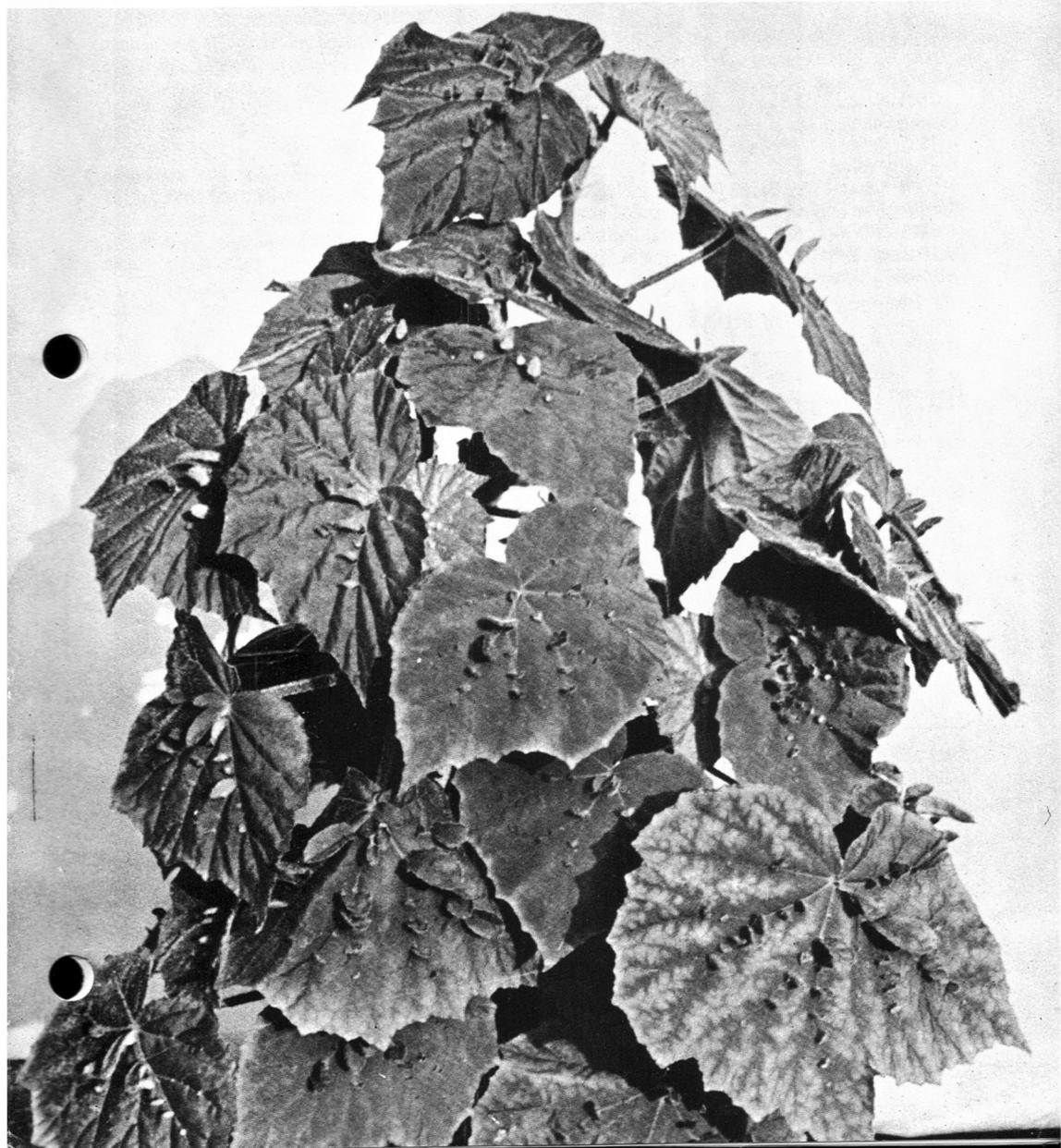


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The purpose of this Society shall be to promote
interest in begonias and other shade-loving plants;
to encourage the introduction and development of
new types of these plants to standardize the no-
menclature of begonias; to gather and publish in-
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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BEGONIAS

By GLADYS REED ROBINSON

The Begonia family is one of the largest families in the plant kingdom today. Each plant is a wee bit different, giving variety from which to choose, including foliage, blossoms, shapes, and sizes.

The tuberous species begonia was believed to have been discovered in 1649 by a Mexican, Father Franz Hernandez. Begonia commemorates M. Michel Begon, a Frenchman. In Central and South America we find the plants growing wild.

Begonias are divided into various types, namely: (1) tuberous begonias—members being Andean species, multiflora begonias, American species, Asiatic species, African species; (2) winter-flowering—members being American begonias and Hiemalis begonias; (3) Rhizomatous and these members are the American rhizomatous, Asiatic rhizomatous, and the Rex; (4) fibrous rooted begonias—members being miscellaneous fibrous, cane-stemmed fibrous, small-leaved fibrous, hirsute, and the semperflorans.

