

# The BEGONIAN

Devoted to the Sheltered Garden

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# The BEGONIAN

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## Editor's Notes

• Another link is forged and added to the already substantial chain of authorities on the roster of the American Begonia Society.

Mrs. Russel T. Bailey (see address above) is appointed Chairman of The Questions and Answers Department. Already her work is brought to you this month. She does not let any grass grow under her feet no matter what circumstances bring her way. Send your queries direct to her and rest assured the best possible answer is forthcoming tout-de-suite. She is well qualified for the position through much personal experience plus having a very complete

library on shade gardening in general and Begonias in particular. She is in close contact with most of the San Diegoians who have the greatest knowledge and skill in shade gardening and is a member of the Society of long standing.

When you read the V-Mail letter you will realize how much more garden lovers SEE THINGS as they roam the earth—it will recall your own impressions and start you counting the many new friends you have made through seeing lovely plants in gardens and asking for the privilege of seeing them. Some of the writer's best and most valued friends were found in just this (See next page)

# Plantly Speaking — In the Shade

By JOHN S. VOSBURG  
Hollywood, Calif.

• Only a few of the succulents have proven very adaptable for shade growing. *Kalanchoe laciniata coccinea* prefers it and the brilliancy of color of the flower seems to be intensified when grown in the shade. This plant is generally grown more as a potted subject than directly in the ground, yet I have seen some very nice beds of it here, occasionally.

The culture of this plant calls for general care and feeding during its growing season with a minimum of water and little attention during its rest period. The plant is in bloom now with its several varieties.

The var. Brilliant is a dwarf type noted for its uniformity of size and growth character, making it a particularly attractive border plant where some sunshine will catch it in the morning. It's worst greenhouse fault is its tolerance of mealy-bug. This is fairly easily controlled but it usually requires some persistency.

*Kalanchoe laciniata coccinea*, or var. Brilliant, propagate readily and by means of cuttings large quantities may be had quickly so that mass bedding is easily accomplished.

It is an interesting bright plant whose quantities of brilliant orange-red flowers, or dark-coral-red against the soft succulent foliage adjusts itself easily to most gardens.



*Kalanchoe laciniata coccinea*

## EDITOR'S NOTES

way. The expression "Common or garden" must have arisen from such a practice; however, these friends are far from common (common: have in common, share, impart, consult . . .), but rather priceless, garden friends.

Seed gathered by several officers of the Society from Begoniaites here and there, excellent sources only, is being distributed to new members and old members interested in GROWING the seed. Send to Mrs. Harry Harker, Membership Chairman, for your packet, with self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Remember—May 14th is your only Mother's Day!

## TO THE PRESIDENTS OF ALL BRANCHES:

Will you please send to me immediately, if not already done, the name and address of your 1944 Branch Representative to the Alfred D. Robinson Memorial Advisory Committee. Thank you.

Jessie A. Poole, Director,  
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# Branch News

**Bellflower Branch** members and friends will meet in May at the home of Mrs. Eshnaur, 932 Flower Ave., with Mr. Fairclo who will speak on Fuchsias. Mrs. Liedler spoke at the last meeting on the subject of Ferns. Mr. Mitchael provided many fine plants.

**San Francisco Branch:** Mrs. Wm Purcell Gall discussed fibrous Begonias, with live material sent her by air from her home-branch in Riverside. In return San Francisco sent live material for a fuchsia and pelargonium discussion in Riverside which greatly pleased everyone. This is a delightful manner in which to play ambassador. Mrs. Purcell Gall, we hear from Mrs. Ferrero, covered her subject very interestingly and well, carrying a special brief for the fibrous Begonia in the fuchsia and tuberous Begonia garden.

**Members, please note:** Meeting night is changed to the **FIRST WEDNESDAY** of each month to accommodate the greater number of members.

Mr. Glenn T. Mack will speak on the participation of the Branch in the forthcoming San Francisco Flower Show.

**Riverside:** The outstanding event of 31st meeting of this group was the discussion held on the material sent by Mrs. Purcell Gall from the San Francisco Branch, all of which was greatly enjoyed. The May meeting will be held at the home of N. E. Duhnke, 4319 Westmoreland, on May 2nd.

**Glendale Branch:** Miss Charlotte Hoak's talk, "Begonias — From the Ground Up," covered many phases of the interesting subject. She emphasized the importance of a compost pile made in sandwich order with layers of grass or other material from the soil and dairy fertilizer. This should be kept moist, it will then be ready for use in about six months. The benefits of sulphur in the soil were also pointed out. Mrs. L. Hart and committee served a fine supper. Mr. John Parker, Vice-Pres. of Hollywood Branch, spoke at the April meeting and Mrs. W. C. Drummond, President of the same Branch will speak on Flowers and their correct use for corsages, at the May meeting.

**California Heights Branch:** New members: Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Spaeth and Mr. and Mrs. F. I. Penrose joined with the larger than usual attendance to hear Program Chairman Jerry W. Starr conduct a symposium on "Spring Fever"

under the general headings of Fertilizers, Pruning, Sprays and Spraying, Expected Pests, Budding and Propagation from cuttings, all of which led to some lively discussions. The May meeting will be held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Smoot, 211 East Adams Street, Long Beach 5, Calif.

**East Bay Branch:** In March a greater number of members than any recorded since the war started turned out to enjoy the fine program offered by Mr. H. K. Draper. He showed splendid slides of tuberous Begonias he had taken at Vetterle & Reinelt's and in Lakeside Park in Oakland.

This Branch expects to hold a **PLANT SALE** at the MacDonald Nursery in Oakland in late Spring. Dr. French will donate 400 tuberous Begonia seedlings.

After the war, the Oakland Park Department plans to build a large conservatory in Lakeside Park into which the Begonia exhibit will be moved.

The April meeting program was given by Mr. Swager with a forum on fibrous Begonias illustrated with slips and leaves brought by Mrs. E. M. Carleton. Mr. Boyd gave his usual monthly talk and brought an Evansiana plant he had raised from a tuber given him at February meeting and which he had raised in a special compost of which he has been talking through the last few months.

