

The BEGONIAN

Devoted to the Sheltered Gardens

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The BEGONIAN

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The Editor's Desk

● It has been decided by all the officers of this Society that since less than half the members of The American Society belong to Branches, the Branch News as published for years is something of a misuse of valuable space in THE BEGONIAN. Such speaker reports as can be sent to the Editor (See Mrs. Clarence Moore's short notice on Mr. Palm-dale) will be welcomed from each branch so that the speakers will become known everywhere, in association with their subject matter.

We still must have the list of your officers as soon as they are elected, and the Editor still must have the advance notices of your meetings in time to get them into the next BEGONIAN. See the Calendar page. We shall try to give our readers more valuable cultural material with each issue, but this means that we shall be expecting more really

down-to-earth-material from each person who is interested in his garden, and has the interest of our Society and THE BEGONIAN at heart sufficiently to write the Editor about his experiences with shade plants anywhere.

We hear Alfred Carl Hottes, well known writer for *Better Homes & Gardens* and lecturer, also the author of many gardening books, will spend the month of September in Los Angeles. This will be a fine chance to have him as speaker for your Branch. He is a member of the Eva Kenworthy Gray Branch of La Jolla, Calif.

Those who attended the invitational dinner for the members of the Inglewood A.B.S. by the Louis Schirmers, can speak warmly of good hospitality, and a very surprising range of lath-houses, greenhouse and Victory garden all concentrated into two little home lots. Not only was the fine dinner free of

(Continued on Page 158)



Photo by Western Engraving & Colortype Co., Courtesy Frank Reinelt, Capitola, Calif.

One of the many types of flowers available from the tuberous begonias. The colors are entrancing and varied to such a degree that only purples, and blues are missing. The list of forms is being extended every year. We would like pictures of your best flowers so that we may acquaint all our readers with the exquisite loveliness of each, though we wish it could be done in color. When possible make color plates of your best flowers for future enjoyment, at the same time good black and white pictures for general reproduction.

SHOW CALENDAR

Joint Meeting:
**The Southern California Horticultural Inst.
 and The American Begonia Society**
 Elks Club, Sixth and Parkview
 Los Angeles, Calif.
August 6th, 7:30 p.m.

The Huntington Beach Country Fair
 Huntington Beach, Calif.
August 17, 18, 19 and 20

San Francisco Flower Show
 Rotunda, The City Hall
August 29th and 30th

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The American Begonia Society Program at the So. California Horticultural Institute

By **GEORGE LAWRENCE**, California

• We will have a very fine exhibit of begonias at the August 6th meeting of the Southern California Horticultural Institute. The meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. at the Elks Club, Sixth and Parkview Avenue, Los Angeles, California.

Clarence A. Hall, of Ventura, our past president, will be the speaker. His talks are always of interest and helpful in growing better begonias.

All of our members and their friends are invited to attend the meeting and to exhibit their best shade plant or plants, or begonia flower arrangements and corsages. The exhibits can be brought in between 7:00 and 7:30 p.m. and can be removed immediately after the meeting.

Plan to attend the meeting and if you have a plant or plants which you are proud of, bring them along so that members of the Southern California Horticultural Institute may become better acquainted with begonias and companion plants.

Announcement by Librarian

MRS. JOHN W. CROWDER

• Word has been received from the Oxford University Press that publication of Bessie Buxton's new edition of "Begonias and How to Grow Them" has been postponed again. It was originally announced by the publisher in the spring catalog that the book would be issued in May, then it was June, now the date is indefinite—probably some time in the fall.

Will all the members who have sent in paid orders and want a refund at this time send a postal to the librarian to this effect? Otherwise, the orders will be held just as they were received until delivery of the book is made. This will save much duplication of work and expense for eventually the book will be ready. Also, if those members who have not sent in their orders but intend to, will wait until the book is in our hands, it will save worry over more outstanding unfilled orders.

This is just another inconvenience and delay caused by the war which was unforeseen and unavoidable.

• Tuberous begonias uprights and hang-basket types will give you blossoms from June to November. You can still get growing plants *Now*.



Photo by courtesy R. G. Hudson.
A GROWING BOUQUET of a beautiful tuberous begonia being presented to Mrs. Rose Chadwell, 1944 Chairman of Hostesses for the Huntington Beach Country Fair, by Mr. R. G. "Scotty" Hudson, President of the Local Garden Club, which sponsors this fine Fair. The tuberous begonia in the 8-inch pot, with flowers averaging 8 inches across, was a special pet of last year. We shall see what Mr. Hudson will exhibit this year when he brings his plants to the Southern California Horticultural Institute, and The American Begonia Society joint meeting on August 6th at the Elks Club, Los Angeles.

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SHIPPING TUBEROUS
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Questions answered by
FRANK REINELT, Capitola, Calif.

Q. How far may be tuberous begonias blooms be shipped? How soon after cutting may they be shipped?

A. Before the war we often shipped cut begonias to New York and other points on Atlantic Coast. The flowers were cut, packed and delivered to Air Express in San Francisco in the afternoon so that they could go out by evening plane. Delivery in Chicago was by early morning or before noon in New York. Presently we do not ship any excepting only short distances like San Francisco or Los Angeles by Express.

Q. How long a stem is it possible to have for best results in keeping blooms of tuberous begonias, and how do you sever them from the plants?

A. I break the flowers off, leaving as much as possible of the stem **ON THE PLANT**. They have to be wired for corsages anyway, so they do not need long stems, otherwise they are displayed flat in dishes where long stems are only a hindrance.

Q. What is the life of a cut-bloom of the tuberous begonia given normal Summer weather? Are you using any chemical that might lengthen the life of such cut flowers?

A. We have never used any chemicals but flowers will keep 6 to 8 days in ice-water and cool room. Four days in warmer weather is about the limit.

Q. What is the best type of container and padding material desired for shipping cut tuberous begonias?

A. We use orchid cotton which comes in commercial size sheets. Wooden boxes padded with cotton then the flowers covered with another sheet of cotton and thoroughly soaked.