TUBEROUS CLASS: As mentioned in the Andean group from which have developed the modern large-flowered hybrids, the pendulous and dwarf multifloras. In the early 1870's these were discovered in the American Andes. In the multifloras the small flowered bushy compacts make up for the lack of size. They are constant free-bloomers and are most useful for summer

COVER PICTURE

Begonia hispida cucullifera—a fibrous-rooted species with large, velvety, maple-like, pale green leaves; producing adventitious leaflets on the top surfaces of the leaves, along the veins. It has red petioles covered with white hairs, and has white flowers. Grown by James Diegnan, Patricia Murphy Greenhouses.

—Photo by HERTHA A. BENJAMIN

beds and window boxes. The American group, those native to Central and South America, have an "annual" stem which dies down with the tuber resting dormant. The Asiatic species, too, have annual stems and go dormant in winter. They require more heat and are usually grown by collectors. The African group contains many which are of interest to collectors only.

WINTER FLOWERING: These spring from *B. socotrana* which is the only bulbous species different from all others in that it forms a number of pale green clusters of small bulbs at the soil level. The flowers are low-spreading and are clear rose pink with gold stamens, grown string-fashion, and are in bloom from December through February. The 'Floire de Lorraine,' often called the Christmas Begonia, is the most popular of the winter bloomers. Pot plants are sold the world over for holiday decoration. Leaves are shining green, often hidden by the clusters of the dainty flowers. This is a cross between the *B. socotrana* and South African *B. dregei*. The Hiemalis begonia is a large-flowered, semi-tuberous, named by Karl Fotsch in 1933 and known in the States as the English winter-flowering begonia. The foliage is attractive green and the flowers single, semi-double, and double are string-like in habit.

RHIZOMED CLASS: Two geographical groups cover this class; the American and the Asiatic from which most rex have been derived. In this group we find some of the most beautiful foliage plants. American rhizomatous includes those with peltate leaves, the "star" begonia with painted leaves, the spiral-leaved forms, and also the crested edges or furry leaves. The size of the leaf will measure 1 inch to 15 inches. In early spring, blossoms will appear in panicles, pinkish white on a tall erect stem extending well above the leaves of the plant.

This comes from Central and South America and Mexico. The silvery green pustulate leaves of chocolate color markings resembling an iron cross is botanically known as *B. Masoniana* for L. Maurice Mason. Easily propagated from leaf cuttings. All Rex have beautiful foliage. Found in the Himalayas where shade, humid places in the crevices of the rocks are prevalent. By crossing with other allied species through the years, we have a large and medium-leaved rex, an upright branching rex, a spiral-leaved rex, an upright "tree" rex, a miniature-leaved rex, a miniature-leaved "tree" rex, and a miniature-leaved tree spiral rex.

FIBROUS CLASS: Here we come in contact with the greatest number of begonias both in appearance and habit. All are evergreen, the stems never die down. The first fibrous rooted begonia reached Kew Gardens in 1777, known as *B. nitida*. Another favorite is the Angel wing because of the shape of the leaves, dark green, overcast with blackish green and decked with large silver spots. It will grow very large but may be kept in bounds by proper pot confinement. It is a perpetual bloomer. "Leaf drop" is common, not due to disease as often thought, but due to temperature, too cool in winter.

Other species are *coccinea*, *corallina*, *albo-picta*, *maculata*, *dichroa*, *teucheri*, *alba*, *undulata*, and *aconitifolia*.

B. 'Lucerne' I feel is the leader. This particular variety makes a massive plant and gives the greenhouse that little lift when so many plants are resting.

Small-leaved fibrous begonias consist of *B. foliosa*, a fern-like plant which is the smallest; the German B. 'Sachsen,' a slightly larger one often referred to as B. 'Dancing Girl.'

With the Hirsute fibrous begonias we find that they all have soft hairy stems and most all have mossy bearded flowers. These are attractive for both foliage and flowers and will adapt themselves very well to warm

dry homes. *B. cathayana*, often called the aristocrat, is considered the most lovely. The stems, erect and fleshy, often stand as high as two feet and are covered with hairs of crimson and white. Leaves are velvet green veined in colors, and flowers are salmon orange.

One of the outstanding species coming from Brazil is *B. metallica*. Leaves wear a metallic gloss and are covered with rough white hairs. Blossoms appear in clusters and put one in mind of pink chenille balls. Another one often referred to as "always blooming" is the glossy foliage *semperflorans cultorum*. Excellent for summer beddings, window boxes, and the house.

Too large plants may be cut down, given a short rest, and new shoots will quickly come up from the base and soon will bloom. The blossoms may be pure white, delicate pink, white with pale pink tinge, and still others rose. Credit must be given a Swedish hybridizer for the double ball blossoms or pompoms.

The begonias come from all parts of the world where climatic conditions vary; therefore, to make them feel at home with us, we must take into consideration the requirements for the various types.

Dormant tubers are started in January or February in pans containing peat, vermiculite or any other rooting materials, a depth of about 4 inches. This medium should be kept comfortably moist. When leaves appear and a good root system has been established they may be transferred to 4-1/2 inch pots containing a fibrous compost with a little bone meal added. Roots are extremely brittle so care should be taken to prevent damage. When weather permits they may be set outside. If too dry or too wet, bud dropping will occur. Not a disease as some think. Stems will undoubtedly require supports of either sticks or a tape that will not cut into the stem. If plants are allowed to mature and ripen gradually they will

(Continued on Page 154)

NORTHEAST BEGONIAS IN AUGUST

By ELDA HARING

Now the sultry "dog days" are with us here in the northeast. Days are very warm and very humid. At last we can sit on our terraces and porches and look out over the gardens in their late summer beauty with no guilty feelings about shirking weeding, feeding, and watering chores. Everything seems, in keeping with the weather, to move at a more leisurely pace. Now is when we eye our collections of begonias summering out of doors, wondering where and how we will find room for these indoors in just a few weeks when the nights grow cool and they need to come inside long before we bid a reluctant farewell to our summer gardens. Days will be balmy and warm for a while yet but the nights will take on the chill to remind us that soon the snow will be flying and our gardens blanketed by nature.

