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The purpose of this Society shall be to promote  
interest in begonias and other shade-loving plants;  
to encourage the introduction and development of  
new types of these plants to standardize the no-  
menclature of begonias; to gather and publish in-  
formation in regard to kinds, propagation and  
culture of begonias and companion plants; to issue  
a bulletin which will be mailed to all members of  
the Society; and to bring into friendly contact all  
who love and grow begonias.

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Views expressed in this magazine are not  
necessarily those of the Editor, the Society, or  
its officers.

# MAYHEM IN THE GREENHOUSE

By MRS. DON L. WAGNER  
*Southern Editor*

There is no charm in a ragged, old plant, yet many of us insist on keeping our old stock for years. When it comes time to tear up an old-timer for new cuttings, I feel completely heartless as I cut the long weary stems and place them in my rooting medium, but when I see the new vigorous plants thickly leaved and bearing flowers, I feel somewhat revived.

Keep plants young and moderate in size so their full beauty may be enjoyed. All plants which have grown large should be examined critically and, if you think they are leggy, with leaves only at the top, take some cuttings and throw the parent away. Most begonias will not require annual propagation; probably a new plant every three years will keep them within reasonable bounds.

Pinching, pruning, and staking should be a routine affair in your greenhouse. Some newcomers I am sure wouldn't agree, if they could see me scalp a beautiful blooming plant with only one stem, but I shut my eyes, tell myself it's for the best, and off comes top, flowers and all. In a few weeks the same plant is bushy and compact and the scar doesn't show, except on me.

When I first started growing begonias and visited with a friend that had a greenhouse, she was shaping her plants and discarding all blooming tips. I couldn't stand this and promptly salvaged all the blooming ends, but after months of hard work and "I told you so", I still had nothing but tall blooming ends. Now I am sure that the plant has at least one branch or node; without it the plant will grow tall and unbranched, no matter how much I pinch it out.

Many of the angel-wings will grow up to three, four, five feet, or even more. But in the process, the lower stems become bare and ungainly; the

remaining leaves form a comical tassel at the top. Pruning keeps the size within reasonable limits and encourages bottom growth from the roots. On mature plants, prune out hard, old, woody stems after each flowering, and in spring when new growth begins. I find the finest and largest flowers are produced on the young, green, vigorous growth.

In my *semperflorens* I pinch out the young plants at least once, and cut back severely after flowering when the plants begin to look a bit tired and straggly. They will then be ready for another cycle of bountiful flowers.

The cuttings with nodes, of course, can be rooted to make more plants. A propagating box is almost a greenhouse necessity. One is easily made from glass or plastic. If it can be placed in a warm location no bottom heat is necessary. Otherwise, a heating cable may be buried in the sand of the box.

Keep faded blossoms picked off, remove dead leaves, and cut out stems that have died back, since any decaying material that contacts the live tissue will cause rot and will destroy the plant. It isn't wise to tempt nature by being careless, so put all the litter from your plants in the garbage, not in the pots or on the floor.

Don't think all this pinching and chopping is a heartless operation—it's a lifesaver that gives your begonias a chance at new beauty.

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## COVER PICTURE

Exotic blossom of a tuberous begonia grown at Sterling Forest Gardens, New York. Read the story on page 44.

—Photo by HERTHA A. BENJAMIN

# TIME TO THINK OF TUBERS

By CHARLES A. LEWIS

Director of Horticulture and Design  
Sterling Forest Gardens, Tuxedo, New York

During the past fifteen years there has been a steady growth in the popularity of tuberous begonias. Each year the demand for quality tubers exceeds the supply. Dramatic improvement in varieties and a more thorough understanding of cultural requirements are reasons for the increasing interest in these plants. Hybridists in the United States, England, Australia, and Europe have come close to perfection with plants bearing beautifully formed flowers held erect above the foliage, a far cry from the tiny original species of one hundred years ago.

One of the newest developments is a new strain that promises to be heat-resistant.

Also, knowledge of the growth requirements of the plants has been refined so we know the optimum environment for which to aim. I have often seen magnificent blooms in suburban gardens, but last year I saw tuberous begonias blooming in August heat in Manhattan in an outside bed. If you can provide conditions of a half a day of sun—morning preferred—or speckled shade under high trees, this is the year for you to grow tuberous begonias.

Plants may be grown from either dormant tubers or seedlings. A tuber plant will grow taller with heavier stems while the seedling plant will produce a vigorous bushy growth. Both plants will produce blooms of equal quality.

Tubers can be started in February and March, and seedling plants are usually available from April through June. For a fine challenge, try growing your own seedling plants, though this is not recommended for the beginner. Almost all the 7,000 tuberous begonias displayed at Sterling Forest Gardens are grown from seed sown in October for early bloom.

Hybridists offer us a wide selection of exquisite forms and colors. Rose-form and ruffled blooms in a rainbow of solid colors as well as two-tone picotee shades are described and pictured in the catalogs of California growers. They have also extended this color versatility to the hanging basket types. In addition to California, tubers of excellent varieties are available from specialists in England and Belgium. In Europe there is production of tubers of some of the older types such as *B. cristata*, *B. crispa*, large singles, and the multiflora type which will bloom in more sunlight than the others.

To grow plants from tubers, place the dormant tubers (cup indentation on top) on a mixture of sand and peat at a warm temperature (65 to 70 degrees), moistening occasionally until pink sprouts show. Then cover the tubers a half-inch deep in a flat of one-third sand and two-thirds peat.



One of the new Harlow hybrid begonias.

—Photos by Hertha A. Benjamin

Place the flat in full light and keep the medium moist but never soggy. Never start tubers in the dark. Compact growth is achieved in plants started in full sunlight. During March and April the sun is not strong enough to burn them.

Plants with two or three full-sized leaves are ready to transplant to pots or a prepared outside location. A mixture of equal parts of leafmold, peat, and sandy soil will provide good drainage and needed organic matter for optimum plant growth. Use a three-quarter or azalea pot of at least seven-inch size for potting the started tuber. Be careful to retain all the roots that have developed in the flat.