**Pasadena Branch:** Members were treated to a view of some of the most beautiful kodachrome pictures of tuberous Begonias, flowers of all Southern California, including some very rare white and yellow Cattleia orchids, also some very fine outdoor cymbidiums and epidendrams as well as some magnificent sky pictures. He discussed the best positions for outdoor orchids which should be preferably grown in pots about Pasadena and placed under oak trees, which give an ideal shade. Most other trees throw too dense and cool a blanket of shade. Raised beds could also be used

(Continued on page 325)

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# Your Questions Answered

By HELEN R. BAILEY  
San Diego, Calif.

Q. My Begonia tubers, under exactly the same conditions as in previous years as to location, temperature and humidity, sprouted prematurely, and, at less than three inches high, developed tiny leaves about the size of a five-cent piece and pigmy-sized blossoms. What is the cause and what is the treatment?

(From Mrs. Hugo R. Schwab, Mayville, Wisconsin.)

A. Mrs. Fewkes tells me that this is not an uncommon occurrence. These are just premature children. Give them your usual treatment, removing all flower buds and blooms so that the plants will not mature until they are normal again.

Q. Where may I order tuberous Begonia tubers? Vetterle and Reinelt have recently returned my money saying that they could not fill my order this year due to a crop failure.

(From Mrs. Hugo Schwab, Mayville, Wisconsin.)

A. Begonia tubers are scarce and hard to obtain this year. There are several advertisers in the Begonian, such as Bob Anderson and Winsel-Gibbs, who list them.

Q. My Begonia Pink Shasta drops its leaves all the time. Have given it good soil and sand, rain water from bottom, have steam in my greenhouse, have sprayed it with nicotine solution, and have it on the north side. What next?

(From Mrs. Elizabeth Hall, Kansas City, Missouri.)

A. Miss Constance Bower, who has a large correspondence with "Eastern" Begonia growers, informs me that most of her friends have given up growing the so-called Rubras or bamboo-type Begonias because they insist on dropping their leaves. They do it for us here in California to some extent, chiefly in Winter.

Q. I have read your articles concerning lath houses in the past issues but would like a little more information regarding the planting of Camellias and Caladiums in the lath house.

(From Mrs. Paul Tulli, Arcadia, Calif.)

A. For the culture of special plants it is well to consult the nurserymen who

sell them to you. There is a good article on Camellias in the June, 1942, Begonian. For Caladiums, consult Mr. Hart's articles in the March, April, and May, 1943, issues.

Q. I have bought some tuberous Begonia seed and would like some suggestions in regard to their culture.

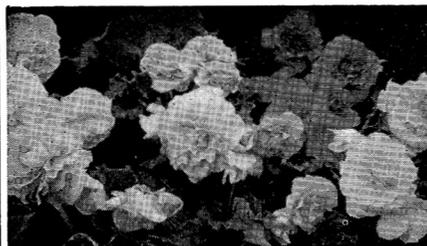
(From Mrs. Paul Tulli, Arcadia, Calif.)

A. In raising tuberous Begonias from seed I would suggest that you follow the directions given in the American Begonia Society Bulletin on Tuberous Begonias. It may be obtained from Mrs. Harker for 15c. Any back numbers of the Begonian to which you may have been referred are also obtainable from her at the same price.

Q. I have a shed in the back yard which I intend to convert into a lath house and would appreciate some suggestions how to plan it. It is 25 feet long and about 25 feet wide.

(From Mrs. Paul Tulli, Arcadia, Calif.)

A. You have given me a large order when you ask for suggestions in planning your new lath house. Each person has a different idea on the subject. One wants an outdoor living room, the next a display room for beautiful plants, and still another a work shop and propagating room. Yours apparently will be  
(Continued on next page)



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## YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

(Continued from preceding page)

large enough to accommodate all three if you wish. The best suggestion I can make, if time and gasoline rationing will permit, is to visit as many fellow members of the American Begonia Society as possible—we all love to show our gardens when the guests show a real interest—and incorporate into your lath house what you consider their best ideas.

You may want a barbecue or a small pool as your center of interest. Of course your beds will be raised. They are easier to prepare, easier to care for, and display your plants to better advantage. Plant your ferns in a separate bed in the darkest location as they require so much more water. Personally I like my Rex Begonias in pots sitting between the ferns. If you are using fuchsias, give them the lightest spot or, better still, plant them outside the lath house to avoid a problem of roots.

Make your beds shallow enough that you can easily reach the farthest plant to care for it. And above all, don't plant too close together or you will have a jungle by next year. It might be better to keep as many of your plants as possible in pots for this season. You are not a true Begonianite if you do not change and re-arrange them all next year as your collection and your knowledge of the requirements of the individual plants grow. The constant change is to me one of the chief beauties of a lath house.

I think you will find Mr. Robinson's articles on Lath House Construction very helpful. They start in the late 1942 Begonians and run well into 1943.

- Has everyone in your Branch a copy of each of the three revised and reprinted Cultural Bulletins? See the advertisement in this issue.

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## Begonias For the Shady Border

By STUART L. FLETCHER  
Oakland, Calif.

(Reprinted by permission from the Journal of the California Horticultural Society, January, 1942.)

- Among the many fibrous-rooted Begonias, either species or hybrids, are a number that have possibilities for use as border plants in the Bay area and Coastal region of California because of their distinctive foliage, coloring, habit of growth and reasonable hardiness.

Their cultural requirements are the same as those of azeleas; a light fibrous soil, either neutral or slightly acid, a normal amount of any of the ordinary commercial fertilizers, moderate watering, and protection from wind. A Northern or Eastern exposure, with morning sun, will offer the most favorable position; their one necessary requirement is adequate staking.