It seems there are always begonias which have responded so well to their outdoor environment that they have outgrown their pots. They must be repotted to the next larger size pot or, if the collection is large and space inside is limited it will be necessary to break up the plants. Rhizomatous types are easy because, when they are removed from the pot, they are easily pulled apart. These can be repotted singly and permitted to grow again to exhibition size or, if the living room is the plant room as well, several rhizomes may be planted back to back in the same pot to produce an "instant" full-pot begonia for display on table or window sill.

If small plants are desired as gifts or replacements, small sections of the rhizomes may be rooted. These should be placed in the rooting medium in a slightly horizontal position in such a way that the rhizome will be above the level of the medium with only part of it buried, whether you use a mixture of peat and sand or a mixture of 1/3 vermiculite, 1/3 perlite, and 1/3 milled sphagnum, as I do.

If some of the spreading varieties like 'Disgweliana,' 'Preussen,' 'Boyem,' 'Dominghensis' (Peanut Brittle), and 'Luwalter' are much too large for the places where you wish to grow them inside, the top 4 to 6 inches of the branches can be snipped back, the plants removed from their pots, and most of the soil carefully rubbed off the shoulders and the bottom of the root ball. Some of the soil can be shaken off the entire root ball if done carefully to avoid damaging the tender roots. The plant then may be replanted in the same size pot with fresh soil carefully pressed around the roots. These recover quickly from this treatment and will provide attractive plants for many months. The cuttings thus removed may also be rooted. If you have the room, all of these varieties make fine subjects for hanging baskets, in which case several cuttings placed together in one basket will produce a fine specimen plant in a short time.

If possible, it is always good insurance to take cuttings at this time of all of your plants. Many times a cherished plant is lost from over or under watering or from some other catastrophe and it is wise if you have the room to keep a few small rooted cuttings on hand for replacements. It is often difficult to locate old or unusual varieties at the various commercial suppliers. Newer varieties are naturally more sought after than the old tried and true ones.

In my own collection are plants of 'Nitida,' which was the first begonia introduced into England from St. Domingo, and 'Marjorie Daw,' which I understand is the first one hybridized by an American.

For the benefit of my readers in *The Begonian*, and I hope there have been many, I would like to explain at this time that I do not grow begonias commercially but merely as an absorbing and ever-fascinating hobby.

POLLINATING BEGONIAS

By JANE E. NEAL
Worthing, Sussex, England

Why does my seed not set? Why does it not germinate?

The answers are legion and almost all technical. Nature has been at the game of hybridizing for countless centuries, playing it with a success almost denied to us. One might say that we understand the method but not the mechanics of the process. The following, however, is one path to at least a measure of success.

First, to determine whether the male flower is ripe and pollen is available, examine the stamens through a hand lens. If they have an over-all waxy appearance, they are not ripe. If a fine line or slit—paler yellow and dusty—is visible down one or both sides of the stamen body, then the pollen sac has burst and the pollen is ready to use. Even if you cannot see the fine dust, it is present if the sac has burst. But, if in doubt, use two male flowers. The only way to make sure the pollen is fertile, however, is by trial and error.

If mating has taken, signs appear, often in hours. Petals tend to close over the fertilized stigma, and sometimes the flower stem crooks over. Some stigmas show a browning and eventual shriveling. One species, *B. liminghei*, closes the petals, and in two or three days the waxy white ovary turns green. It remains green, until, at full ripeness, it turns brown.

The most certain sign is the aging of the stigma. You will, with practice, be able to tell at a glance if the cross has taken. If after twenty-four hours the stigma still looks fresh and glistening, move to another flower and start again.

The stigma ages because the pollen grain immediately starts to grow a tube down which the male gamete travels to the ovary. This tube bores through the stigmatic tissues. Under a microscope, the stigma after fertilization shows a sponge-like condition,

with sometimes uncertain wandering by the pollen tube before it penetrated the ovary.

Fertilization failure is not always due to lack of pollen. The pollen may be from a variety that cannot grow a tube long enough to reach the ovary. It may be too weak to complete its journey. It may be sterile and never start it. It may be genetically incompatible and, again, die before beginning the journey to the ovary.

If you have trouble setting seed, choose the time of day with care. The middle hours, warm and sunny, with high humidity, appear to be the time when pollen is most active and the stigma most receptive. With the right conditions, seed setting is almost certain, unless sterility is present in one of the parents (and sterility is present in some degree if either parent is a hybrid).

Whether selfing or crossing, complete segregation of the flowers or plants used is essential. Female flowers should be covered in some manner and *all males removed* long before either opens, to avoid any possible air pollination. Unless the most rigorous precautions are taken, "home" pollen may light on your flower as you apply your selected brand. This "home" pollen will take up a large share of the ovules. It may take all, and the applied pollen get none, and results will be misleading.