Outside beds should be prepared about fourteen inches deep with sand and leafmold to provide ideal conditions for root growth. Good drainage is vital to prevent bud drop. A quarter cup of fish meal or electra may be incorporated in the soil under each plant.

Other than soil, the prime requisite for growth is the correct amount of light. Tuberous begonias are semi-shade plants and will not grow properly in full shade. Morning sun is ideal, as is the dappled sunlight under high trees. The more sun the better, short of the point where the leaves start to be damaged and the plant stunted.

The plants should always be planted so that the points of the leaves are forward. The flowers will always face in the direction the leaves point.

After planting, water carefully until the plants are established. The rapidly growing plants will require watering frequently. Be careful not to wet the foliage. The leaves will burn and turn brown if the sun shines on them when they are wet.

Hanging basket types should have as many stems per tuber as possible. Where only a few stems grow, pinch these back to four leaves to encourage branching.

Fertilize regularly twice a month with a balanced fertilizer in a water solution or a dry fertilizer around the



**New Harlow hybrid tuberous begonias offer a dramatic improvement in heat-resistance.**

plants. The organic base fertilizers are especially desirable because of their slower and longer-lasting action. Never allow any of the fertilizer to come into direct contact with plants. A severe rot can be caused by such contact.

All dead petals and stems must be removed as soon as they drop. Decaying plant material which falls on live tissue will cause rot. At the first sign of rot on the stem, cut out the diseased portion and paint the wound with a thin paste of Zerlate in water.

Plants must be staked to keep them from breaking over during wind and rain.

Leave the plants in the ground until the first light frost blackens the leaves. Then dig the plants, leaving a ball of soil around each tuber. Cut the tuber. Place this soil ball in a cool, dry spot. In two months the soil may be cleaned from the tuber and the stem portion removed. The tubers are then stored in slightly damp peat in a cool cellar until spring.

*(Continued on Page 58)*

# PLANNING AN INHERITANCE STUDY

By GRANT MCGREGOR  
Ottawa, Canada

The first begonias were introduced from Jamaica in 1777. More than 58 years later, the first begonia hybrid was developed in the Berlin Botanic Garden, Germany. Many species of great variety are available, yet the popularity of the begonia must be attributed to the continued success of the hybridists in developing a wide diversity of types.

However, in spite of the amount of hybridization that has taken place in this family, very little information on inheritance is available.

An inheritance study differs little from hybridization. The first consideration is a choice of parents. The object is the same, to combine the good features of one parent with those of another so that the new plant selected will be an improvement over those previously available. In an inheritance study, the parents should be pure breeding and it may be necessary to grow the plants through a generation or two to check this.

The begonia has both male and female flowers. The female has the three-winged seed-bearing ovary immediately under the petals, while the male has larger petals, with a cluster of stamens in the center. Some parents may be sterile and it is well to insure that pollen is being produced.

The technique of crossing was described in detail in an article by Dorothy S. Behrends in *The Begonian*, July, 1963. I like to remove the male flower and rub the stamens over the pistil in the female flower, and then tag the flower, listing the female parent first. Either parent may be used as female, but sometimes, using one parent as female will give greater success than using the other, especially in species crosses.

If pure-bred parents having characteristics for a number of traits are bred, the first filial ( $F_1$ ) generation

will exhibit the features of one or the other of the parents. These features will either be dominant, as in the dark foliage of *B. semperflorens*, or will blend, as in the cross of a semperflorens red-flowering variety with a white-flowering variety when all the offspring will be pink.

The cross could be diagrammed in the following manner, by considering the red-flowering plant with dark foliage as RRDD, and the white-flowering plant with green foliage as rrdd:

$F_1$  generation —

Pollen	RD	RD
Egg rd	RrDd	RrDd
rd	RrDd	RrDd

$F_2$  generation —

Pollen	RD	rD	Rd	rd
Egg RD	RRDD	RrDD	RRDd	RrDd
rD	RrDD	RrDD	RrDd	rrDd
Rd	RRDd	RrDd	RRdd	Rrdd
rd	RrDd	rrDd	Rrdd	rrdd

With the red parent as male, the pollen would carry RD, and the white parent would carry rd in the egg. In the  $F_1$  plants the constitution is all the same RrDd and we have a dominance of dark foliage with the presence of the D gene, but in the flower color the R gene is not strong enough and we have the blend pink.

The second generation ( $F_2$ ) is much more interesting. Here we get a segregation of characters and we look for new combinations. One plant RRDD is pure like the original red parent and another rrdd is pure like the white parent. If the diagram is studied, you will note that one is also pure for red with green foliage RRdd, and one is pure for white with dark foliage rrDD. The others are hybrid, nine of which will be pink. The hybrids for foliage color may be indistinguishable from the pure breeding and must be grown in the third or  $F_3$  generation to determine those true breeding from the hybrids.

The diagram illustrates how recombinations can be explained and follows some of the simple laws of Mendel, which were first worked out about one hundred years ago. The new combination — say a red-flowering *semperflorens* with green foliage — will occur only once among sixteen plants. On the chance that this particular combination will occur in your program, two-hundred or more plants may have to be grown.

Many hybridizers will stop with the first generation and, since these plants may be propagated by leaves or stem cuttings, many new types are obtained in this way. However, those who have the time to follow crossing programs and to take careful observations can make interesting and profitable contributions to the information on this interesting plant family.

#### **Inheritance In Begonia Semperflorens**

The *semperflorens* begonia is one of the most widely grown types in both Europe and America. A great deal of hybridizing has occurred and many varieties of widely different characteristics are available. Some years ago W. O. Holley studied inheritance in this group at the University of New Hampshire.

The following characteristics have been studied:

**Flower color** — Red-flowering varieties were crossed with white-flowering varieties, giving a uniform medium pink type in the first ( $F_1$ ) generation. In the second generation ( $F_2$ ) light pinks were difficult to distinguish from whites. However, in the unopened buds some pigment was present in the pink types. The segregation varied somewhat, giving red, pink, and white types. Further work appeared necessary to determine the number of factors present.