As most of these Begonias, or the parent plants from which they have been developed, are native to Mexico, Central or South American mountain sections, growing at heights of 3,000 to 8,000 feet above the sea, their temperature requirements make them adaptable to our coastal climate. Where night temperatures fall to 50 degrees and day temperatures do not rise much above 75 degrees in the summer, they find their happiest environment; if Winter temperatures do not fall below 30 degrees many of them will survive without protection.

A partial list of ones worth trying in the border follows:

**Begonia olbia** Kerch. This species, from Brazil, grows to a height of two feet or more; the stems are woody in the lower part; the leaves are lobed, olive-green and sparsely hairy above, reddish beneath; the flowers greenish-white, about 1 inch across, grown from the leaf axils in small clusters, both male and female blossoms in the same cluster. Freely branching, this Begonia will make a plant 18 inches to 2 feet in diameter.

**Begonia Druryii**, a hybrid of *B. sanguinea* and *B. cypraea*, the latter a variety of *B. metallica*, is one of the taller varieties with bold dark olive-green foliage, brownish red on the under side, slightly hairy, stems red, hairy and succulent; flowers are white, but do not contribute to the value of this plant, which lies in the striking color of its foliage, the

darkest in this group of Begonias. This plant does not branch as freely as some but sends out new shoots from the root. See Begonian, October, 1943, for picture by Miss Alice Clark.

Begonia Braemeri is similar in coloring to B. Druryi. It apparently is a hybrid of B. scharffi (haageana) and B. metallica, showing the hairy stems and prominent stipules of B. scharffiana and the satiny upper leaf surface of B. metallica. Its leaves are thick and leathery, six to nine inches long, dark olive green above, plum color beneath; stems are red, freely branching, making a plant to two or three feet in diameter. Possibly it could be treated as an herbaceous perennial, since one of its parents, B. scharffiana has that habit.

Begonia undulata Schott. This Begonia is small-leaved and small growing, leaves a bright green, shining, red margined and wavy edged; stems are woody in lower part, green with small white spots, cane-like with short nodes; flowers in axillary clusters, small white. This plant has possibilities where a clear bright green is desired, while the wavy leaves add a distinctive effect. A Brazilian species.

Begonia nitida, var. odorata and var. odorata alba. This Begonia, with its varieties, is perhaps not as hardy as some listed above, but is worth trying even if it is necessary to lift the plants during the coldest months. It grows two to three feet or more in height, branching freely; stems are woody in lower part, reddish to green; leaves are obliquely ovate, glossy bright to medium green, wavy, up to six inches long; flowers are in clusters, pale pink or white in the varieties, on long peduncles, the varieties odorata and odorata alba being sweet-scented. Begonia nitida, the first Begonia introduced into cultivation, was brought from Jamaica to Kew in 1777 by Dr. Wm. Brown.

Begonia fuchsioides Hook. This species from Mexico has grown outdoors in the writer's garden for four years, suffering no damage from slight frosts and temperatures normal to the Bay region. Its slender stems have a tendency to trail, are very graceful, two to three feet high, smooth; the small leaves, up to one and one-half inches long, are closely set on the stems, giving somewhat the appearance of a fern; flowers in terminal or axillary clusters, drooping, rich scarlet, males four-petaled, females five; will stand considerable sun, leaves

• The Begonian will be a monthly happy surprise for you and your friends. A most acceptable gift for any occasion.

Mealy Bugs on Saint Paulia Violets may be eradicated by brushing the bugs with a tooth-pick dipped in kerosene — alcohol will also serve. As soon as a plant is found to be infected in any way, remove it from vicinity to healthy plants. Every good gardener ought to have a place where plants may be hospitalized until quite in good condition again.

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and stems acquiring a rich coloring. (See pages 318-319, Alice Clark's sketch.)

Begonia foliosa HBK. This species from Colombia has the same general characteristics as B. fuchsioides, with very much smaller leaves, more frond-like; flowers are white or slightly rose-tinted. It has a tendency to become herbaceous outdoors, but spring growth is rapid, so it should be satisfactory in the border. (See Alice Clark's sketch, page 318.)

In all cases propagation of the above Begonias is by stem cuttings, taken at any period during active growth. They root easily in moist sand and peat, under glass except during the warmest months.

There are many more Begonias that might be included in a list of possible border plants, and all offer possibilities for hybridization. Some work is being done in this line and interesting developments may be expected in the next few years. The growth of membership in the American Begonia Society indicates the revival of interest in this great family of plants, whose possibilities for development under California conditions are not yet fully realized.

# SMALL-LEAVED BEGONIAS

By ALICE M. CLARK  
San Diego, Calif.

**B**EGONIAS in California seem to feel the effects of Winter and Spring, if you know what I mean. The balmy Fall and Winter days carry them over into late bloom. By March and April they have lost the impetus of that warmth and have not had time to show the results of Spring sunshine. So, again, my search for a suitable model was in vain and I have been forced to send up another "trial balloon."

Mrs. Krauss was kind enough to suggest to me that it would be interesting to see branches of the semi-tuberous all on one page. Some of these are still dormant but an article that she wrote in "Gardner's Chronicle" for November, 1943, on the small-leaved fibrous, inspired me to draw several of these, instead. I have tried to keep them all on the same scale so the diversity of leaf and flower might be seen at a glance. This method fails to depict the habit of growth, the size of the plant and, of course, the color variation. Much allowance must also be made for differences due to various exposures.

The chances are that most of these Begonias are old familiar friends to all of you. In size, the sprigs sketched, are from six to eight inches long. I have tried to label them with approved, up-to-date names. Like myself, you may find these new identifications awkward but it would seem that adopting the nomenclature that has been patiently evolved for us by our painstaking authorities is the least we can do to reward their efforts and hasten the day when we can all speak the same Begonia language.