Complete segregation is the only way to ensure that the pollen applied is the only pollen reaching the ovary.

Obtaining seed from the first generation (F_1) is the first hurdle. The second, and most difficult, is obtaining viable seed from the second generation (F_2). For perfection, the F_2 should be from matings of the siblings (sister seedlings) of the F_1 cross. Should these prove sterile, as all too often happens, cross back onto one or

both parents. Backcrossing will transfer at least part of the genes.

Baileya of December 1966 reports on iris of the Mississippi Delta—the Louisiana Iris. A new species, *Iris Nelsonii*, is apparently the end result of sibling backcrossing onto a parent. This result is also possible in begonias. Once, the idea that a species could give rise to another was regarded as heresy; modern botanists and zoologists have shown it is not. It is among the F_2 that the new species may be found. Nature still laughs at us, and—though we know it is a possibility—we still do not know exactly how it happens.

Most often, the F_2 gives a polyploid, fertile, but unconstant. When we can produce a tetraploid (four sets of chromosomes, two from each parent), we have a true-breeding, constant line, and a possible new species. We are a long way from the goal, however—except by chance. But by growing good, viable seed, we are on the way. It is important to use plants in the peak of condition. The plant that sets seed well, holds it until it is fully ripe, is in sound health, not forced or overfed. The lush, overgrown plant may be a showpiece, but will not make a good parent.

Much seed is ruined in the harvesting. When fully ripe, the pod should be picked and thoroughly dried for two or three days—on a sheet of paper, for it will begin to shed and seed could be lost. When dry, complete the shedding, remove any debris with a match stick, and store in grease-proof paper sacks in a cool dry place until sowing.

Authors consulted:

G. Ledyard Stebbins, Jr. *Variation and Evolution in Plants*, 1950.

J. M. Lowson. *Textbook of Botany*, 1962.

L. F. Randolph. "Iris Nelsonii," *Baileya*, Vol. 14, December 1966 (The Liberty Hyde Bailey Hortorium, Cornell University, New York.)

PATRONIZE OUR
ADVERTISERS

WATCHING FOR BLOOM

The richly varied foliage of begonias is the magnet for many growers, but we cannot help watching for bloom. Sometimes the blossom is large and showy, sometimes small; it, too, has endless variation in the many begonia species and cultivars.

Anita Sickmon of Cheney, Kansas, has noted that many members find beautiful-leaved 'Sophie Cecile' (cane cultivar of *sceptrum* x 'Lenore Olivier') difficult to bring into bloom. The few that have succeeded, grew it in almost full sun.

Several of Thelma O'Reilly's rhizomatous begonias, growing in La Mesa, California, have very dark pink to red flowers, including 'Joe Hayden' and 'Laguna' (lovely red, shaped like Bleeding Hearts before opening fully). One of her 'Leslie Lynn' selfed seedlings has the most striking red clusters of flowers for a nontuberous begonia. Her rhizomatous 'Norah Bedson' (*boweri* x *strigillosa*), growing in the ground, has bright, deep pink blooms. Charles Tagg in Fullerton, California, says his, too, is bright pink.

Pat Burdick of Burnsville, Minnesota, had B. 'Thurstoni' (hairy-flowered fibrous) blooming in May, also rhizomatous B. 'Freddie' (with its tiny blooms high above large leaves). She had put 'Freddie' under the greenhouse bench, because it was getting too much light. Her 'Gloire de Sceaux' was still in bloom, as were 'Pink Shasta,' 'Pebble Lane,' and 'Fleecealba,' although male blossoms of 'Fleecealba' did not open.

Robert Shatzer in Albright, West Virginia, has observed that plants growing under artificial lights tend to bloom at different times than in natural light. However, his big pot of tuberous B. 'Bertini' under lights still knows when to go dormant. Some members have had tuberous begonias continue blooming under lights, when brought in from the garden, until long past their usual season. But tubers may be used up if not rested, some report.

UNSUSPECTED AFFINITY

Although crosses between tuberous and fibrous begonias have been reported difficult, a strange thing happened to Mary Powers of Mahafey, Pannsylvania, in the summer of 1965.

Mary kept a box of vermiculite for propagating cuttings in her lathhouse, on a table beside shelves of *semperflorens* and tuberous begonias. In the fall, she potted up her cuttings and left the box until the following April, when she put rex leaves in it to root. The leaves, having suffered a long mail journey, died, but the vermiculite was left damp — and one day Mary noticed it was covered with hundreds of tiny seedlings. She gave away many in clumps. Others were transplanted when they were large enough.

The seedlings looked and bloomed like *semperflorens* begonias. The box was later taken into the greenhouse, and in the spring of 1967 Mary began to move the plants to make room for cuttings. "Lo and behold, these semps had tubers."

She had not tried to make any crosses or pollinations or to sow any seed. Bees or breezes must have been at work. The seed had been frozen in the box all winter, but germinated very well.

EXPERIENCES WITH SEED

All sorts of things can happen when A.B.S. members sow seed, as members of both regular round robins and seed specialty flights find out. Shared notes help with the difficult ones.