Q. Is it better to prepay transportation or to send package C.O.D.?

A. When Express used we send C.O.D. Mail is not advisable.

Q. Is Air-Mail the only means for shipping or is regular Railway Express still feasible?

A. Regular Express for short distances, as the flowers should never be on the way longer than 24 hours.

Comments: Precooling the flowers for several hours in icy water helps where it is too warm. The whole thing depends on how cool and moist the flowers are kept during shipment.

Propagation of Begonia Semperflorens and Other Begonias From Seed

By DR. W. C. DRUMMOND, Hollywood, California

• At the request of our Editor, I am presenting herewith, a method of growing *Begonia semperflorens* and others from seed, which, in my hands has proven quite successful. I am told this same method can be used for any other seeds. Credit for this method goes to that great *Begonia* enthusiast, Mrs. Eva Kenworthy Gray, of La Jolla, California, first described on page 296 of 1944 *Begonian*. I am here presenting it with some elaboration and more detail as to soil and temperature.

To commence with, secure a large-mouthed square glass gallon jar (a round jar will do) provided with a screw lid. Lay the bottle on its side and spread a $\frac{3}{4}$ inch layer of screened oak leaf-mold, compost and fine sand, using equal parts. Mix well and pass through a $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch screen. Do not screen while wet. On top of this place a $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch layer of either fine grade Sani-Soil or sphagnum moss screened through a house fly-screen. Moisten the soil and place the bottle with the soil in an oven to pasteurize at 160 F., for one hour. This will not kill all the beneficial bacteria but will kill nematodes and fungi responsible for damping off. Watch that it does not dry out. To moisten use boiled water. The lid may be kept on, but not too tight while in the oven. One may use formaldehyde at the rate of 1/6th of a pound to one gallon of water as a sterilizing drench, or use Semesan according to directions. This should prevent damping off or inroads of nematodes. I prefer the oven method. Large growers use steam.

When the soil has cooled the seed may be planted, or in the case of formaldehyde let it stand one week or until the odor has been dissipated. The surface of the mixture should be level and smooth but not compact or it will puddle the soil and exclude the oxygen which may cause failure of germination. Too much water also drives the oxygen out of the soil. Mix the seed with a little fine sterile sand and use a case knife to distribute it evenly over the surface. Screw on the lid. Place in a dark place where the night temperature will not be below 65 to 70 degrees F.; 70 is best. A lower temperature slows germination. The seed should be up in about 6 to 7 days. Then the temperature may be reduced to 55 or 60 degrees F., and the bottle given more light. A temperature of 70 F. will do no harm.

When the plants are about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch high they may and should be transplanted. Be patient as this takes time. Use a case knife to bring out a small quantity of soil with the seedlings. In all this process keep the young seedlings away from gas fumes as they are quite susceptible to injury by non-combusted gas fumes, becoming chlorotic and they may die in 24 to 48 hours. While handling these seedlings do not let them dry out.

Transplant the young seedlings into a flat or in pans, either must have excellent drainage assured by an inch layer of leafmold screenings of coarse redwood bark. Over this the finely sifted sterilized leafmold with a little sand will be found best for the first transplanting. Good begonias may be grown without sterilization of the soil, but it is better and safer to take this extra precaution.

By using a common pen point inverted in its holder one may transplant the seedlings singly into the flat, setting them out not closer than one inch apart. Shade lightly for a few days, gradually allowing more light but not full sun. A lathhouse in spring or summer is ideal. Don't fill the flat too full of soil, it will sour, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep is enough. Moisten the soil in the flat by placing it in a vessel of shallow water waiting for the water to rise to the surface, or since the soil should be moist at planting time, one may water lightly with a fine rose spray. When the begonias are $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 inches high transplant into permanent beds or pots or two inches apart in flats until placed outdoors in beds. Until the permanent planting use no manure or fertilizer in the soil. While they are in flats they can be watered with any good liquid fertilizer with advantage using it only one fourth the strength prescribed for general use. I use Likwid Gro.

When planting out place some clean, washed, coarse sand close around the roots of the plants, there will be less damping off. Fine Sani-Soil may also be used for this purpose. Do not keep soil too wet. When begonias are grown in a glass jar there will be no necessity for water if the lid is kept closed tightly. I grew begonias for more than seven months without damping off or watering in a jar with the lid on tight all the time.

Some sterilize the soil by pouring boiling water over it, others use a 2 to 4% chlorox

(Continued on Page 156)

ANNUAL PICNIC

• Annual picnic at Lincoln Park instead of Annual Convention. Mark the day definitely on your calendar . . . September 16 1945, . . . the Sunday was chosen with a view to making it possible for all men and women of the Society to be present at the business meeting early in the afternoon and still visit the greenhouse, the Alfred D. Robinson Memorial. The pic-nic will be a happy affair for all members and friends. Plan food for hot day. Coffee and cream will be provided through Mrs. Crawford of Long Beach and Committee. Watch for details in the September issue. **BUT MARK THE DAY!**

Arthur E. Nelson, President,
The American Begonia Society.

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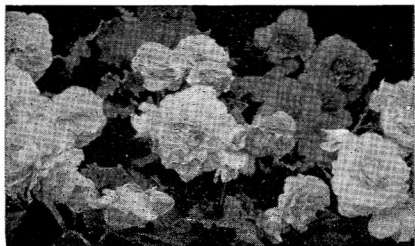
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TUBEROUS BEGONIAS FROM SEED

By CHESTER D. TANNER, L. A. County

As the tubers bloom—reward plus will be yours—when you can invite all your friends to come and admire the blossoming plants with you as I invite my friends.

If it is desired to raise your own seed start with the choice of a single male flower for pollen which apply to female flowers of the variety of double selected. The results will be a majority of single flowers and some doubles but it will start you off with a slight feeling of achievement. After that—you are in the hands of the BEGONIA BUG—maybe we had better call it HOBBY. Whatever it is called you will not mind, as long as you learn what keeps buds from dropping and can tell your friends that too much water or too little water will cause the disastrous effect—and so will overfeeding.

