellows Temple
728 Elm, Long Beach, Calif.
Miss Cecile Block, Secy.-Treas.
1263 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, Calif.

HERBERT DYCKMAN BRANCH

Friday, June 11th
Home of Mrs. Jessie Jenkins,
3615 Cerritos Ave., Long Beach, Calif.
Mrs. Rush T. Lewis, Secy.-Treas.
3733-A California, Long Beach, Calif.

HOLLYWOOD BRANCH

Thursday, June 10th, 7:30 p.m.
Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd.
Mrs. Grant Waldref, Secy.,
1615 No. Genesee, Los Angeles, Calif.

INGLEWOOD BRANCH

Thursday, June 10th, 8:00 p.m.
Woman's Club of Inglewood
325 No. Hillcrest
Inglewood, Calif.
Mrs. Harold S. Clark, Secretary
1618½ W. 52nd St., Los Angeles, Calif.

SAN DIEGO BRANCH

Monday, June 14th
4037 39th Ave., San Diego, Calif.
Mrs. Edwin F. Barker, Secy.-Treas.,
4561 El Cerrito Dr., San Diego, Calif.

EAST BAY BRANCH

Monday, June 14th, 7:45 p.m.
Washington School,
60th and Shattuck Ave., Oakland, Calif.
Dick G. Goodnow, Secy.-Treas.,
2519 Milvia Street, Berkeley, Calif.

VICTORY BRANCH

Thursday, June 17th
11228 Atlantic Ave.
Mrs. Clara Moore, Secy.-Treas.,
11275 Duncan Ave., Lynwood, Calif.

EVA KENWORTHY GRAY BRANCH

Monday, June 21
Mrs. Henry O. Colt, Secy.-Treas.,
7221 Olivetas, La Jolla, Calif.

MARGARET GRUENBAUM BRANCH

Tuesday, June 22
Home of Mrs. Anna Oehrle,
Hatboro, Pa.
Mrs. M. S. Prince, Secy., Hatboro, Pa.

GLENDALE BRANCH

Tuesday, June 22
329 No. Brand Blvd., Glendale, Calif.
Mrs. C. C. Cook, Secretary,
1345 Virginia Ave.,
Glendale, Citrus 2-6603
Plant Culture and Propagation
U. S. C. Pictures

SAN GABRIEL VALLEY BRANCH

Sunday, June 27th, 2:00 p.m.
Mrs. N. H. Powell, Secretary
419 South Ynez Ave.
Monterey Park, Calif.
Speaker: Ferd P. Neels

ALFRED D. ROBINSON BRANCH

Friday, June 25th, 7:30 p.m.
Home of Mrs. John G. Clark,
3026 Freeman St., San Diego, Calif.
Mrs. George S. Graves, Secy.-Treas.
2922 Evergreen St., San Diego, Calif.

SANTA BARBARA BRANCH

Irregular Meetings
Thelma Sommerfield, Secy.,
210 E. Anapamu, Santa Barbara, Calif.

NEW ENGLAND BRANCH

Miss Annabelle Sylvester, Secy.,
Pleasant St., Middleton, Mass.

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