Arline Peck of Pascoag, Rhode Island, advises to keep seedlings of *B. cathayana* (sensitive Chinese species with velvety leaves) covered until they are of good size, to give them the humidity they need. Even large plants are sensitive; she carried hers to and from a show in a plastic bag this year to prevent last year's wilting. Arline notes also that *B. paulensis* (Brazil species with spider-web veins on seer-sucker leaves) does not need as much

sun as other begonias, though it does want good light.

In Tampa, Dora Lee Dorsey's seedlings of *B. richardiana* (finely cut maple-leaved semituberous begonia) were spotted before turning all green. Even an adult plant will get a few new leaves with spots each spring when starting into new growth. Hers is several years old, and its tuber-like base is two inches in diameter. It blooms all summer and gets rather leggy and limp by fall, when she cuts off most leaves, to let it rest.

Thelma O'Reilly of La Mesa, California, told of three growers who bought seed of *B. sikkimensis* (species from India) from the A.B.S. Seed Fund in the same month. She had eight healthy seedlings starting their second set of true leaves in May. The others had no germination. On the other hand, she had nothing from seed of *B. 'Gee Gee'* (new Chester Nave hybrid) in seven weeks, while the other two had twenty to thirty seedlings—losing some because they germinated pure white (no chlorophyll).

Muriel Perz of Long Beach, California, did get *B. cathcarti* (yellow-flowered Indian species) to germinate, but only three seedlings were living. Another member tried from three sources, with no luck.

Self-pollinated (by hand) blooms of *B. 'San Miguel'* held on the plant for a long time for Edna Stewart of Tarentum, Pennsylvania, but dropped before ripening. She later found two seed capsules lying on a board by the plant, dry, so sowed the seed, and was surprised to have twenty very tiny seedlings up in May.

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CLAYTON M. KELLY SEED FUND FLIGHT

No. 1—*B. boweri nigramarga*—

New species from Mexico. Small, dainty, rhizomatous, with white hairs bordering edges of leaves. Leaves have black markings similar to *B. boweri*. Seeds have been tested and seedlings all like true plant. Creeps on top of soil in a shallow pot; good basket or terrarium plant. \$1.00 per pkt.

No. 2—*B. caragutubensis*—Brade—

New Brazil sp. identified by Zieshenne and described by the collector as follows: Leaves up to one foot across beautifully shaped and textured, dark red on underside, plants about two feet tall, tall panicles of white flowers. At the upper end of leaf petiole, were several red-hairy bristly, red wings or collars. Seeds were recently received from Brazil. \$1.00 per pkt.

No. 3—*B. masoniana*— syn *B. 'Iron Cross'*—

Plant introduced by Mason (England) in 1952 and said to be one of the most beautiful begonias in cultivation. Leaves are large and puckered, Nile-green marked with a contrasting, bold, brown-red pattern, resembling the German iron cross. Stems are white-hairy and reddish. Flowers are waxy, greenish-white, with maroon bristles on the back. Seeds were supplied by a friend in South America who has a large commercial greenhouse and they have been carefully hand-pollinated and tested for germination. However, allow ample time for seedlings to appear before deciding they are not going to germinate. \$1.00 per pkt.

No. 4—*B. #959*—

From a collector in Costa Rica and described as a vine-like epiphytic begonia with white flowers. 50 cents per pkt.

No. 5—*B. #1025*—

Costa Rica. A short trail side begonia with fleshy bright red stems, small geranium-like leaves and bright pink flowers. Both of the above are

scandens and can be used as baskets. 50 cents per pkt.

No. 6—*B. convolvulacea*—

Brazil. Grows bushy up to two meters. Stems fleshy with knotty swellings, forming roots over the entire length, bare, green. Petioles 6-12 cm long with a small groove, bare, green. Leaves large, broader than long, about 9 x 12 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, white.

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

No. 7—*B. 'Peach Blossom'*— X—JRHS—

Long, narrow, smooth, unspotted leaves of the clearest green, flowers true rose-pink. Good begonia. 35 cents per pkt.

No. 8—*B. Mixed*—

Contains the following: *B. sunderbruchi* X; *B. Erythrophylla helix*; *popenoei* X, and unnamed seedling. 25 cents per pkt.

No. 9—*B. megeptera*—

Leaves unequalled at the base. A large number of elongated peduncles rise from the upper axils, bearing pink flowers on each. The flowers completely cover the plant, creating a pleasing effect. A friend in Brazil is growing this plant for his own pleasure and has produced seed for Seed Fund. 50 cents per pkt.

No. 10—*B. lobulata*—

Mexico. Tall, erect, branching habit; leaves resembling those of the ivy (*Hedera helix*) in shape rather than those of the grape, large, broad-ovate with shallow angular lobes, bright glossy green, finely toothed, slightly tomentose beneath; flowers pink and white in large clusters from the leaf axil. 35 cents per pkt.

Please note: We have had numerous requests for packets of mixed seeds and as our aim is to please the Seed Fund patrons we offer the following: Begonias (several var.) Bromeliads, Gesneriads, Amaryllis and others. Seeds will all be in ONE packet regardless of size of seed, and due to extra work involved, we cannot identify anything therein. This offer is especially for those with limited space and time. Price 25 cents for special offer.

BROMELIADS—

Nidularium regelioides—

Compact rosette with dark green leathery leaves, red flowers. 50 cents per pkt.