**Foliage color** — The common dark-red-leaved variety crossed on the green leaf variety gave an  $F_1$  with dark foliage dominant. The  $F_2$  segregated into 50% dark foliage, 25% in-

termediate, and 25% green foliage plants. In the cross of the Calla type with green-leaved varieties, the  $F_1$  was green. In one cross the  $F_2$  were 164 green to 24 mottled, and in a second cross, the segregation was 247 green, 90 mottled, and 13 Calla type. The difficulty in getting albino seedlings to grow gives considerable error in this cross.

**Flower types**—In crosses of double-flowering types with single-flowering the  $F_1$  were single, showing doubleness to be recessive. In the  $F_2$  a wide variation of results was obtained. Singles always predominated and there appeared to be a linkage resulting in more semi-doubles among the white progeny. It was also noted that early vigor in seedlings gave a higher number of double-flowering plants in the larger plants. German breeders claim that 100% double-flowered begonias can be realized only if a 3-gene hypothesis of inheritance is correct. In the deformed anther type known as Cinderella the  $F_1$  were Cinderella type with a segregation in the  $F_2$  of three Cinderella type to one natural type.

**Plant habit** — Two distinct types were crossed, an upright type with a well branched type. The  $F_1$  was upright, with segregation on a one-gene basis of three upright to one branching.

In the production of hybrid seed, the following suggestions were made. Both parents should be dwarf, well branched and free-flowering, and pure for the color selected. Female parents must be double-flowered with a semi-double male that produces pollen well and transmits a high percentage of doubles in the progeny. To produce red hybrids both parents must be pure for red, and to produce dark foliage one of the parents should be pure for this foliage color.

#### **References**

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Reiman-Phillip, R. and H. Seidel. Zeit. f. Pflanzenzucht, 50 (I) 59-70, Sept. 1963.

# NEED SPACE? TRY A HANGING BASKET

By MRS. DON L. WAGNER

My greenhouse is rapidly filling up and, in order to continue my collection, I am turning to hanging baskets and many of the old favorites are doing splendidly.

Hanging-basket begonias usually bring to mind the summer flowering tuberous hybrid, with tender drooping stems, large colorful flowers, and wing-shaped leaves, but other types are available and are decorative the year round.

There is a large and varied group with long, lax stems and another type with a creeping rhizome that do well in baskets, as their pendulous stems fall over the sides of the basket and display the flowers or foliage to the best advantage.

I choose my begonias for any of many decorative virtues. They will climb or hang to any length, from three inches to three feet or over. Foliage comes in all shades of green and many other colors; flowers are just as varied.

Hanging and creeping begonias are among the easiest to grow and the most adaptable, because they appreciate the warmth and fresh air circulating around their pots. Cultural problems in general, and flowering in particular, can often be traced to the fact that people take the term "shade plant" too literally. Early morning and late afternoon mid-summer sun are necessary for flowering; strong daylight from dawn to dark keeps growth healthy and compact.

The type of container depends on your personal taste or the particular begonia you plan to grow in it. "Basket" can mean literally anything you can put a wire or chain on to hang. You can obtain baskets made of plastic, ceramic, redwood, reed, metal, wire and other materials; they are available in all sizes, shapes, and colors.

Personally, I like the baskets made of wire or redwood, lined with sphag-

num moss and filled with soil. The moss holds the moisture and the roots can breathe. You can create your own unusual baskets by attaching hook or wire to all kinds of objects you find about the home—bowls, gourds, jugs, buckets, or any containers.

Soil mixture should be light, porous, moderately rich in organic matter, and slightly acid or neutral. It should be neither soggy wet nor dry. Attach an aluminum tray to the bottom of each hanging basket indoors, otherwise water will drip onto the floors. The tray will also retain some water to give extra humidity.

Finally, the plants are inserted, some at the sides, others at the top of the basket, so that the latter will be well furnished. The soil is thoroughly moistened and the basket is hung in position. The most convenient way of watering is to take the basket and soak it in a container of water.

The plants I have set in the baskets and suspended in the greenhouse until spring will gradually be hardened off and placed out-of-doors, after the weather is warm. Plants that are not crowded will develop more gracefully and enjoy better health than those in thickly planted baskets.

Fertilize hanging baskets about a month after planting, then follow with bi-weekly feedings. My old standby is fish emulsion diluted one tablespoon to one gallon of water, feeding at intervals of ten to fourteen days.

Putting small pads of moistened moss against the wire parts touching the plants will cut down on breaking and stem rot. To encourage a begonia to hang, let it dry out and when it is limp, tie down the ends with weights before you water.

There is no end to the number of begonias suitable for hanging bas-

*(Continued on Page 57)*

## MEALYBUGS

By ROBERT L. SHATZER  
A.B.S. Research Director

Have you ever noticed on any of your begonias a shiny, white, cotton-like, small puff on the stem where the branch joins it? If so, your plant has mealybugs. There are two members of this family which tend to choose begonias, among other hosts, to make their home. As time passes, if they are uncontrolled, your plants will begin to lose vitality and will sag.

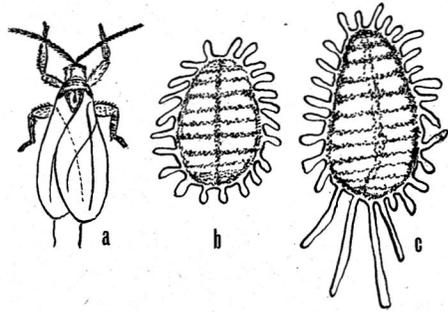
Of several types of mealybugs, there are two that enjoy begonias. They are commonly known as the citrus mealybug (*Pseudococcus citri*) and the long-tail mealybug (*Pseudococcus adonidum*). Both types can bring severe harm to your plants. They seem to be in evidence all over the world.

This bug is a soft scale, and has a tiny, oval, soft, segmented body which is covered with a white dust-like wax. Filaments extend beyond the body, normally of equal length, except for the long-tailed mealybug that has a longer thread at the front end.

The average female will lay 300 to 600 eggs in a white, waxy-looking sac beneath the rear section of her body. She lays eggs for seven to fourteen days and then she dies. This sac of eggs is what the plant owner sees on the branch where the stem connects.