*B. foliosa*, reputed to be a good hanging-basket type, has the smallest leaves of the Begonia family. The specimen depicted here was taken from a five-foot stalk in the ground at Montalvo Nursery. Naturally it is not new growth and many of the larger leaves are missing (a big help to the artist though not to the plant), so it does not show its true bushy nature nor the normal abundance of flowers. These blossoms come in groups of two and three on almost thread-like red stems from the leaf axils. Two of the female bloom, with five petals are difficult to see on the right tip branch. A small male flower with four petals is visible on the lower left. They are mostly white inside and splashed with deep pink without. The brown leaf sheaths are so large that the foliage seems to grow out of scales instead of stems and they all face flat-front like a fern, whose drooping grace this plant closely resembles. The leaves are a soft green, deepening in color at the base, lighter on the back, with a tint of red on the tiny notched edges and a single center vein. *Foliosa* species was discovered in Colombia, South America, in 1825 and cultivated in France before it was lost. It reappeared in England in 1868 and then, as Mrs. Krauss says, was misnamed *Microphylla* and *Miniata*. It enjoys more water and shade.

*Floribunda* is a simpler, equally descriptive, designation for "multiflora rosea," a name that belongs to another



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species. The drawing shows a spray from the tip of a thriving new plant, so the leaves are thick and glossy. They are a fresh shining green above, lighter below and waxy in texture. The mid-rib is off center and the margin has the fine serrations with a tiny red hair at each point, that are characteristic of most of the small-leaved type. The leaf sheaths are small and pointed and do not cover the round, reddish-brown stems. The lovely, long soft-pink tassels of the free-blooming flowers that droop from the leaf axils, give this Begonia great charm. Floribunda has a healthy, graceful form and a very good branching habit. Its flowers are a brighter color if given more sunshine. In California it grows quite tall out of doors. Six five-foot plants in wooden boxes in the front portico of our local Red Cross headquarters have created favorable comment and given cheer to busy war-workers for three years. This hybrid came from the skillful hand of Mr. Lemoine of France in the early seventies.

B. fuchsioides, a species from the Andes was discovered in 1844 and, according to Mrs. Krauss, has been written about so much and in such constant cultivation that it never had a chance to acquire a synonym, praise be! It is much used in hybridizing. The leaves of fuchsioides are larger, longer and not as smooth-shining as floribunda, which is probably one of its hybrids. When young the foliage is cupped and shows the red flush along the under edge. Most of the veins are parallel to the center. The branch is sketched extended, instead of upright, as, unless it is pinched back or tied up it is inclined to lean over. It does not make as bushy a plant as floribunda though it grows equally tall. The resemblance to a fuchsia, of the clusters of vermilion-red flowers that droop like branching darts from the

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axils of the rather brownish stems, is its most distinctive feature. The four-petaled male blooms look like heart-shaped beads when in bud. The ovary of the female flower with its five full petals below looks more like its namesake.

The plant that I have drawn as Lady Waterlow has been listed here since 1928 as Digswelliana. Mrs. Krauss says that the first-named Begonia came from Kew in 1934 and its origin is obscure. In the Rosecroft catalogue Digswelliana was listed as an improved form of that name, with Lady Waterloo as a synonym. Mrs. Fewkes says that several years ago she had a plant from Mr. Robinson, the so-called Digswelliana, that was ragged and homely and quite unsatisfactory. One day she found a seed pod and planted it and from that has come the stock from which my sketch was made. Another person in Santa Monica got the same result. Mrs. Fewkes destroyed the original plant that had the seed, so of course it cannot now be traced, but it had pink flowers more like fuchsioides and the leaf-form, though larger, of foliosa.

At any rate, the Lady Waterlow of my sketch answers to the description in the Journal of the New York Botanical Garden. This single new shoot does

(Continued on page 320)

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*B. foliosa*





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*B. fuchsoides*



B. Ingrami

B. Lady Waterlow

## SMALL-LEAVED BEGONIAS

(Continued from page 317)

not illustrate the grace of the plant nor the pleasing flowers with bright red outsides and pink to white inside petals. These splashes of color, together with its bushy habit and a tendency to bend at the tips give the effect of a flower-fountain. Even the sepals that fold protectively over the white ovary, with its one long red-tipped wing, are also scarlet. It blooms twelve months in the year, where the original only bore flowers for a limited season. Normally it grows about three feet high in the ground. The leaves are fluted and a darker green than others of its class, besides having a few hairs on the top surface. The veins show red on the gray-green backs with a brighter flush on the ruffled margin. The stems, too, are reddish except for a green space near the axils.

B. Ingrami, as portrayed here, is a new tip cutting. I could not locate a specimen in bloom anywhere within the gas-limited cruise of my neighborhood but I have drawn it anyway as it is often confused with Lady Waterlow. One difference can be seen in the smaller, thicker, stiffer, more holly-like leaves. They have a very highly-glazed bright-green top surface with hairs only on the edge points. The back has a ruddy tinge that shows both in the young leaves and their folded sheaths. The stems are a succulent red, also green at the axils and dashed here and there with white spots. The whole plant has a russet effect, especially if grown in the sun, and is so strong that it is no wonder it was called "robusta." We must drop that name since we now know that it belongs to a large-leaf species. The flowers are rose to pink and lack the nice contrast of those of Lady Waterlow. As Mrs. Krauss explained last month, our hybrid is the result of a cross of fuchsoides and nitida made by Tom Ingram in the Royal Gardens near Windsor in 1850.

Some time when the material is available perhaps I can give you another page of the small-leaved types, including the real Digswelliana, Decker's Select and others.

◆

● \*\*\*\*\* Deadline for all copy for the Begonian is the 15th of the previous month. Send your articles and branch news in time.

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● Questions and Answers Chairman, just appointed, writes our President: "I welcome any chance by which I may serve anyone in (or out of) the American Begonia Society. My membership not only means a great deal to me but has done so much for me. And each time that I search for the answer to a question, I will have gained personally in my knowledge of Begonias." That is particularly the spirit of this Chairman and also of our other officers. Thank you, Mrs. Bailey, for putting it into words for us.

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# IS THIS HOW YOU DO IT?