Aechmea nidicaulis—

Teresopolis, Brazil. In nature, nidicaulium flower during the rainy season while their cups are ordinarily full of water. 50 cents per pkt.

Billbergia pyramidilis—

Favorite plant, broad-leafed bottle-shaped plant, golden green. The compact flower head is densely set with pink to red flowers on a short scape. Blooms in winter. 50 cents per pkt.

Vriesea rubra—

50 cents per pkt.

Aechmea nidicaulis forma compacta—

50 cents per pkt.

Bromeliad seed will germinate on a moistened tissue if given the right heat and humidity, but they have to have a more suitable base to live on after they have germinated. The mixture must be able to absorb water and shed all unwanted surplus. A good general purpose mix is equal parts of coarse leaves, tree-fern fiber, sharp river sand. Powdered charcoal can be added to prevent damp-off. Find a suitable warm spot to germinate seed. However, they do not need light until they have germinated. A daytime temperature of 70-80 degrees and nighttime 60-65 degrees is ideal.

GREENHOUSE PLANTS—

Athyrium filix femina—

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ROUND ROBIN NOTES

Do you have a question about begonias, gesneriads, or other shade-loving plants? Ask one in a round-robin—and answers and comments will come in from all sides, as in the many letters flying now.

Under Lights: Distance between light tubes and plants depends on maturity and variety of plants, Lily Fine of Brooklyn notes. With Gro-Lux tubes, she keeps seedlings four inches below the lights, or even closer, while tops of mature begonias and African violets are ten to twelve inches below. Gesneriads other than violets (X-gloxineras, columneas, slipper gloxinias) prefer more light, are kept closer. Members of her Gloxinia Society grow gloxinias practically touching the tubes, but most now use the Wide Spectrum, which seems to give better results. Under Optima tubes, so far, Lily's plants make growth, but mature plants of flowering size were not blooming.

Bob Shatzer of Albright, West Virginia, grows gloxinias right into the tubes also. Episcias want to be close as well, but African violets do not, he agrees. He has not yet found the best place for columneas. When gloxinia seedlings are potted, he keeps them close to the lights. After the first blooming, he cuts them down to two leaves and lets them sprout new main stems and bloom again, to make tubers larger, before going dormant for a rest. From then on, he allows one blooming before resting them.

Columneas: Don Salmon of Millicent, South Australia, tried old fluorescent tubes directly under the glass in his glasshouse, rather than coating with lime to reduce summer heat. The tubes' partial vacuum reduces both cold and heat in season, and the shading seems just enough for his columneas (growing in seven-inch sphagnum-lined baskets). The tubes have been successful this year. *Columnea gloriosa* had twenty flowers open at once in April, and twenty-four-inch tendrils. C. 'Campus Queen,' 'Casca-

dilla,' 'Early Bird,' and 'Yellow Dragon' also were in flower. He suspends container lids filled with water beneath baskets for humidity. Bob Shatzer noted that columneas must have humidity at all times to bloom.

Begonia Bloom: An *epipsila* (trailing species) bloomed in the fall and then again in March, the male flowers opening first, then the female—for Edna Stewart of Tarentum, Pennsylvania. Pat Burdick of Savage, Minnesota, doesn't think rhizomatous begonias have to reach any certain age to bloom. Her August seedlings bloomed in March. She thinks it is a matter of light and season and that higher temperatures probably hurry blossoming. Her friend's house-grown plants bloom a month earlier than Pat's greenhouse begonias.

Lillian Bergeron of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, reported that her Danish *semperflorens* begonias—three varieties from seed—were beautiful, firm and compact, blooming their heads off.

From Seed: A fellow Branch member of Geraldine Daly (Coventry, Rhode Island) used well-rotted heart of tree stumps for starting fine seed, with good results. Mac MacIntyre of Liverpool, England, tried to save the last two of his damped-off *B. emini* seedlings. They were only one-fourth-inch high, but he trimmed the stems and stuck them in again. Both rooted, and now he has two good seedlings.

Helen Matsubu of Fruitland, Idaho, was watching her Indian rex seedlings with interest in April. Some had dark leaves, others plain green. They were slow; other rex seedlings were twice as large. Seed received in the mail has sometimes been crushed. Don Salmon has observed with his magnifying glass.

Sterility: Jay Neal of Worthing, England, never has had seed on her *B. erythrophylla* or 'Erythrophylla Helix' (old rhizomatous hybrids), nor can she find pollen on either one. Don Salmon in Australia has not had seed from any of the "beefsteak begonias,"

either. And Ruth Stanley in Bellefontaine, Ohio, has never seen male blossoms open on the 'Erythrophylla' group. She has tried pollinating females on these with pollen from other begonias and has achieved only one plant—her 'B. Beryl' seedling of "Bunchi" (lettuce-leaved sport of 'Erythrophylla').

Congratulations: ABS member Mike Kartuz won nine blue ribbons and the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Gold Medal at the New England Flower Show, robins report. Lily Fine's gloxinia and gesneraid entries took blue ribbons in the Amateur Section of the International Flower Show in New York.