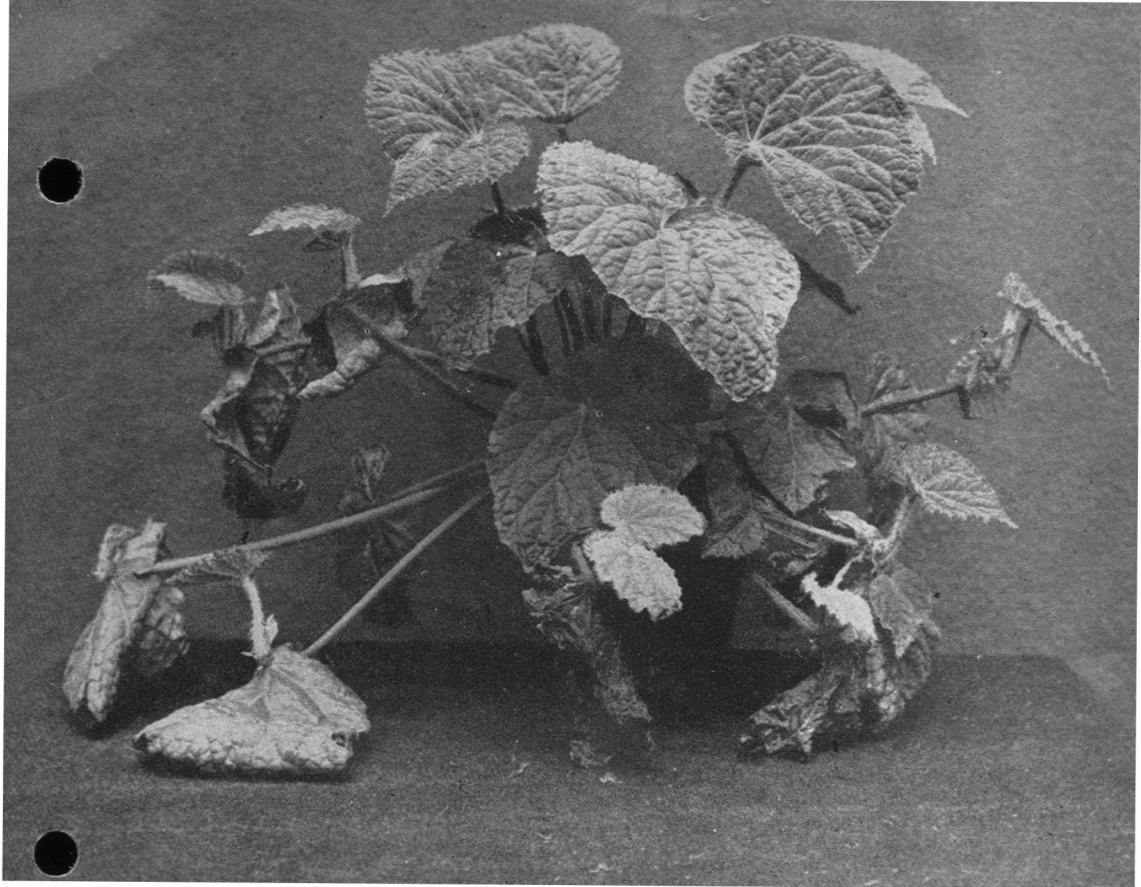
I contend that tuberous begonias are the easiest things to grow but here and there—there is a challenge that cannot be overlooked.

I have a yellow plant that produced 56 blossoms which is not bad.

Later, when the tubers are ready to take a well-earned rest, the leaves will begin to turn yellow, that sign will indicate watering only about twice a week, then gradually only once a week and soon the pots will be turned on their sides. The tubers planted in the ground may be washed free of soil after the stems have matured off, then dried slowly before being put away in a cool place packed in some dry material that will not rob the tubers of moisture, yet will protect them from attack from insects. Open boxes that may be stacked but kept well ventilated are preferred. The hanging basket tubers need the same procedure as suggested for the regular tubers but do not take cuttings from them as all the possible stems are needed from each tuber so that the basket will hang heavy with blossoms from each stem and side-shoot. To make them multiply it is necessary to nip the shoots as they get to be 6 to 8 inches long. This will force more growth in the form of branches. For the same reason it is advisable to plant three of the hanging basket tubers to each 10-inch basket . . . or hanging pot.

My years, as far as I see now, will be counted from Summer to Summer because of the tuberous-rooted begonias. And I'm wishing the same to you.

• LATH FOR FERNS should be closer spaced and lower than for begonias—but—there **MUST** be good ventilation.



Rex Begonia Goes Viviparous

By GONDA HARTWELL, with photograph by A. N. HARTWELL

• The plant shown in the accompanying photograph is Rex Begonia Emerald Isle which took, what seemed to me, an unusual method of trying to perpetuate itself.

Last January while looking over the plants in the glass house, I noticed in the centers of the mature leaves of Emerald Isle an indication of new growth of some sort and resolved to watch carefully and see what developed. I continued the regular feeding and by the first of March, it was evident that these were to be young plants. They continued to grow throughout the spring and early summer and by July when the photograph was taken each one of the nine leaves

had a healthy young plant developing in the center.

I looked over the other plants, but this was the only one that showed any indication of developing new plants while the leaves were still attached to the mother plant. All the plants had been grown under the same conditions and had the same amount of feeding, and so far as I know there was no reason why this plant should have taken this course.

If other begonia hobbyists have had a similar experience, or know the reason why some plants act thusly, won't you write of your experience and send it to the Editor so the information will be available to all?

• "Our 'ad' has brought a good many inquiries and the majority have sent in orders. Will you please run the 'adv.' again?" If our advertisements pay for a short time, they surely must pay more in the long run. Send your copy to Maria Wilkes, see first page.

Several innovations are added to the activities of the Inglewood Branch, Calif.

1. A ticket for the plant sale given to each member bringing in a plant in not less than a 4" pot for the sale, a limit of not more than three tickets to one person per meeting.

B x Scharffiana, Regel

By ALICE M. CLARK, San Diego, California

• It seems rather unnecessary to discuss and depict such a familiar plant as *B. Scharffiana*, but, from the standpoint of beauty, its praise cannot be sung too highly. Almost seventy years ago it was discovered on the Island of St. Catherine, in Southern Brazil, by Dr. Scharff. He sent its seed and that of two other begonias to Haage and Schmidt in Erfurt. Haage passed them on to Dr. Regel in Petersburg and Hooker at Kew Gardens, requesting that one of them be named for their discoverer.