By AN AMATEUR

THE articles appearing in this column are being assembled and published in an attempt to be of assistance to the newcomer or amateur fellow member. For those, who intrigued by the sheer beauty of the Tuberous-rooted Begonia blossom that Mrs. "I-Know-How-To-Grow-Them" wore on her coat the last time they saw her, or fascinated by the glowing colors of the Rex leaves on the plant that Mr. "I-Do-Too" proudly displayed at the last flower show, joined the nearest branch of the ABS to learn just how it is done. Who, after attending the meetings, still say in a slightly annoyed tone of voice, "I still don't know what to do about planting those seeds that I bought"; or, "How in the world do you go about making a stem cutting?" "I have heard all about this, that, and the other thing, but why don't they tell me things that even I can understand?" Oh, the many times I have said just those words.

During the first year I attended the Branch meetings there is one talk which stands out in my memory. This talk was given by our Past-President Frank Harrison and he discussed in simple, straight-forward manner the procedure followed in making leaf-cuttings from the Rex Begonia leaves. When he finished his remarks I left the meeting fully convinced that I had gained knowledge which I wanted to immediately put in practice. I hope that after reading these articles you will have the same feeling.

The methods of propagation that follow will be divided into three parts. The first should deal with the most popular of the three, namely, propagation by stem-cutting, but because of requests for simple instructions on propagation from seed, we have reversed the usual order. Stem and leaf cuttings will be discussed

in future articles. These cultural directions have been carefully gleaned from our own cultural bulletins.

## Propagation From Seed

Begonias may be grown from seed quite readily, though taking much longer to produce a good sized plant than if grown from stem or leaf cuttings. The Hobbyist who has the patience, and time, will experience new thrills in the variation of the plants grown from seed. Seedlings of the fibrous species, and several of the semperflorens hybrids will come true to type, but with most hybrids or other horticultural varieties a large percentage of variation may be expected.

Begonia seeds are very small, are easily crushed and are susceptible to moisture, but if properly stored the seed will retain its viability for several years.

Seed may be planted any time after the first of July, or earlier if you have the facilities to maintain an even night and day temperature of 50 degrees or more. They may be planted in a common nursery flat or pottery seed pan. Coarse gravel should be spread over the bottom of the pan to assure proper drainage, then fill the container to within an inch or less of the top of the pan or flat with a mixture of leaf mold and sharp river sand. The top layer should be a mixture of very fine leaf mold and fine sand, with a little finely screened peat moss mixed with it if desired.

The soil in the seed bed in pot or flat should be thoroughly sterilized. An easy method of doing this is to use double strength solution of Blackleaf 40 filling a large container with enough of this solution to come about one-half to two-thirds of the way up the outside of the seed pan but not enough to come

(Continued on page 324)

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# Observations On African Violets

By MARY DUNCOMB  
Luverne, Minn.

• It is only a few years since lovers of houseplants in Minnesota were introduced to the Saintpaulia Violet. Now there are few who have not had a try at it with varying degrees of success. Being new it was considered somewhat difficult and many conflicting ideas concerning its successful culture were afloat. Many so-called iron-clad theories have now proved to be false. Now that successful propagation is easily assured, we are not so reluctant to try out new methods on our Saintpaulias, and have found that they are not difficult to grow at all.

The first mention I ever read in any travel book was in one by Martin Johnson on Africa. In describing the flora seen during a climb up Mount Kenya, he refers to a plant having blooms like a Violet but with different foliage. This, I take to be our African Violet, the humid atmosphere where it grew being quite in keeping to that in which the Saintpaulias thrive.

At first it was believed that no water should touch the leaves and that they must be brushed to remove the dust which clings to them so tenaciously. While drops of water spot and burn the leaves, especially when in the sun where the rays focus through the water drops onto the leaf, a good, thorough sprinkling or spraying with clean luke-warm water is very beneficial, providing the plant is set out of the sun for the remainder of the day or until the leaves are perfectly dry. This is best done in the early morning when the temperature is not too cold. Likewise one does not always have to water from the bottom of the pot. In young plants where the crown is close to the soil, bottom watering is perhaps the wiser course, but in older plants the crowns tend to push upward as the stalk grows and it is perfectly safe to water from the top. The older a plant grows the more this is noticeable. Besides, bottom watering is impossible in cases where the pots have no drainage. Contrary to popular opinion, African Violets do very well in these ornamental pots, providing small pebbles and charcoal lie below the potting soil. Do be careful not to let the soil get sour and soggy. When using

plant food, do not overdo a good thing. Follow directions. The number of crowns and the size of pot seem to be of small issue in the growing of healthy, blooming plants. Of course the pot must have an abundance of roots in it before the plant can bloom and plants should be shifted gradually from one size to the next. Have patience in waiting for the plant to bloom, but give it time—and bloom it will, and with a mass of bloom at that. Many times I have been called to look at a plant that stubbornly refused to bloom only to go back a few weeks later to find it in profuse bloom. The more crowns in a large pot the more blooms but a small plant or crown is better kept in a small pot. Several lovely plants I saw this Winter were planted in humble gallon pails in warm, well lighted steamy kitchens. Simply masses of blooms. When kept in South windows, they generally had the benefit of a lace curtain to filter the sun's rays, but many of these were in warm North windows. The chief pests of Saintpaulia Violets are the mealy bugs whose cottony overcoats must be melted by a touch of cotton soaked in wood alcohol or kerosene; or perhaps when drastic methods are needed by placing the plant in a tightly closed paper bag in company with a handful of moth balls or naphthalene flakes for a few hours or so. Propagation in terrariums made by using glass jars, such as tobacco jars with glass tops which may contain several leaves, or simply a water glass covered with cellophane seem to be favorite methods. The plants start readily from leaves inserted in these containers which are partly filled with fine soil, in no time at all. The humid, warm atmosphere being the medium they love. They also form roots in water as do the Gloxinias.