Ideas: Grant McGregor of Ottawa, Canada, is trying wick-fed pots for begonias, hoping to save watering time and solve vacation problems. He has been trying different species and varieties in both plastic and clay pots, using his wife's discarded nylon stockings. (He uses these also to tie garden plants, because they are strong and soft and not too noticeable.) Grant cuts wicks long enough to come well into the pot. Width of wick and kind of potting mix may affect water uptake. Zack Monesson of Lakewood, New Jersey, asked if soil should not dry out a bit between waterings. Bob Shatzer thinks canes probably prefer top watering.

Anita Sickmon of Cheney, Kansas, cut plastic lids of coffee cans into strips, stapled on typewritten labels, and sprayed them with clear plastic to waterproof them. Others use the lids under pots. Muriel Perz of Long Beach, California, keeps a few plants small and in small pots by pinching them back, cutting roots each year, and feeding about half what she feeds others.

Pests: Virginia Withee of Coventry, Rhode Island, will not keep a plant that has any pests; she burns it. She will not buy plants she has not seen, lest she spread pests. Show rules prohibit showing plants with pests, and she is especially careful not to con-

taminate other plants in a show. She feels that strict care is important for begonia dealers.

B. 'lubbersi': Elaine Wilkerson of Baton Rouge grows this peltate-leaved cane in a large glass tank under the greenhouse bench, with plenty of light but not direct sun. It is a beautiful dark green with many silver spots.

B. 'Weltoniensis': This maple-leaved semituberous hybrid is a favorite of Lucile Mearns of Louisville, Illinois. It is easy to grow from slips in spring, and both leaves and bloom are pretty. She puts hers out under the maple trees, where it needs lots of water in hot weather. Though it will wilt, with water it is beautiful again. She took one out of a four-inch pot and found the pot full of tubers.

B. 'Kathleyana': This hybrid of rex 'Mrs. Moon' *cathayana* has beautiful leaves but tends to go dormant for Edna Stewart. It is an upright grower with dark green leaves, heavily silver-speckled between the veins.

B. 'Black Jewel': Pat Burdick describes 'Black Jewel' as having smaller leaves than those of B. 'Spaulding,' green, with a small brown edge.

Adventitious Plantlets: Ruth Wille of Jackson, Mississippi, has found plantlets at the sinus of leaves still attached to plants of two more rexes, B. rex cultivars 'Amy' and 'Evergreen'—in addition to her "Mother Begonia."

Ferns: *Pellea rotundifolia* is a lime-lover, Frieda Polsfuss of Macon, Georgia, noted. Her friend's several-year-old plant of *Asplenium nidus* was so large it could not be used at the State Fair last fall. Frieda does not know if it will live another year; she has not heard of a long-lived fern.

Frieda's *Pteris victoriana* does well with cool nights and more dryness during winter. Many ferns seem to appreciate these conditions, especially the *Nephrolepis* clan. Squirrelfoot and Deersfoot *Davallia* may rot if feet are soggy. Aleks Bird of Jamaica, New York, described a huge fern, *Polypodium aureum manduianum*,

with gorgeous fronds two or three feet long, curled and wavy-edged.

To join a robin, write:

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LETTERS

Mrs. Hertha Benjamin,
Eastern Editor.

I will address this letter to you as I do not know the address of M. Carleton L'Hommedieu, grower of the begonia on the cover of the February issue of *The Begonian*.

I also have a plant of 'Fireflush' or 'Bettina Rothschild.' It is a begonia of good size, being two or three years old.

My trouble is that the leaves curl under, all but the very young small new ones. I have the plant in our laundry room, where there is certainly a little moisture, more than in other rooms where I have begonias. I even mist the plant daily, but still the leaves curl under.

The plant is free from any insects on leaves.

I wonder if this grower has any method for this condition on his 'Fireflush.' I notice only one leaf in the picture is curled under.

EDITH R. ARNOLD

* * *

Mrs. Edith R. Arnold,
Skaneateles, New York.

Your letter was forwarded to me by Mrs. Hertha Benjamin.

The curling under of the leaves of your Begonia rex 'Fireflush' has not been a problem with my 'Fireflush.' However, I have had some begonias that would present this problem; among them has been *B. x sunderbruchi*, where some of the lobes of the leaves were completely curled under. If there are no insects or diseases causing this trouble, I would say that it is either a temperature or humidity condition—too low humidity or too low temperature or both.

There are some begonias that show a curled effect because of their normal cupping upwards or downwards. This will often occur when the plant has peltate leaves (where the leaf blade is attached to the stalk inside its margin.) *Beg. 'Fleecealba'* and *Beg. geogoensis* are examples of cupping downward. *Beg. conchaefolia* and *Beg. eptpsila* are ones that cup upwards. *Beg. leptotricha* has a tendency to curl upward on the edges of the leaves. These examples of curling are normal for the plants.

I would say that *Beg. rex 'Fireflush'* and *B. x sunderbruchi* would not curl if they have proper growing conditions.

M. C. L'HOMMEDIEU

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BEGONIAS . . .

(Continued from Page 144)

insure healthy plants for the next year. Tubers may be taken up, cleaned, and stored in shallow boxes with 45°-50° temperature. Withering tubers may be avoided by storing them in potting compost.

Winter-flowering begonias are raised usually from cuttings of the basal shoots which are potted in small pots of sandy, peaty soil at first and then into larger containers containing a compost of equal parts of loam, leaf mold, and well decayed manure. Moisture, semishade, and a minimum temperature of 55° are needed. Up until November, flower buds should be removed, then allowed to develop and bloom, after which less water is given and after a rest period restarted again to provide mainly basal shoots for cuttings.