In the warmth of the house or greenhouse these eggs will hatch in about a week and a half, and the young will begin to crawl around on the plant. At this time they appear as smooth, oval, pale yellow insects with six legs. They feed by breaking the plant and draining the sap. Next the waxy filaments begin to appear and cover their bodies with 36 projections. The mature female may be up to one-fourth inch long.

The male changes into a small two-winged, fly-like insect. It dies shortly after mating because it starves in this form. There is one difference between the long-tailed and the citrus mealy-



Citrus Mealybug (*Pseudococcus citri*) — a. male adult; b. female adult; c. long-tailed female. Sketch from "The Gardener's Bug Book," by Cynthia Westcott, 1964, Doubleday & Company, Inc.

bug. The long-tailed gives birth to its young in a live-born state rather than laying eggs in a sac. The adult mealybug secretes a dew type of liquid which attracts ants and also serves as a medium on which sooty mold fungus grows.

The long-tail (see sketch) has two pencil-like filaments at the posterior end of its body which are often longer than the body itself.

Control measures that have proved effective are a miscible oil spray, malathion, nicotine insecticide, Volch (3 to 5 tablespoons per gallon), DDVP, parathion, and Sulfotepp. Do not treat plants in direct sun. Syringe them with water some hours later if possible. A light infestation of mealybugs can be picked off with a small stick or killed with a cotton-tipped swab dipped in alcohol.

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# CLAYTON M. KELLY SEED FUND FLIGHT

## No. 1 — *B. convolvulacea* —

Brazil. Grows bushy up to two meters. Stem fleshy with knotty swellings, forming root over the entire length, bare, green. Petioles 6-12 cm long with a small groove, bare, green. Leaves large, broader than long, about 9 cm x 11 cm when fully grown, broad, heart-shaped, dull-pointed, irregular small 5-7 partite lobes, dark green on top, shining, bare; below pale green, bare. Flowers overhanging, axillary, very ramified, multi-flowered panicles. Flowers white. Male flowers have many petals; female flowers have five.

This is a fast-growing, robust species, which is suitable for growing on walls or trellises in greenhouses but requires cool conditions. Can be grown outside where climate permits. Price \$1.00 per pkt.

## No. 2 — *B. acetosa* —

Brazil. Neat, round, hairy leaves top short stilt stems from rhizome below. On top the effect of fuzz is dull green; underneath, ruby-red. Nice sprays of white flowers in spring. 50 cents per pkt.

## No. 3 — *B. sanguinea* —

Brazil. Thick, leathery, oval leaves, glazed brown on top, red beneath. White flowers. Makes a good basket begonia. 50 cents per pkt.

## No. 4 — *B. 'Strawberry Parefait'*

This is a new Calla-lily type semperflorens developed by Peter Rutherford. It has not only the typical Calla markings and pure white centers, but added touches of strawberry-pink for good measure. It is not yet known whether this type will reproduce from seed, but it has been registered with the American Begonia Society and is being propagated vegetatively. 50 cents per pkt.

## No. 5 — *B. 'Orangeade'* —

Another semperflorens type with an entirely new color — bright orange-scarlet. It should be a colorful addition to greenhouse or outdoor beds. Also developed by Peter Rutherford,

who has spent a great deal of time and effort on work with semperflorens and you will be seeing some of his lovely plants in the near future. *B. 'Orangeade'* — 35 cents per pkt.

## No. 6 — *B. boweri* x *B. 'Black Shadow'* seedling —

This is a good cross and should produce interesting small plants or basket plants with characteristics of both parents. 35 cents per pkt.

## No. 7 — *B. 'Pink Parade'* —

*Dichroa* seedling. Wavy bronzed leaves thickly silver-spotted. Shrimp-pink flowers. 50 cents per pkt.

## No. 8 — *B. Rex hybrids* —

Many colorful plants from these particular seeds, which were tested in the fall and germination was one hundred per cent. Seedlings look very promising.

Rex seedlings should be kept protected until after their second planting and will require a longer time to become established than other types. Rex begonias are the slow-growing rhizomatous type and should be planted accordingly. They are well worth the extra time and effort required for growing them. \$1.00 per pkt.

## GREENHOUSE PLANTS

### *Hypocyrta radicans* —

Brazil. Beautiful little creeping epiphyte with small leaves the size and shape of boxwood, rooting from the stems while they trail over tree fern trunks or fiber totem poles. Flowers are pink, one inch long, and pouch-shaped with a minute opening. Blooms are fertilized by ants and seeds are carried away to their nests in trees. A nice, unusual plant. 50 cents per pkt.

### *Rechsteineria macropoda* —

Brazil. Tuberos species with unbranched stems bearing opposite; rather thin, rugose, velvety, bright green. Small flowers in clusters, the slender tubes vermilion-red with the lower lobes marked brown-red. 50 cents per pkt.

### **Sinningia pusilla**

Miniature rosettes only two inches high. Little, oval, puckered leaves, olive-green with brown veins, hugging the ground. Slender stem bearing a quarter-inch attractive tubular flower with five spreading lobes, orchid-colored with darker veins and lemon-yellow throat. Very fresh seed. 50 cents per pkt.

### **Streptocarpus - Wisemoor tetrad** —

Extra large flowers and strong stems. Exciting new color combination — bright rose with crimson blotches. New Type. 50 cents per pkt.

### **NEW ZEALAND FERNS**

#### **Dicksonia fibrosa** —

Covered with brown, fibrous aerial rootlets. Large frond, fresh green and fairly stiff. 35 cents per pkt.

#### **Dicksonia squarrosa** —

Soft texture, light green fronds. 35 cents per pkt.

#### **Cyathea dealbata** —

Also called 'Silver King tree fern'. Silver-white on underside of fronds. Does not like cold. 35 cents per pkt.

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Comment: The close-out sale in *The Begonian* for January proved to be almost too much. It required all of my time and I could not write letters to people who collect and supply seed to the Seed Fund. Therefore, the list this month is a little short. I hope to make it up later. As I am doing all the work of the Seed Fund alone, things sometimes become a little hectic.