Working independently, Dr. Regel described and illustrated the plant of our article in *Gartenflora*, 1888, under the name of *B. Scharffiana*. Watson and Hooker each separately described the same one of the other seedlings under two different names—*Haageana* and *Scharffii*. That story has nothing to do with this month's plant as the confusion is only in name, the begonias themselves being easy to tell apart.

B. Scharffiana is a distinct individual in the fuzzy world of hairy fibrous begonias. Seen in a hanging basket, with the sun coming through its red-backed foliage and touching the velvety red "ears" of the newly-unfolded leaves, one is instantly captivated by its visual charms. Irresistibly one touches the plushy leaves and the brilliant red "whiskers" on the ivory-white flowers. Raising a glorious specimen like that of President Nelson's, illustrated in the September, 1943, *BEGONIAN*, it seems to me would be reaching a begonia heaven from which one could never descend to the plane of ordinary lath-house mortals again. One can never capture this begonia's loveliness in the mediums of paint and paper, but each of you can acquire a *live* plant of your own to enjoy, right now.

There is plenty of written material on *B. Scharffiana*. From the old garden magazines in the same languages, it is always described, but not always illustrated.

My sketch does not show the strong, sturdy, main stalk of the plant, as the leaves of branches, starting close to the ground, obstruct the view. This branching habit is most characteristic of *B.S.* All the stems and the backs of the leaves are very red, the better to show off the fog of white hairs that envelops them. Round and fleshy, both the stems, petioles and peduncles look almost stiff, were it not for the softening haze of hairs. The old stipules become brown and dried, but are a light yellow-green pointed oval, about two inches long,

with arched keels, very hairy and pink-tinted at the tip, when young. They do not begin to fade until the second cup of leaves rises above the first pair, and serve well to protect the red pucker of new leaves. These expand in pairs on petioles almost as long as the leaves.

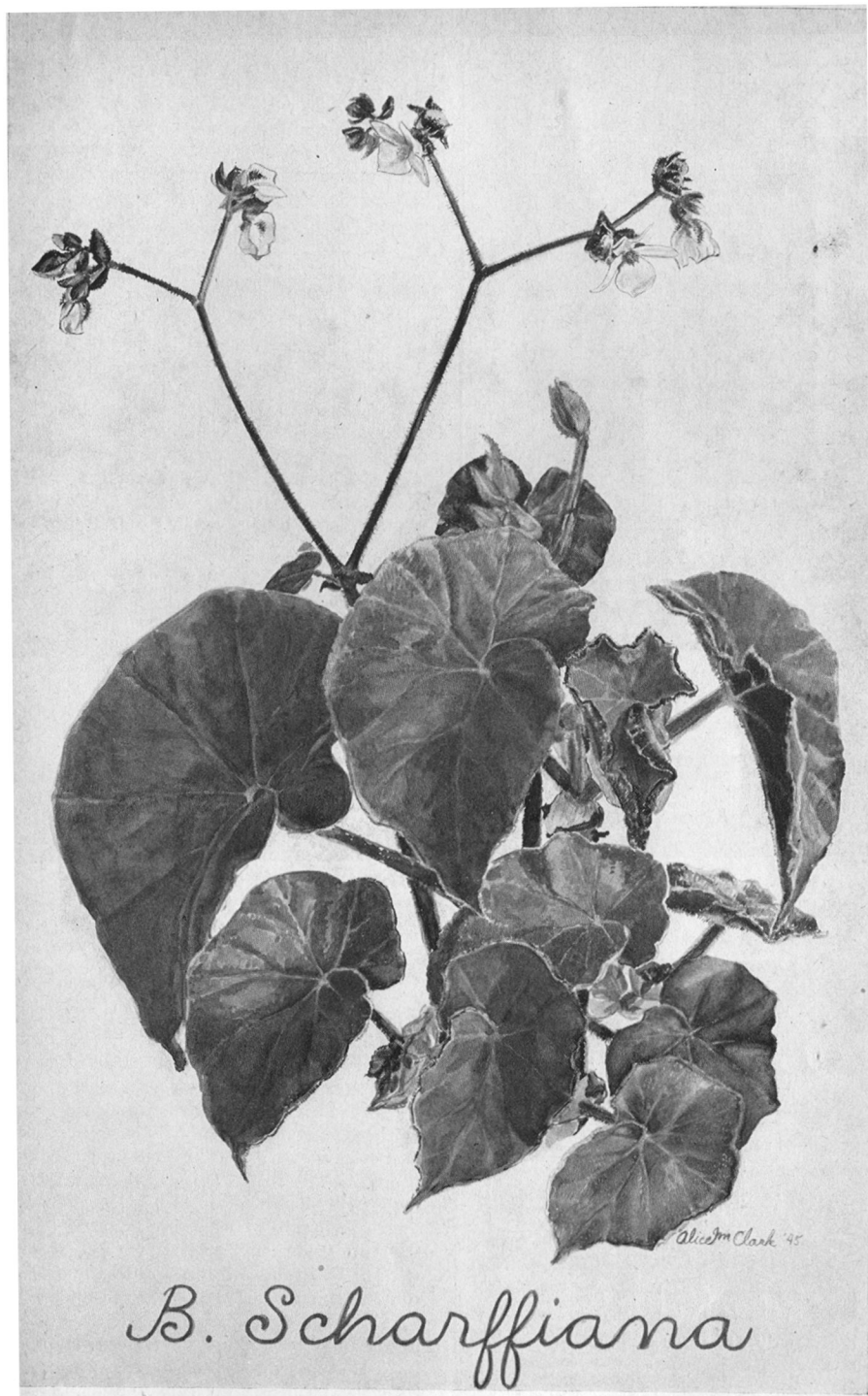
Overlapping, heart-shaped, slightly angular in outline, the leaves taper to a decided point. In fact there is a variety that almost has a tail. The sinus and veins, neatly carved in the mossy-green upper surface, are a very light green, completely hiding the raised veins and russet-red texture of the underleaf, unless a beam of light sends the rose tint glowing through. Especially charming is the thick cut edge of the leaf, with its double fringe of hairs where the two-colored surfaces meet. The largest leaf on my two-year-old plant is about nine inches long but they reach a foot or more.