It is a far cry from the original lavender African Violet we first enjoyed. Now there are many varieties on the market, sports, for the most part, of those early ones with many shades of blues, violet, a pearly white, a pink, and an amethyst. It is truly a versatile plant. While it cannot go out into the open borders, even in Summer, it can be enjoyed inside, provided it gets the proper attention all house-bound plants must have to live over in hot Summers in air which sometimes is allowed to get too dry.

Care for them as carefully then as when they beautify the window in Winter.

# Nomenclature

By HELEN K. KRAUSS, Director,  
Nomenclature & Research Depts.

(CONTINUED)

*B. rigida*, a species from Ecuador, was named by Regel who at that time was associated with the Botanical Gardens at Zurich, Switzerland, and from where he sent flowers of the newly introduced *Begonia* to Klotzsch for analysis and determination. It was first described by Klotzsch in *Begoniaceen Gattungen und Arten*, 1854-1855. Syn. *caudorensis*.

*B. Silvadore*, a handsome seedling of *B. rigida*, was developed by Mrs. E. M. Fewkes at the Montalvo Gardens of San Diego. Its habit of growth is similar to that of the parent. The fine foliage is exceedingly ornamental and suggestive of two shimmering, bright green-silver stars, a smaller one of four or five points superimposed upon a large one of five points which are regularly toothed, acutely lobed and red veined. It grows to a height of four feet or more in Southern California and the leaves measure about one foot across. In our colder climates, where *Begonias* must be grown indoors part of the year, the size attained is about one-half to two-thirds of those grown in California.

*B. Feasti helix* (a sport of *B. erythrophylla*, the correct name for *B. Feasti*, according to Chas. Chevalier in *Les Begonias*, 1938, it is noted for its peltate leaves which are curled and twisted at the margins. This *Begonia* has frequently been listed as *conchaeifolia* which is erroneous, as the name belongs to a small leaved species from Costa Rica, discovered by Orsted in 1851, and which is currently under cultivation.

*B. dichotoma*, a Venezuelan species, was introduced into England by Thomas Hov in 1800. The first description was given by Jacquin, who was one of the earliest botanists familiar with the genus *Begoniaceae*. With few exceptions botanical authorities have used Jacquin's terminology. Syn. *Lindleyana* came into use over forty years later and this error was made by Klotzsch and revived in recent years. *Parviflora* and *gunneraeifolia* are also old synonyms which have long since been abandoned.

*B. micranthera* var. *fimbriata*, an Argentine tuberous species with orange flowers, was introduced several years ago and is generally known by its introduction number, 1041. It is one of the parents of Mrs. Annie Robinson's ricini-

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*folia crosses*. *B. micranthera* var. *foliosa* is also under cultivation.

*B. scharffi*, a Brazilian species, was discovered with two others by Dr. Scharff in 1886 for the horticulturists, Haage and Schmidt. Syn. *Haageana*.

Volumes of controversial material have been written about this particular *Begonia* and many *Begonia* enthusiasts could choose a book or publication at random and find support for their contention. However, in sifting all available sources the following information should prove of value.

Mr. Haage sent seeds of Dr. Scharff's discoveries to Regel and Hooker with the request that the discoverer be honored if any new species were involved.

In 1888 Dr. Regel described and illustrated *B. Scharffiana* in *Gartenflora* (see *The Begonian*, September, 1943, for illustration of specimen grown in California.) In the same year W. Watson described *B. haageana* in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* and Hooker, filed, illustrated and described *B. scharffi* in the *Botanical Magazine*, the two latter names being synonymous.

When the name *B. haageana* was brought to the attention of Mr. Haage he wrote to Hooker requesting that the name be changed since a *B. boliviensis* x *Pearcei* hybrid had previously been named for him. It is apparent that this change was promptly made and that Hooker was conversant with the entire situation as he gave a full account of the three *Begonias* in his original version of 1888.

*B. scharffiana*: The question of similarity in the case of *B. scharffi* and *B. scharffiana* arises and here it is well to

(Continued on next page)

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## NOMENCLATURE

(Continued from preceding page)

quote Mr. T. H. Everett in the N. Y. B. G. booklet, Begonias: "scharffi—this is the correct name of haageana. Contrary to the opinion of Watson in his original description of *B. haageana* (Gard. Chron. LXVI, 388, 1889) the prior publication by Regel of *B. scharffiana* for a different plant does not invalidate Hooker's *B. scharffi*."

In literature we find that a few botanists have voiced opposition in various ways. One suggests that *scharffiana* is *scharffi* while another suggests that *B. haageana* is a hybrid which is correct, however, *B. scharffi* is the plant discussed and not the tuberous hybrid mentioned above. Since most botanists are in accord with Hooker's and Regel's original material no doubt is left as to the final disposition of the controversy.

*B. Heracleicotyle* is a hybrid of two species, *B. heracleifolia* and *B. hydrocotylifolia*, which was developed by Veitch & Sons, Chelsea, England, in 1895. Syn. Mrs. Townsend, Hunteri.

*B. venus*, a variety of *B. heracleicotyle*, has darker foliage.

*B. subvillosa*, a Brazilian species, was discovered by Sello in 1841. Syn. Scotch luxurians.

*B. luxurians*, a Brazilian species, was discovered by De Jonghe in 1846 and named by Scheidweiler. It is a distinctive *Begonia* suggestive of a palm. Syn. *sessifolia*.

*B. olbia*, a Brazilian species, which was accidentally introduced with a fern in 1883 and named by Kerchove. The leaves are small, suggestive of those of the maple, olive green above with distinctive darker veining, and red beneath. Syn. luxuriant.

## IS THIS HOW YOU DO IT?

(Continued from page 321)

over the top. Set the pan in this solution and as soon as the moisture reaches the surface of the soil take the pan out and set aside for several hours to allow complete drainage. The bed is then ready to receive the seed.