MRS. FLORENCE GEE

*Seed Fund Administrator*

234 Birch Street

Roseville, California 95678

### **OUR MEMBERS WRITE:**

*From Scotland:* I have been pleased to note an improvement in the standard of articles in the November and December numbers. This is certainly a move in the right direction, for the periodical badly needs authoritative articles and less domestic "chat".

*From New York:* I was pleased to receive the current issue.

*From Washington:* Your November issue is splendid.

*From Idaho:* I enjoyed the pictures of the people who work so hard for the Begonia Society. Just seeing their pictures gives me a sense of actually knowing them in person.

*From Georgia:* The articles are lively, interesting, and informative. Since I am a member-at-large, I really appreciate the pictures of other members and happenings.

*From California:* A wonderful part of your production is the excellent proofreading.

*From Massachusetts:* It seems good to get a professional *Begonian*.

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## ROUND ROBIN NEWS

New robins are flying, whether spring comes or not. In addition to regular begonia flights, specialty robins now include growing under lights, hybridizing, greenhouse growing, and two on growing from seed. An all-male robin and second light and hybridizing robins may fly before this is printed. Requests have come in for specialty flights on propagating from cuttings, tuberhybrida begonias, "hoyas also", rare and odd begonias, and a chairmen's robin. If any wish to join these or regular flights, let me know.

The new flights are especially the research laboratories of the A.B.S., as are all the robins: research laboratories in which individual members gain benefits for themselves and also make invaluable contributions to the Society's aim of increasing begonia knowledge. Robins serve other important purposes, too, drawing us together in warm friendship. But it is we members who—in homes, basements, greenhouses, across the nation—have the living research material under our hands.

Don't let the word *research* frighten you! Our simple growing efforts give all kinds of information that can be added up to knowledge. Use the Research Director's Information Sheets in the flights. Don't feel your bit of experience or description is too small. No piece of a jigsaw puzzle is insignificant, and your piece may be just the one someone else needs.

*Grafting:* Bob Totino of Mountlake Terrace, Washington—member of a new regular flight—asks if it is possible to graft begonias onto each other. Has anyone tried?

*From Seed:* The first seed-growing flight, 27, has made its first round, in five weeks. Members already are comparing planting mediums and benefits of artificial light. Aleks Bird of Jamaica, New York, sows seed onto, and makes early transplants into, straight "unmilled, unfancy" peat

moss (not sphagnum). He uses clear plastic boxes and close, intense, fluorescent light; floods seed pans for transplanting, to make lifting tiny seedlings easier, and keeps careful records.

Anita Sickman of Cheney, Kansas, asks if the plump green seed pods that drop from her B. 'Anna Christine' before they are dry will ripen and produce good seed.

*Fertilizer:* Flight 7 has been discussing balance of fertilizer ingredients. Chairman Daisy Austin of Anaheim, California, emphasizes begonias' need for nitrogen, as well as for potash for flowering. Glenn Sutherland of Seattle has tried a 0-10-10 fertilizer as bloom booster. Jane Cullen of Hinsdale, Illinois, uses 4-10-10 to boost bloom, 10-5-5 on foliage plants, and 5-1-1 as an occasional alternate.

Jane finds that a slow plant can be rejuvenated by removing it from its pot, placing it in the cutting box, treating it like a cutting, and feeding it. A favorite place for cuttings and hard-to-grow plants for Eleva Buesink of Clymer, New York, is a bathroom window.

*Hybridizing:* Winifred Smith of Hillsboro, Oregon, had seedlings beginning to show of her B. *masoniana* x B. 'Silver Pustulata' cross, and was "anxiously waiting to see what these two beautiful begonias produce." Seeds for this cross were larger than any other begonia seeds she has seen. Her mother's *masoniana* blooms twice a year, while Winifred's has sparse bloom. Her mother keeps her house warmer, but uses the same potting mix.

Pat Burdick of Savage, Minnesota, last winter crossed various rhizomatous begonias with B. 'Bow-Nigra' pollen, hoping for small, dark-leaved begonias. Planted in July, seed gave good germination, and none of the seedlings promised to be large. Most show the *boweri* ancestor, with blanket stitching and leaf shape. This is her first attempt—"great fun".

Joan Lee of Roy, Utah, notes that *semperflorens* characteristics are usually dominant in her first generation of a cross and that white flowers are often recessive. Her bright red x white *semp* cross yielded all red or pink.

**Lights:** George Barton of Deland, Florida, is growing begonias, orchids, and bromeliads in carport planters with fluorescent light fixtures along the edges so that the light hits plants on the side rather than the top. He did not intend to leave the lights this way, but has never had more lush growth, so has not made any change. Lights come on at 6 p.m. and go off at 5 a.m.

**X-Ray:** Both Joanne Fosselman of Newport, Pennsylvania, and Vernia Routh of Louisburg, Missouri, report on plants from X-rayed seed of calla begonias. Joanne had three "gorgeous plants" of calla coloration but with much larger leaves, one with some pure white leaves and pink stems. Vernia said, while only a few of the seedlings had calla variegation, all had very large blossoms—doubles, Cinderellas, thimbles, all colors from white to red.

**Favorites:** Chairman Lily Fine of Brooklyn, New York, has suggested that her Flight 17 try researching individual begonias from among members' favorite ten. She notes that B. 'American Beauty' and B. 'Can Can' are both rosey-hued and not-too-difficult rexes, had a full plant in November from a leaf of 'American Beauty' started in water in July. She keeps them close to lights for color.

**Aridicaulis:** Phyllis Wright of Seattle had trouble with B. *aridicaulis*, but it is now doing beautifully in moss from trees and dead logs. She uses one fourth teaspoon fertilizer to

a gallon of warm water for watering.

**Correction:** Edna Stewart of Tarentum, Pennsylvania, expressed surprise at being quoted in the January column as saying anything about 17-degree temperatures. This item came from a state farther north.