The inflorescence is axillary. The one in my painting breaks out from the main stem about two inches above the ground and reaches its first branch at ten inches. There we find a small leaf, barely visible in the sketch, which is rather usual in this species. The flower stem continues to branch in pairs until it becomes quite large. It, too, is protected by a cowl-like, red-flushed, hairy hood in its bud stage, as is also each separate flower cluster. The bracts are deciduous. Only male flowers are shown in the drawing, the inflorescence being too young to show the females which develop later. They have three or more petals and form a thick seed-pod, almost like a burr because of its hairs and redness on the sides exposed to the light.

As is common in many begonias, the central flower blooms first and is the largest. The upper of the two large, inch-long, roundish petals is flushed red all over instead of just at the tip as in the lower one. Both have the heavy sprinkling of coarse red hairs, one-eighth of an inch long at the full part of the petal and at the base. When open, satin-smooth within, they disclose two more slender, tongue-shaped petals and the gay, yellow cluster of stamens.

B. Scharffiana, crossed with *B. Metallica* in 1890, gave us a popular hybrid, *B. Credneri* and in 1892, with *B. echinosepala* produced *B. Duchartrei*. Other favorite seedlings are: *Loma Alta*, *Undemille*, *Duscharf* and the accidental crossing that brought forth *B. Mrs. Scripps*.

(Continued on Page 156)



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Bromeliads In Hanging Baskets and on Tree Trunks

By JAMES N. GIRIDLIAN, Arcadia, California

• This family may be subjected to many uses. Why the home gardener does not make more use of the various Billbergias as hanging baskets remains a mystery. Actually these plants ask for little attention and not much preparation.

There are two varieties that are especially suited for planting in wire baskets: *B. Euphemiae* and *B. amoena*. The latter may be singled out because of its dwarf habit and also because it makes a stunning show of itself when the brilliant orange scarlet bracts break out and are followed by the green-edged blue flowers which develop to add their quota of color throughout the summer. Of course, the plants should be well established before much bloom may be expected. When the plants are shipped they look most discouraging upon arrival, for most times they show little root system, if any, but they soon make new ones.

Acting upon the reaction of the gardener who is not familiar with billbergias he rushes to plant them in wet soil, which is a mistake. Moist is preferred.

SOIL MIXTURE FOR HANGING BASKETS: Make a mixture of 8 parts of sphagnum moss, 1½ parts leafmold and ½ part of well-rotted cow manure. Stuff an 8-inch wire basket with the mixture after first lining it with a layer of plain sphagnum moss. The billbergia divisions may then be placed firmly in the mixture about 4 inches apart and one in the center. As the plants develop and new shoots are made some will grow out all around the sides of the basket so that soon it will be a shower of plants, if the hollow centers of the plants are kept with a constant supply of water, stored therein to keep them in good condition. The leaves have a slightly scaly surface which is nature's way of helping the absorption of water as it falls on the leaves. This puts the collection of water up to the leaves and the roots evidently draw on this supply to carry moisture into the leaves proper. The plants otherwise grow better if they are maintained on the moist side rather than over damp or wet. As a matter of fact, they do remarkably well tied to tree trunks with little, if any soil mixture IF the moisture content is maintained in the leaf-cups.

AS TREE TRUNK PLANTS: The billbergias may be tied onto evergreen tree trunks by first applying a wad of sphagnum moss then the billbergia division and another pad of moss over the root—all of which may be laced with wire onto the tree trunk with the



Billbergia rubro-cyanea

Courtesy Oakhurst Gardens

aid of four well-placed nails which do not need to be driven deeply enough to cause the tree any harm.

Several types of the billbergias may be planted on one tree, especially if there is a leaning trunk. The California oaks lend themselves beautifully to this treatment.

Among the varieties of billbergias that are fine in baskets or for tree trunks are: *B. calophylla*, desirable for its wide, bronzy green foliage, which is heavily barred with gray, but more so for the blood-red and dark blue flowers which bloom a great deal of the

(Continued on Next Page)

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Address MRS. RUSSEL T. BAILEY, Ch.

Q. Last year my tuberous begonias seemed to grow very heavy tall main stems instead of having more leaves and hugging the pot. Was this due to too much fertilizer? Most of my begonias are in pots on a bench in a partially glassed in porch. The wood portion comes up above the begonias with glass the balance of the way and the end is open. This may be the cause.

From Mrs. L. L., San Francisco, Calif.

A. Your trouble could be either the loca-

tion of too much fertilizer—or both. Any plant will reach for the light. That can be easily corrected by raising the bench so that the plants are on a level with the top of the wood. You can easily tell if a tuberous begonia is getting too much fertilizer by the glassy, thin appearance of the underside of the leaves. If they are over-fertilized flush as much of the fertilizer out of the soil as possible by heavy waterings and do not fertilize again except for a possible dose of superphosphate, the bulb producing fertilizer, toward the end of the season.

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BOB ANDERSON

1415 Echo Park Ave. Los Angeles (26)

Bromeliads in Hanging Baskets and On Tree Trunks

(Continued from Page 153)

time in Southern California. The old Christmas-flowering *B. nutans* is well known for its unfailing shower of tassel flowers in pink, green and purple-blue which continue to bloom through most of the spring. The same *B. nutans* has been crossed with *B. Alberti* to give us much larger bracts of a deeper rose-color. Our picture shows a potted specimen of *B. rubro-cyanea* which depicts the interesting formation of leaf, flower bracts and flowers but fails to give an idea of the effect the color adds to the ensemble.

A variety that is particularly sought after for baskets is *B. speciosa* x *nutans* since it is prolific and blooms much of the summer. Another summer-bloomer is *B. thyrsoflora*.

One of my favorites is *B. Euphemiae* because of its dark green foliage that is covered with a velvety plum-like bloom. The bracts are bright pink with royal purple flowers. This has a definite creeping habit which makes it sprout all over the basket with very fine effect. Also very interesting and colorful is a close relative of the billbergia, it is a Bromeliad, too, called *Quesnelia* species, because it is as yet unidentified. It has the same habit of *B. Euphemiae* but smaller. The inflorescence makes a most colorful splash with the calyx in brilliant red and the deep blue flowers which issue from it enhance the effect. Once a gardener becomes intrigued with the beauty of the Bromeliads, be it for potted plants, hanging baskets, or tree-trunk-planting (or in the lath-house beds and in the glasshouse . . . also as house-plants) he will not rest until he has amassed quite a collection. There is quite a little hybridizing in progress which will forge new and more colorful varieties, but if no more were evolved, we would still have plenty of good ones on hand to add much interest and color to our air gardens in the manner suggested here.