To spread the seed evenly mix with an equal part of sifted leaf mold or sand, place in a salt shaker and shake over the surface of the seed bed. Do not cover the seed with soil, but do cover the seed box with a sheet of glass, to prevent evaporation, then cover the glass with newspaper. The newspaper may be placed under the glass to absorb the moisture drawn out of the soil and prevent dripping. A method I much prefer is to cover the flat with tightly stretched cheese cloth before putting the glass on; this of course is in place of the paper. Place in a shady location where the temperature may be constantly maintained between 65 and 70 degrees until germination starts. If the soil is thoroughly moistened as directed the seed should germinate without further watering. Should the surface show signs of drying out water again from the bottom using clear water.

### Sphagnum Moss for Seed Growing

Another good method is to place an inch of coarse peat-moss on the bottom of the flat, fill the rest of the flat to the brim with sphagnum moss that has been sifted through a fine sieve. It should be tamped down.

After watering from the bottom and allowing for drainage the seed may be sown, following the directions given above. Dry Oregon green moss, screened

(Continued on next page)



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## IS THIS HOW YOU DO IT?

through a fine sieve may be used instead of sphagnum.

After the seeds have sprouted remove the glass and, if heat has been used, allow the temperature to drop a little. The young plants may be watered with a fine spray whenever the soil shows an appearance of drying out. Watering with a 4 per cent solution of Clorox will tend to prevent damping off. After the third leaf has developed the small plants may be pricked out and set farther apart in a flat containing a soil mixture of one-third each of leaf mold, sand and loam. When the plants are several inches high they are ready for potting and then the same simple procedure should be followed as used with young plants obtained from stem or leaf cuttings.

## BRANCH NEWS

(Continued from page 312)

successfully which would tend to assure better drainage. He invited the members to his place after a while, when his lath-house will be finished. The Show Committee asked everyone to be sure to bring exhibit material to the Rose Bowl on April 22nd and 23rd for the Pacific Rose Show, in which the Pasadena Begonia Branch were to have an exhibit. Mr. Harold Hart will speak on Caladiums on May 9th, and that is looked forward to with anticipation.

**Hollywood Branch:** The monthly Begonia lesson was given by Mr. W. C. Cooke, Treasurer of the Branch. His subject: *B. haageana*. He brought a very fine specimen of the plant which he donated as a special prize. Mrs. Weber then followed with a few words of praise for the almost forgotten hanging basket *B. Schmitti*, bolstering her words with a nice young plant.

Mr. George McDowell of Inglewood, spoke about fibrous Begonias. He wants them planted out in the garden, even where they get some sun, they will enrich the garden with their colorful leafage and fine trusses of flowers, they will be healthier, more compact and generally hardier. He advised careful removal of the older growth so as to make room for the younger and more vigorous bloom-canes. Mr. and Mrs. Remmers, of Long Beach, played the good neighbors and Mr. Remmers gave us a magic-carpet tour of many interesting places in the United States through his fine kodachrome slides.

Mr. Clarence Hall, Pres. the ABS, will speak on Tuberous-rooted Begonias and

## CONDENSED MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, AMERICAN BEGONIA SOCIETY

Held at 417 South Hill Street, Los Angeles, Monday, March 13, 1944.

MEETING OPENED at 7:45 P. M. — President Hall, presiding.

PRESENT AT MEETING: Mr. Dunkle, Mrs. Poole, Mrs. Jenks, Mrs. Harris, Mr. and Mrs. Harker, Mr. and Mrs. Crowder, Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Baily, (San Gabriel Branch), Mr. J. Baily (Pasadena Branch), Judge and Mrs. Pope, Mr. and Mrs. Coche, Mr. and Mrs. Parker, Dr. and Mrs. Drummond, Mrs. McRae, Mr. Willard, Capt. Deere, Mrs. Wilkes, Mrs. Hartwell, and Mr. Hart. The President introduced the guests and Mr. Dunkle, Director from Long Beach.

MINUTES of the meeting of February 14, read and approved.

Written reports from Mrs. Harker, MEMBERSHIP FEES CHAIRMAN; Mrs. Wilkes, EDITOR and BUSINESS MANAGER; and Mr. Hart, TREASURER, were read, and ordered filed as part of the minutes of the meeting.

LIBRARIAN, Mrs. Crowder, reported on activities in her work, stating that the library material was in constant demand, the members finding an increasing use for Begonia literature.

REPRESENTATIVE DIRECTORS present: Mr. Harker, Parent Branch, Mr. Willard, Pasadena Branch, Mrs. McRae, Glendale Branch; Mr. Crowder, Inglewood Branch, Capt. Deere, San Gabriel Branch; Dr. Drummond, reporting for Mr. Hawkins, Hollywood Branch. Each gave a brief report of their Branch activities.

A letter from Mrs. Bessie Buxton was read in which she asked for clarification on several points relative to judging Begonias at flower shows. The President appointed Mrs. J. A. Poole, Mr. Ferd Neels, and Mr. Geo. Laurence as a COMMITTEE to clarify the points as requested by Mrs. Buxton.

Mrs. C. Harris, SEED FUND CHAIRMAN, reported on seeds distributed to members contributing to the seed fund, and advised that a few more members could be accepted in the seed fund group.

MOTION by J. L. Baily, seconded by Mrs. J. A. Poole, that "Unpaid Begonian subscriptions terminating in December, 1943, amounting to 368, be dropped from the mailing list."

Mrs. Drummond, President of the Hollywood Branch, asked that an earlier date than usual for the ANNUAL CONVENTION be considered: Moved by Mrs. J. A. Poole, seconded by Mrs. Wilkes, that "the Board agree to any date which will suit the Hollywood Branch, including September, 30, 1944, or any date following in October." Motion carried. Mrs. Drummond was asked to advise the Board when the definite date had been set.

Mr. Hart reported on BEGONIA SEEDS collected for distribution to members. Moved by Mrs. Crowder, seconded by Mrs. McRae, that "a notice be placed in the Begonian that seed is available to any member, free of charge, if a return addressed stamped envelope is forwarded with the request to the membership secretary." Motion carried.

MEETING ADJOURNED to the next regular meeting of Monday, April 10, 1944.

the forthcoming Convention in Hollywood.