MRS. CARRIE KAREGEANNES,  
*Round Robin Director*  
3916 Lake Boulevard  
Annandale, Virginia, 22003

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Question:** Mrs. P. C. Thurman, of Homer, Louisiana, writes to ask why her 'Preussen' and 'Sachsen' have lost their copper-bronze-pink color and are now covered with silver dots (presumably on a green background). She also asks what to do about the problem of mildew in her greenhouse.

**Answer:** Toby Lothman and I are in accord that it is very likely that the 'Preussen' and 'Sachsen' need more light than they are receiving, which would bring out the bronze-tone characteristic of the plant. For myself, I have noted that the leaves closest to my light fixture are quite bronzy-pink on 'Preussen,' while the lower leaves do, indeed, have silver dots on green. We do not believe that feeding has anything to do with it.

As for mildew in the greenhouse, Actidione PM is very effective and should be used exactly as directed on the container. But in addition to this, I would urge strongly that some way be found to improve the ventilation and air-circulation, for sprays are only stop-gaps which in no way eliminate the cause of the problem.

**Question:** When was B. 'Texastar' created, by whom, and what is the parentage?

This is a question I am posing myself, as I consider 'Texastar' to be one of the finest additions to the Begonia family and I have been told that it is a comparatively recent creation. I am very interested in learning more about it. In advance—my Bravo

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to its creator! Can anyone help out with answers?

*Question:* What is a begonia?

I should like very much to print an answer to this question, so often asked, even by long-time begonia growers. Leaves of plants differ to such an extent in size, shape, and color, that it is difficult to believe the plants are of the same family. What determines a plant's being a member of the Begonia family?

I hope that many people will write in on this. Letters will be compiled, verification made, and I hope to be able to write concisely and precisely a definition of the characteristics that make a plant a begonia.

*Trick:* Although this is not a new "trick", I was surprised when recently a long-time grower found it new to her, and I pass it on for the benefit of others to whom it will be new:

When placing a seed tray, a seedling, or a full-grown plant into a plastic bag to simulate greenhouse conditions, puff air into the bag before tying the end. This air decreases or eliminates the possibility of leaves rotting when they are in constant contact with the moisture that forms on the inside of the bag. In addition, it gives the leaves more room to spread, whether or not they are in danger of rot from contact. In the case of a seed tray, it permits you to keep the seedlings in the tray much longer, until they are taller and stronger and more easily handled during the first transplanting.

Not a new trick, as I said—only to those who never heard of it before.

MURRAY D. MORRISON,  
2109 Matthews Avenue,  
The Bronx, New York, 10462

## RESEARCH REPORT

The regular report from the A.B.S. Research Director was not received this month. Look for its publication next month.

## PACKING FOR POSTING

By JANE E. NEAL  
*Worthing, Sussex, England*

The following method of packing plants to send by post has been used by Mr. Mac Intyre and Mr. Wall, a professional, and myself, for several years, always with success. Losses over the years have been very small.

The plants selected are well rooted cuttings or seedlings ready for their first potting-on, although new cuttings have been sent. The small plants are lifted and carefully shaken free of as much surplus compost as possible. A thin layer of damp moss is then spread over a piece of plastic sheet big enough to encase the ends. This is then wrapped and tied. The name label can be attached here. The whole plant is then dropped into a plastic bag big enough to cover it completely but this is not sealed or closed in any way.

Next a stout cardboard box is required. This should be large enough to allow one inch clearance all around the largest plant. A loose packing of wood wool is placed in the bottom and on this the plants in their plastic bags are arranged in layers. These are covered with another pad or layer of wood wool and the top is taped on firmly. It also pays to wrap the whole in stout paper and seal all joints with scotch tape.

Posting is best done at the beginning of the week so that the plants do not have to lie longer than is absolutely necessary. Also very cold or very hot periods should be avoided.

While I realize that our plants have seldom spent more than a few days, perhaps three, under these conditions, I think this packing might be worth trying for the longer period and perhaps greater distances to be covered in the U.S.A. as it certainly enables plants to be acquired that might otherwise remain forever out of reach.

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## BUD DROPPING

By F. J. MARTIN

I hope that very few of you are troubled with bud dropping but as some of our newer members may meet this trouble I hope the following notes will help.

This is a problem that normally troubles only newcomers to begonia growing and it is caused by some fault in the growing conditions or the treatment of the plants.

If you are trying to grow them in a south-facing veranda, conditions will be almost impossible unless you have plenty of ventilation and shading. Small greenhouses can also be difficult if they have few ventilators and possibly concrete paths. If you have to grow under any of these conditions, try to get the maximum amount of air past the foliage of the plants, and try to add some moisture to the air on sunny days.

You may read in some books of the dangers of drafts on your plants. In my experience, this is quite wrong and I prefer a greenhouse with doors at both ends, both to be kept open day and night during the summer, in addition to as many ventilators as possible.

Watering is another very important point, and one which is difficult to define. I am sure that many of us have over-watered some of our plants during the dull cool summer. Yellowing of the lower foliage can be a result of a lack of nitrogen or magnesium, but I always put excess watering as the number one suspect. If you let the whole ball of soil in a pot dry out, you may get bud dropping when you do give some water. From this, you can see how important this point is; either too much or too little water can cause trouble — but remember that too much is more frequently the problem.

When you have mastered the art of watering, you should be able to grow good begonias, or any other pot plants.

The basic points to watch when

growing begonias under glass are, therefore, shading, ventilation day and night, and watering.

*F. J. Martin is secretary-treasurer of the National Begonia Society (England). This article is reprinted from the Bulletin of that organization.*

## NEW SOCIETY FORMED FOR LIGHT GARDENING

The Indoor Light Gardening Society of America, Inc.—organized to stimulate nationwide enthusiasm for growing plants under lights—was granted its charter by South Carolina last September. Members will exchange experiences in growing methods with different kinds of fluorescent lights to meet the varying needs of plants.

Among the charter members are nationally known growers and writers: Elaine Cherry, Ruth Katzenberger, Muriel Orans, Michael Kartuz, and Ted Bona.

Officers of the new organization are: Rufus C. Neas of Greenville, South Carolina, president; Robert L. Shatzer of Albright, West Virginia, first vice-president; Barbara Walker of Niles, Illinois, second vice-president; Gerald A. Sausaman of Albright, West Virginia, treasurer; Ethel Shuler of Lexington, Ohio, corresponding secretary; and Ruth Washburn of Chippewa Lake, Ohio, membership secretary.