Dicksonia Antarctica A Lovely Tree Fern For So. Calif.

By ALFRED D. ROBERTS, Los Angeles, California

• Dicksonia, which forms by far the most important division of the tribe "Dicksonieae," was named in honor of James Dickson, a famous British cryptogamic botanist.

The tree fern (*Dicksonia antarctica*) grows in great abundance on Mount Wellington in Tasmania, its native habitat, rising to a height of 35 feet where it is frequently subjected to brief but severe frosts. Although this variety has long been known to Southern California fern enthusiasts, altogether too few are seen locally. It has adapted itself remarkably well to sheltered and wind protected areas in coastal California and there are several fine specimens on the grounds of the Huntington Memorial Library in San Marino, California.

Dicksonia antarctica are propagated from spores which they produce in great abundance and which germinate freely. It is a remarkably fast grower, producing rigid fronds, 8 to 12 feet in length, more abundant than the familiar Australian tree fern, "*Alsophila australis*." Since the new roots of this species attach themselves to the outer portion of the trunk and grow from the crown where they are formed down to the earth, large trunks have been successfully cut off two-thirds of their length below the crown during the rest period, or just before new growth starts, and planted in tubs where a new root ball is formed. It is important to keep these trunks moist at all times, including the winter months, as a great portion of the moisture requirements of the plant is derived from the trunk. Overhead watering, which is very beneficial, should be done during the day and not too late in the evening, since this sometimes causes a rust-colored leaf spotting.

This fern will tolerate the same amount of sun as *Alsophila australis*, although both will develop more luxuriously if given sun protection during the hot part of the day. An ideal location for the best development of *Dicksonia* would be to plant them under the protection of Sycamore or Live Oak trees provided the latter are thinned every two years to admit light freely. Drainage should be exceptionally good, as stagnant conditions favor root decay.

As a rule, when not planted out, all tree ferns thrive best in pots or tubs in which only three or four inches of soil all around the trunk is allowed. Remarkably large plants can be grown in a comparatively small container in proportion to the size of the plant.

When grown in this manner, it is indispensable that water be applied freely to their roots all the year round. They will show the effects of a day's neglect in an unmistakable way and a very long time will elapse before they recover from the damage done during that short time. However good their growth may be in pots, it cannot equal their vigor when grown in the open ground.

The most suitable compost is a mixture of fibrous peat and coarse leafmold, with a small amount of fibrous loam and coarse sand added.

If fed regularly with a mild solution of organic liquid manure, tub plants will retain their lower leaves for a long time, giving the plant a striking appearance. A proportion of one quart of Likwid-Gro to 50 gallons of water has been used successfully and exclusively by me on tub and hanging-basket ferns throughout the growing season.

There is a similar species from New Zealand called "*Dicksonia fibrosa*," which resembles *Dicksonia antarctica*, having slightly coarser textured and larger leaves. A slender-trunked species "*Dicksonia squarrosa*," also from New Zealand does remarkably well here. The mid-ribs of the leaves of this latter variety were black in appearance, which adds interest and line to the already beautiful foliage. A *D. antarctica* of 6' x 6' is a beautiful sight.

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BEGONIA ROUND ROBINS

By FRANCES DOWNING

305 N. Mason Street, Bowie, Texas

• The First Begonia R.R. for advanced growers, General No. 1 . . . has been in flight since early June. The members range from California to Massachusetts and from Florida to Minnesota. It will be interesting to get the returns from these letters.

Since then I have received around sixty applicants for membership in other flights. It is truly thrilling to read the letters from lovers of these begonia and other shade plants from all over these United States. Most are beginners and eager to learn more and more about these plants.

The first beginners' semperflorens, rex and fibrous as well as the ADVANCED rex and fibrous begonia Robins have started flight from California to New York.

An ALL CALIFORNIA tuberous begonia Robin is in the making and another to follow. The Director of these two clubs is a Californian.

Requests are in for R.R.'s on fuchsias, ferns, impatiens, basket and trailing plants and vines for shady gardens.

Directors will be needed for these Robin Clubs. Persons having more than a passing knowledge of the subjects named are qualified to direct. I will be pleased to hear from anyone who would like to undertake this interesting and pleasant task.

Propagation of Begonia Semperflorens and Other Begonias From Seed

(Continued from Page 147)

solution to wet the soil to prevent damping off. I have never used the latter.

Keep begonia seed dry and do not crush it. For the conventional method of growing seed, read "Is This How You Do It," page 321, BEGONIAN, by An Amateur, a fine article. Also "Tuberous Begonia Plants," page 251, 1944 BEGONIAN, by Frank Reinelt, a splendid article.

B. Scharffiana, Regel

(Continued from Page 150)

My plant is just under two feet high. Strangely enough it is the only one of three that I have been able to raise. My mistake was in keeping it too shady and too cool. Now it is in a warm bed, tree-shaded, with much light.

Mr. Robinson told us that B.S., when frozen stiff, thawed out as if it had never been touched, (probably due to that fuzzy insulation it carries). So, for that empty hanging-basket or extra tub on the front terrace of your lath-house, plant B. Scharffiana and do right by yourself and that handsome, sturdy grand-dad of good begonias.

Blind School Director Has Magic Touch With Begonias

Reprinted by courtesy the Berkeley Daily Gazette

• Adding to the renown of the State of California for quality and quantity today is a Berkeley horticulturist, Dr. Richard S. French, famed as a grower of some of the most beautiful tuberous begonias throughout the State.

In the glass conservatory and redwood lath-house on the grounds of the California School for the Blind, on Derby St., where he is superintendent, Dr. French has been producing annually, for the past ten years, hundreds of the delicate flowers.

While the tuberous begonia is not nearly so difficult to raise as other fragile flowers such as orchids, he explained that constant care, patience and "Knack" for raising the flowers often discourage amateur growers.