**Inglewood Branch:** Mr. Fairclo, owner of the Home Gardens in Gardena spoke on Fuchsias. An added attraction was the lovely colored slides of Fuchsias shown by Mrs. Klingspar, of South Gate. Doughnuts and coffee were served by the club. The members were asked to bring their own cup and spoon. This is also asked for May. Our next two meetings will have Donation Plant sales.

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# 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.**

The May (Second Monday) American Begonia Society Board Meeting will take place in the Director's Room, Retail Merchants Credit Assn., 417 So. Hill, Los Angeles, Calif., May 8th, 7:45 p.m.

## BELLFLOWER BRANCH

Tuesday, May 2nd, 8:00 p.m.  
Home of Mrs. Eshnaur,  
932 Flower Ave., Bellflower, Calif.  
Mrs. Esther McElhinney, Secy.-Treas.,  
534 Darnell St., Bellflower, Calif.

## RIVERSIDE BRANCH

Tuesday, May 2nd, 7:30 p.m.  
Home of N. E. Duhnke,  
4319 Westmoreland, Riverside, Calif.  
Mrs. Jessie A. Topham, Secy.-Treas.,  
4620 Arlington Ave., Riverside, Calif.

## THEODOSIA BURR SHEPHERD BRANCH

Tuesday, May 2nd, 7:30 p.m.  
American Legion Hall,  
North California St., Ventura, Calif.  
Mrs. Olive Hamilton, Secy.-Treas.  
515 So. Evergreen Dr., Ventura, Calif.

## SAN FRANCISCO BRANCH

Wednesday, May 3rd, 7:45 p.m.  
Social Hall, Calvary Methodist Church,  
7/8 19th and Judah St., San Francisco, Calif.  
Mrs. Theresa Ferrero, Secy.,  
2183 31st Ave., San Francisco, Calif.

## DOMINGUEZ BRANCH

Thursday, May 4th  
Mrs. R. L. Warren, Secy.  
21718 So. Alameda, Long Beach, Calif.

## ORANGE COUNTY BRANCH

Thursday, May 4th  
Laurance Archibald, Secretary  
1216 W. Chapman, Orange, Calif.

## NORTH LONG BEACH BRANCH

Monday, May 8th, 7:30 p.m.  
42 East Market St., North Long Beach, Calif.  
Mrs. Jean Stocklasa, Secy.,  
5505 Olive Ave., Long Beach 5, Calif.

## EAST BAY BRANCH

Monday, May 8th  
Washington School, P.-T. A. room,  
61st and Shattuck Ave., Oakland, Calif.  
Dick G. Goodnow, Secy.-Treas.,  
2519 Milvia Street, Berkeley, Calif.

## PASADENA BRANCH

Tuesday, May 9th, 7:30 p.m.  
Pasadena Public Library  
Lester F. Harrell, Secy.-Treas.,  
668 Bellefontaine St., Pasadena, Calif.  
Speaker: Harold Hart  
Subject: Caladiums

## LONG BEACH PARENT CHAPTER

Wednesday, May 10th, 7:30 p.m.  
2218 East 4th St., Long Beach, Calif.  
Miss Cecille Block, Secy.-Treas.,  
1263 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, Calif.

## HOLLYWOOD BRANCH

Thursday, May 11th, 7:30 p.m.  
Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd.  
Mrs. Kem Weber, Secy.,  
6707 Milner Road, Los Angeles, Calif.  
Speaker: Clarence A. Hall, Pres. ABS  
Subject: Tuberous Rooted Begonias

## INGLEWOOD BRANCH

Thursday, May 11th, 8:00 p.m.  
Woman's Club of Inglewood,  
325 No. Hill-rest, Inglewood, Calif.  
Mrs. Harold S. Clark, Secretary  
1618 1/2 W. 52nd St., Los Angeles 37, Calif.

## CALIFORNIA HEIGHTS BRANCH

Friday, May 12th, 8:00 p.m.  
Home of Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Smoot,  
211 S. Adams St., Long Beach 5, Calif.  
Chalmers Bower, Secy.-Treas.,  
1020 Belmont Ave., Long Beach 4, Calif.

## EVA KENWORTHY GRAY BRANCH

Monday, May 15th  
Mrs. Henry O. Colt, Secy.-Treas.,  
7221 Olivetas, La Jolla, Calif.

## PHIOBEGONIA CLUB BRANCH

Thursday, May 18th  
Mrs. Albert H. Gere, Treas.,  
362 Brookway, Merion, Pa.

## SAN DIEGO BRANCH

Monday, May 22nd  
Hard of Hearing Hall,  
3843 Herbert Ave., San Diego, Calif.  
Mrs. George S. Breidford, Secy.-Treas.,  
1146 Oliver Ave., Pacific Beach, Calif.

## MARGARET GRUENBAUM BRANCH

Tuesday, May 23rd  
Mrs. W. E. Jones, Secy., Willow Grove, Pa.

## GLENDALE BRANCH

Tuesday, May 23rd  
329 No. Brand Blvd., Glendale, Calif.  
Mrs. Grace A. Dewar, Pres.,  
709 Milford St., Glendale 3, Calif.

## SAN GABRIEL VALLEY BRANCH

Friday, May 26th  
Mrs. Velma C. Dunn, Secretary  
244 No. Ivy St., Monrovia, Calif.  
Fellowship Hall,  
304 E. Valley Blvd., El Monte, Calif.

## ALFRED D. ROBINSON BRANCH

Friday, May 26th, 10:30 a.m.  
Hall Point Loma Community Church,  
Udal Street at Poinsettia Dr., San Diego, Calif.  
Mrs. Merrel H. Taylor, Secy.,  
2838 Chatsworth Blvd., 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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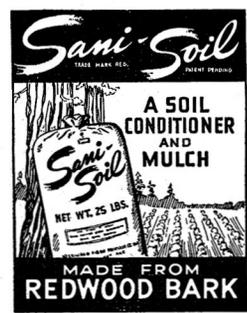
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