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## REPORT OF A.B.S. BOARD MEETING

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the American Begonia Society was called to order by President Muriel Perz at 7:45 p.m., January 24, 1966, in the South Gate City Auditorium.

Vice-President Wilbur Olson led in the pledge of allegiance to the Flag.

President-Elect Everett Wright read the aims and purposes of the Society.

Secretary Evelyn Keaster called the roll, with twenty-eight officers, chairmen, and Branch representatives present.

President Perz introduced Miss Lily Fine, of the Knickerbocker Branch in New York, as a guest of the evening.

A thank-you card from Mrs. Lois Morton was read.

Also read was a notice of time for renewing membership in the California Arboretum.

A letter was read from Mrs. Phyllis Wagner, of the Greater Baton Rouge Branch, telling of her disappointment in the lack of response to "Project-Help" printed in the December issue of *The Begonian*. This was in regard to the need for supplies and study materials for the leper colony in Carville, Louisiana. These people are vitally interested in learning and growing begonias and companion plants. This project would be a very significant therapy for these unfortunate patients.

President-Elect Everett Wright made an appeal to all Branch representatives to take a message to their Branches urging them to build up the membership by getting new members and contacting past members to find out why they no longer are participating.

Treasurer Harold Burkett reported a balance of \$2,144.49.

Membership Secretary Daisy Austin reported for two months, from November 18 to January 18, with a total of 113 new members and 316 renewals. *Begonians* mailed were 5,139.

She also read a letter from Mr. N. Uye-mura, Vice-President of the Japanese Begonia Society, saying that they would be glad to exchange memberships with this Society and that this Society will receive their magazine free.

Advertising Manager Anne Rose reported receipts of \$99.48 for the past two months and accounts receivable of \$102.50.

A detailed report from Research Director Robert Shatzer was read, telling of the

many beneficial contacts he is making. He has added three names to his committee: Mrs. Shuler of Lexington, Ohio; Mrs. Edna Stewart of Tarentum, Pennsylvania; and Mr. Gerald Sausaman of Albright, West Virginia.

He also made the suggestion that memberships be offered to a few of the professional research and botanical people as these people have much to offer in the advancement of the begonia, as cooperating members would be of great benefit to the aims of the A.B.S.

The following names were suggested at this time: Howard W. Pfeifer, Curator of the Herbarium, University of Connecticut; Dr. W. J. Carpenter, Department of Horticulture, Manhattan, Kansas; Rufus B. Rutland, College of Agriculture, University of Georgia; Jan W. Abernathis, College of Agriculture and Home Economics, University of Kentucky; Marvin Carboneau, University of Illinois; Dr. Lyman B. Smith, Senior Scientist, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; J. Doorenbos, Laboratorium, Holland; Dr. George H. M. Lawrence, Hupt Botanical Library, Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

A motion was made by Margaret Lee and seconded by Bert Slatter that these men be included among our members; also that a letter be sent to Mr. Shatzer telling him of this action and thanking him for his lively interest and diligent work.

Mrs. Vera Naumann, Public Relations Director, was reported ill at this time, but Mr. Naumann is still recuperating nicely.

Judges Course Director's financial report was read by assistant Ruth Pease. There were 68 persons enrolled in the classes.

Identifications Director Dorothy Behrends reported the identification of two begonias and one fern. A suggestion was made that the Society set up an office whereby a hybridizer could register crosses he had germinated, possibly saving other hybridizers the time and effort of doing the same work and producing the same or similar cultivars.

Slide Librarian Maynette Hodgins gave her report and stated that she needs more slides of particular kinds of begonias to make a complete set. She also suggested appointing co-chairmen in different areas to make speakers' lists for their particular areas, as the local list covers only the surrounding areas, and she has had requests for speakers from distant Branches.

Existing and suggested new constitution

and by-laws were read and discussed. After a few changes, it was moved by Margaret Lee and seconded by Pearl Benell to approve the suggested constitution and by-laws for presentation to the membership for a vote. Carried.

Minutes of a meeting [of a few officers] were read. After some discussion, it was moved by Mr. Neff, seconded by Maynette Hodgins, that letters of apology be sent to the Editor, Mr. Peterson, and to the printer, Mr. Joseph, because the President had asked for Mr. Peterson's resignation and had terminated the printing arrangement with Mr. Joseph; this matter to be discussed at the next Board meeting. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Maynette Hodgins, seconded by Margaret Lee, to issue \$150.00 as an operating fund to the new Librarian, Mrs. Adeline Patterson. Carried.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 p.m.

EVELYN KEASTER,  
Secretary

### EDITOR'S NOTE

The procedure for amending the Constitution of the American Begonia Society is specified as follows:

#### ARTICLE IX — AMENDMENTS

Section 1. Amendments to this Constitution may be initiated by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any *Annual Meeting*. Such amendments shall then be submitted by mail to the membership in accordance with Section 2 of this Article.

The proposed new Constitution was voted on at the regular meeting of the Board of Directors on January 24, and not at the *Annual Meeting* as required.

Therefore, the proposed new Constitution cannot legally be published in this magazine for a vote by the membership.

★ ★ ★

The procedure for amending the Bylaws is as follows:

#### ARTICLE XI — AMENDMENTS

Section 1. Amendments to the Bylaws may be initiated by a majority vote of the members present at any *Annual Meeting* or special meeting called for this purpose, or by a *two-thirds vote* of the Board of Directors. Such amendment shall then be submitted by mail to the membership in accordance with Section 2 of this Article.

The proposed new Bylaws were

read to the Board of Directors but were not approved by a *two-thirds vote*, as recorded in the minutes.

Therefore, the Bylaws are not published in this issue of *The Begonian*.