Four years of preparation, allowing for natural decomposition, screening and mixing, are required to ready the soil before seeds may be planted, according to Dr. French.

Even the process of sowing the seeds is something of an art, he stated, as the seeds are not visible to the naked eye, and resemble a sprinkling of rust. Several million seeds are contained in an ounce, he said.

Need Constant Care

Begonia seeds must be sown on top of the earth, first mixed with fine sand grains and then almost breathed on to the prepared soil. After the sowing, which occurs in January, the seedlets are then transplanted four times, finally established in large wooden boxes.

Once the seedlets begin to grow and even after the flowers are full grown, constant care is necessary to keep them alive. Three kinds of heat—electric, steam and natural warmth of the sun—are combined to provide the right amount. Maintaining an even temperature is vital to the plants as well as sufficient moisture which the flowers require. Floors of the two buildings are sprinkled three times daily to keep the air moist at all times.

An outstanding variety, which has not yet reached the commercial market has very ruffled blossoms.

Dr. French attributes his skill in growing the flowers to his association with Frank Reinelt of Capitola, Calif., who has originated most of the recent fine forms of the tuberous begonias. Dr. French is also instructor in education at the University of California.

We have space now for your articles on Shade Plants of all kinds besides all ferns and Begonias.

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CONDENSED MINUTES BOARD MEETING, A.B.S.,

Held in the Model Library Room, Los Angeles
Public Library, June 25th, 1945.

Meeting called to order at 7:30, with President Nelson in the Chair. Board members present: Messrs. Nelson, Hart, Hawkins, Lawrence, Messdames Wilkes, Clark, Hartwell, Crowder. Branch director Mrs. Alice M. Clark of the Alfred D. Robinson Branch, San Diego, was a most welcome guest at this meeting and gave a very good report on activities around San Diego—there being now four branches in that vicinity. Mr. and Mrs. Dyckman and Mrs. Crawford, all from Long Beach, were among our guests.

Reports of Business Manager and Editor, Treasurer, Membership Fees Chairman received and on motion accepted as read and ordered filed as part of the minutes. These are carefully prepared, itemized typewritten reports covering the activities of these officers during the previous month.

LIBRARIAN MRS. CROWDER reported she had received over 100 paid orders for the Bessie Buxton book, but had been advised by the publisher that the book would not be out until this fall. Asked the Representative Directors to take this word back to their branch members and she stated she would either refund their monies, or would hold until the book was received and then get the books to the members as promptly as possible; stated she had placed an order for 500 copies and was sure she would be able to fill all her orders. Mrs. Crowder also reported that Mrs. Krauss was preparing to publish a book on Begonias and she would keep us posted on the progress made and when the book should be out.

Mr. Lawrence reported organization of a new branch at La Mesa, California.

Discussion followed on the advisability of discontinuing the Branch reports in *The Begonian* as it was felt to use the same space for a shade plant talk would be of more help to the members than as at present. After a general expression by those present, Mr. Lawrence made at motion, seconded by Mrs. Wilkes—"I move that the future issues of the *Begonian* discontinue Branch news, and substitute therefor shade plant material—other than begonia—and to make the change as soon as possible." **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Lawrence called attention to the forthcoming meeting with the Horticultural Society and suggested we have extra copies of the August *Begonian* printed, without the ballot, to hand out to visitors; also brought up the plan of handing out small packets of begonia seed (seed to be supplied by Dr. Drummond) cultural directions will be in *The Begonian*. Discussion followed with full concurrence by all present, and the following motion was made by Mr. Hart, seconded by Mrs. Wilkes—"I move that we have 600 extra copies of the August issue (without the ballot) printed." **SO ORDERED.** Mr. Hart moved "That we distribute begonia seed, with cultural directions in the August *Begonian*" unanimously approved. It was also stated that Mr. Hall would be the speaker, and that both commercials and amateurs would exhibit and members were urged to bring in their pet plants as this exhibit must really be an outstanding one.

ROBINSON MEMORIAL: Mr. Hart reported the plan to have the annual meeting A.B.S. at Lincoln Park, Sept. 16th, was progressing; he had gone into the matter of tables and chairs with the officers of City Parks and felt sure that by late afternoon there would be plenty of tables and seats available. Mrs. Crawford has the coffee and cream item well in hand and we are assured of plenty of coffee and good, too. The rex begonias at the Memorial are looking good and the fibrous improving. Mr. Hart stated he was most anxious to find someone who could act as an assistant and look after the nomenclature and was anxious to have some suggestions. It is his desire to have the plants permanently as well as correctly labelled. Discussion followed on type of labels to use and lettering, but no action taken. Also discussion on how to properly heat the Memorial this winter, but no action taken.

As usual, good reports by the Representative Directors present.

The new meeting place proved satisfactory and the July meeting will be held there.

From The Editor's Desk

(Continued from Page 142)

charge but the Schirmers also presented a large number of plants for the plant sale. The attendance, the largest on record, numbered 140.

The San Diego Branch held the June meeting in the lovely, sunny, hillside garden of Mrs. John Bellows.

East Bay Branch: "We do enjoy our Branch up here very much and have many lively discussions but really envy the South in being able to plant the fibrous begonias out in the ground, leaving them there during the winter." . . . Emma M. Carleton. The yearly picnic at Mr. H. W. Haberland's was again to be a big feature on July 22nd.

Whittier Begonians joined with the Fuchsians to stage a very fine garden tour of seven gardens of William Meyn, Fred Bradford, George Barber, Clyde Irwin, F. H. Slumppff, P. J. Miller and Vivian Bickel. A splendid method of making new friends for members and the Society.

Riverside . . . The place where Begonias were thought to be impossible . . . has another lovely garden with begonias and fuchsias. Mrs. Topham is the hostess who invited the local group to pass judgment on it last month.

San Gabriel: John Parker of Hollywood spoke on "A Look Into Your Garden" in June, and in July, Mrs. Mary Hazel Drummond was scheduled to demonstrate the art of corsage and flower arrangements.

Mr. Randall, President of California Heights Branch, of Long Beach Branch, has some fine slides of trees, landscapes and gardens in general to show.

The Parent Branch of Long Beach recommends Mrs. Haller's talk on "The Care and Growing of Various Types of Ferns." She also has some colored pictures. This Branch combined with members the California Fuchsia Society, in a garden tour July 29th.