### NEED SPACE? . . .

(Continued from Page 48)

kets, but here are a few that will provide gorgeous flowers as well as foliage: B. Pinafore', 'Dainty Spray', 'Glabra', 'Limminghei', 'Helen W. King', 'Digswelliana', 'Ellen Dee', and 'Majorie Daw'. *Semperflorens* do very well as do many of the angelwings. In the rhizomatous type, 'Maphil', *boweri*, *stitched leaf*, or a mixture will present a magnificent show of colors. With such a wide variety of begonias for baskets, I can continue to add to my collection and have happy, healthy plants.

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## IN MEMORIAM

The New Year came in on a sad note for us. Ruth Richardson answered a call from the "great beyond" on January first.

Her passing left a void we shall long be at a loss to fill. Ruth was an active member and our efficient program chairman for a number of years. Her many talents, conscientiousness, and willingness were just a few of her sterling qualities we may keep as memories.

May her soul rest in peace and may perpetual light shine upon her.

—THE ELSA FORT BRANCH,  
A. B. S.

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## TUBERS . . .

*(Continued from Page 45)*

You can eliminate the many steps of starting tubers by obtaining seedling plants. These will have no tubers until the end of the growing season.

In very recent years, seedling plants have been available to this area primarily through the efforts of Prof. H. Gilbert Harlow of Schenectady, New York. For the past fourteen years he has been perfecting a strain of tuberous begonias that should withstand the heat of eastern summers.

Prof. Harlow has used parent plants from all over the world to develop his present strains, which appear to be less susceptible to the problems of heat than plants hybridized and selected in California. His seedlings are available in a wide range of colors and beautiful double forms. Three years ago the International Flower Show awarded him a silver trophy for his outstanding work.

Plants may be obtained at Koral Gardens, Patersonville, New York, either as transplanted seedlings or as four-inch-pot blooming material. Prof. Harlow grows the plants in nearly full sun at Schenectady without serious burn problems. They should produce satisfactory results in the New York area.

Plants grown from seedlings will form their first tubers in the fall. The

plants may be lifted, potted, and brought indoors before frost. Keep the plants alive in a window until December, which will permit the tubers already formed to grow larger. Then dry off the plants, cut back the tops, and store them in a cool place for a month. Remove the tubers and store them in damp peat until spring.

Whether from tubers or seeds, the tuberous begonia can provide a magnificent display of spectacular blooms all summer. Now is the time to start doing something about it.

*(This article is reprinted, by permission, from the Bulletin of the Horticultural Society of New York, Inc.)*

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## AFRICAN VIOLET SHOW IN INGLEWOOD

"Swinging with Violets" will be the theme of the twelfth annual African Violet Show to be staged April 1 and 2 by the African Violet Society of Inglewood, at the Professional Women's Clubhouse, 820 Java Street, Inglewood, California.

Awards will include Queen of the Show, Sweepstakes, Novice Exhibitor, Best Miniature, and others.

The show will be open on Friday, from 1 to 9 p.m. and on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission will be 50 cents.

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## PLAN FOR SEPTEMBER SHOW

On September 17, 1966, the Bessie Raymond Buxton Branch of the American Begonia Society will be host to a combined begonia show, lecture, tea, and sale. The show will be open to all.

This affair will be held at the Waltham Field Station of the University of Massachusetts, which is easily accessible from Route 128.

All A.B.S. members and anyone interested in begonias is invited.

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## DALLAS BRANCH WILL SHOW BEGONIAS

The Lone Star State will burst forth in colorful glory on March 4 and 5 when the Dallas Branch of the American Begonia Society will hold its show at the West Cliff Mall Shopping Center, at the corner of Hampton Road and Ledbetter Drive in Dallas, Texas.

The educational display will feature seed, leaves, and pictures of begonias, along with other shade-loving varieties of plants.

Doors will be open on the fourth from 1 to 9 p.m. and on the fifth from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Admission is free.

Additional information may be had from Mrs. Elizabeth Herndon, publicity chairman for this event, 6122 Cockrell Hill Road, Dallas, Texas, 75236. Telephone: AX 8-3934.

## APRIL SHOW IN LOUISIANA

A begonia and shade plant show will be presented by the Greater Baton Rouge Branch of the American Begonia Society on Wednesday and Thursday, April 6 and 7, in the Sears Garden Center, 6201 Florida Blvd., Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Begonias, ferns, African violets, gloxinias, orchids, and other exotic plants will be featured.

Trophies will be awarded in seven classes and ribbons in all classes.

Mrs. Don L. Wagner, show chairman, has announced that entries may be made on Wednesday morning before 10:30 a.m. The public is invited to bring plants and to participate.



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## CALENDAR

**MARCH 3**—Westchester Branch: Guest speaker will be Dr. Robert Atkinson, nationally known for his writing, photography, and consulting services in gardening and horticulture, and for his radio talks on station KNX-CBS.

**MARCH 4-5**—Dallas County, Texas, Branch: Show at West Cliff Mall Shopping Center, Dallas.

**MARCH 5-13**—International Flower Show, New York Coliseum, New York.

**MARCH 9**—Inglewood Branch: Mrs. Frances Young, president of the South Coast Botanic Garden Foundation, will speak on "Begonias and Shade Plants".

**MARCH 10**—Orange County Branch: Robert Allen will speak on "Shade Plant Culture". He is a recipient of our college scholarship fund.

**MARCH 11**—San Gabriel Valley Branch: Guest speaker will be Mrs. Winona Jensen, of Bellflower. Her subject will be "Spring Planting and Care of Begonias".

**MARCH 11-17**—Elsa Fort Branch: Will have an exhibit in the Spring Flower Show of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

**MARCH 17**—Foothill Branch: A representative from the Nutrilite Products Co. will speak on "Planting Mix".

**MARCH 25**—Redondo Area Branch: Daisy Austin will speak on "Lights and Their Effect on Begonias".

**APRIL 1-2**—African Violet Show: Inglewood, California.

**April 6-7**—Greater Baton Rouge Branch: Show at Sears Garden Center in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

**APRIL 13**—Inglewood Branch: Annual Presidents' Dinner.

**JULY 29-30**—Eastern Regional Begonia Convention, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

**SEPTEMBER 17**—Bessie Raymond Buxton Branch: Begonia show, lecture, tea, and sale.

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