The first summer garden visitation of the Hollywood Branch finished a happy tour with a picnic supper at Ferndell. The gardens seen were those of the W. A. Meads, W. C. Drummonds, Edward B. Flynns, B. P. Monards and the Morris B. Ebersoles.

We are all looking forward to the joint meeting of the Southern California Horticultural Society and the American Begonia Society on August 6th, at the Elks Club, 6th and Parkview, at 7:30 p.m. Advance reports promise fine exhibits of all kinds from **THE SHADE GARDEN**. See you there.

Nominating Committee present and handed in their report. See ballot in the August *Begonian*. Committee thanked for their painstaking work and report given Editor for publication.

Meeting adjourned until July 23rd.

Respectfully submitted

GONDA HARTWELL, Corres. Sec.

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 August American Begonia Society Board Meetings will take place in the Los Angeles Public Library, Lecture Room, Grand Street Entrance, Monday, August 27th, at 7:30 p.m.

SAN FRANCISCO BRANCH

Wednesday, Aug. 1st, 7:45 p.m.
Social Hall, Calvary Methodist Church
c/o 19th and Judah St., San Francisco, Calif.
Mrs. Theresa Ferrero, Secretary
2183 - 31st Ave., San Francisco, Calif.

ORANGE COUNTY BRANCH

Thursday, Aug. 2nd
College Hall, Santa Ana J. C. 917 N. Maine St.
Santa Ana, Calif.
Mrs. K. D. Burdick, Sec.-Treas., Rt. 3, Box 355,
Santa Ana, Calif.

WHITTIER BRANCH

Monday, Aug. 6th, 7:30 p.m.
Jonathan Bailey School, Room 19
Comstock Ave. & Hadley Street, Whittier, Calif.
Mrs. G. E. Polentz, Sec.-Treas.
1000 West Broadway, Whittier, Calif.

INGLEWOOD BRANCH

Monday, Aug. 6th, 7:30 p.m.
Elks Club, 6th and Parkview, Los Angeles
Mrs. Fred Witman, Secretary
3856 W. 27th St., Los Angeles 16, Calif.

BELLFLOWER BRANCH

Tuesday, Aug. 7th, 7:30 p.m.
Home of Albert McElhinney
Mrs. Ardel Radle, Sec.-Treas.
920 Flower St., Bellflower, Calif.

THEODOSIA BURR SHEPHERD BRANCH

Tuesday, Aug. 7th, 7:30 p.m.
American Legion Hall
North Carolina St., Ventura, Calif.
Mrs. Wm. Smith, Sec.-Treas.
Ventura, Calif.

HOLLYWOOD BRANCH

Thursday, Aug. 9th, 7:30 p.m.
Speaker: Ruby Liedler; subject: Fuchsias
Mrs. Helen Scherer, Secretary
3222 Larissa Dr., Los Angeles 26, Calif.

CALIFORNIA HEIGHTS BRANCH

Friday, August 10th, 7:30 p.m.
Anniversary Celebration Dinner Meeting
Mrs. Merle H. Penrose, Sec.-Treas.
4142 Walnut Ave., Long Beach 7, Calif.

LA MESA BRANCH

Monday, Aug. 13th, 8 p.m.
La Mesa Grammar School
La Mesa, San Diego Co., Calif.,
Sec.-Treas.: Mrs. Joseph Christofferson

NORTH LONG BEACH BRANCH

Monday, Aug. 13th, 7:30 p.m.
42 East Market St., North Long Beach, Calif.
Mrs. Ruby W. Liedler, Secretary
169 E. Artesia, Bellflower, Calif.

PASADENA BRANCH

Tuesday, Aug. 14th, 6:30 p.m.
Pasadena Public Library
Lester F. Harrell, Sec.-Treas.
668 Bellefontaine St., Pasadena, Calif.

RIVERSIDE BRANCH

Tuesday, Aug. 14th, 7:30 p.m.
Fairmont Park
Mrs. Curt Smith, Sec.-Treas.
3784 Central Ave., Riverside, Calif.

LONG BEACH PARENT CHAPTER

Wednesday, August 15th, 7:30 p.m.
Colonial Hall, Tenth & Locust Ave.
Mary Hotaling, Sec.-Treas.
324A Temple Ave., Long Beach 4, Calif.

PHILOBEGONIA CLUB BRANCH

Irregular Meetings
Mrs. Albert H. Gere, Treasurer
362 Brookway, Merion, Pa.

EAST BAY BRANCH

Sunday, Aug. 19th, 2:30 p.m.
Home of M. L. Boyd, 1107 Miller, Berkeley, Calif.
Mrs. Ruth Utter, Secretary
155 Ardmore Rd., Berkeley 8, Calif.

EVA KENWORTHY GRAY BRANCH

Monday, Aug. 20th
Tillie Genter, Sec.-Treas.
7356 Eads St., La Jolla, Calif.

SAN DIEGO BRANCH

Monday, Aug. 27th
Hard of Hearing Hall
3843 Herbert Ave., San Diego, Calif.
Mrs. George S. Breidford, Sec.-Treas.
1146 Oliver Ave., Pacific Beach, Calif.

MARGARET GRUENBAUM BRANCH

Tuesday, Aug. 28th
Mrs. W. E. Jones, Sec., Willow Grove, Pa.

GLENDALE BRANCH

Tuesday, Aug. 28th, 8:00 p.m.
329 N. Brand Blvd., Glendale, Calif.
Mrs. Helen Grigsby, Secretary
958 E. Mountain, Glendale 7, Calif.

ALFRED D. ROBINSON BRANCH

Friday, August 24th, 10:00 a.m.
Hall, Point Loma Community Church
Udal Street at Poinsettia Dr., San Diego, Calif.
Mrs. Merrel H. Taylor, Secretary.
2838 Chatsworth Blvd., San Diego, Calif.

SAN GABRIEL VALLEY BRANCH

Friday, Aug. 24th, 8:00 p.m.
American Legion Hall
720 N. First Ave., Arcadia, Calif.
Mrs. W. H. Corbett, Secretary
2017 S. Fourth Street, Alhambra, Calif.

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