The rhizomatous and rex begonias originate in warm, humid forests and require a minimum temperature of 50°-55° with a location semi-shaded. A north window makes an excellent place. The best potting compost consists of equal parts of leaf mold and loam, to which some crushed charcoal, a little sand, and a bit of rotted cow manure has been added. March is the time for repotting. Division of the plant itself is one of the means of propagation and the other is leaf propagation. Healthy leaves may be taken from the plant, notches made in the veins on the lower surface, and then the leaves laid on sand or peat in a propagating frame. Baby plants will form near the notches and just as soon as a good root system has formed they may be potted in small pots.

Fibrous begonias, evergreen and perpetual-blooming plants, very often grow as tall as man in their native habitat. This would be much too large for the usual plant grower so pot confinement may be used to keep the plant in bounds. A minimum of 55°, fair amount of humidity, not heavily fertilized soil, and a moderate amount of sun are their requirements. Cut-

tings will root very readily in a propagating case of sand.

Most varieties of the wax begonias will come true from seed and some would rather start their decorating plants in this way. Shoots taken off the mother plant root readily in sand.

If grown properly, begonias are usually free of pests and diseases. Sterilized soil, fresh air, correct temperatures, along with correct light exposure all go to make healthy and beautiful plants. Because they are deep breathers, the soil should never be packed tightly onto the root systems. Should stem rot appear in tuberous begonias fumigating with a good fumigating powder will usually control the trouble.

Begonias are very happy under fluorescent lights so please do not let the lighting problem discourage you. A bench in the cellar filled with begonias with proper temperature will prove satisfactory.

CORRECTION

In the June issue of *The Begonia* it was reported that Mrs. T. J. Atkinson and Mr. U. U. Stanford—now Mr. and Mrs. U. U. Stanford—joined the Lone Star Branch of the American Begonia Society. This was in error—both joined the Texas State Branch.

ARE YOU MOVING?

Send your change of address, with zip code, to the Membership Secretary, and state the date it will be effective. **THE BEGONIAN** is second class mail and cannot be forwarded to you. Do not risk being without your magazine.

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A. B. S. CONVENTION

This year's flower show and convention will be held at the Hawthorne Memorial Building, at 3901 West El Segundo Blvd., Hawthorne, California. The dates will be September 2, 3, and 4.

Help and donations of food or money will be needed. Anyone having time to help should contact the President, Everett Wright, at 4508 West 133rd Street, Hawthorne, or phone 676-3565, and let him know when you can give a hand. Any money sent to help should be sent to the Treasurer, Walter J. Barnett, 1213 South Mullendar Avenue, West Covina, California. Make all checks payable to the A.B.S. Convention Fund.

If you want hotel reservations made, contact Mr. Wright and he will make them for you. Hotels and restaurants will be convenient to the convention location. The show and banquet will all be held under one roof this year.

Let's all get behind the Board and help make this a very successful and happy event. We will be looking forward to seeing you all at the convention.

LUCILLE WILLIAMS
Secretary

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ADVENTITIOUS GROWTH

Since publication of Dr. Harriet B. Creighton's article on "Phyllomania" in the March *Begonian*, many members are taking a closer look at the phenomenon of adventitious growth on certain begonias.

Thelma O'Reilly of La Mesa, California, saw a friend's Begonia 'Gwen Lowell' which the friend thought had insects she could not get rid of. Under a magnifying glass, all the main stems proved to be covered with baby leaves. No other growers she called in the area had seen this trait in their 'Gwen Lowell' plants, except Sylvia Leatherman, whose plants were covered from soil line to top of the stems with this growth—not just one, but all the plants she could find.

Alice Roberts of Encinitas also reported that her 'Gwen Lowell' stems were covered with adventitious leaflets, although Robert Shatzer in Albright, West Virginia, has found none on his.

B. 'Gwen Lowell' is a Belva Kusler hybrid of *B. olsoniae* (*vellozoana*) x *B. obscura*.

Wally Watchorn of Oceanville, California, gave Thelma a plant from a cross of *B. macrocarpa* x *hispidula cucullata* with the red and green coloring of the mother and the shape (so far) from both parents. Thelma noticed an adventitious leaflet on a leaf of this plant recently. And Ruth Pease of Los Angeles has a seedling of *hispidula* x *macrocarpa* which also has adventitious plantlets.

In Annandale, Virginia, Carrie Karegeannes had two very small *dregei* x *rex* cultivar seedlings (from a cross made by Jane Neal in England) suddenly show a tiny leaflet at the sinus of a leaf. She does not know the traits of the *rex* parent, though some *rexes* are known to have adventitious plantlets at sinus of mature leaves, or of leaves about to drop at dormancy. She wonders if adverse conditions could have made even young seedlings try in this way to make sure of

life. On one plant, the whole leaf soon withered and dropped, but the seedling itself is growing well now. The other seedling is not very healthy, but the sinus has sent up a second tiny leaflet.

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REPORT OF A.B.S. BOARD MEETING

The June meeting of the Board of Directors of the American Begonia Society was called to order by President Everett Wright at 7:50 p.m. in the South Gate City Auditorium.

President Wright introduced a new member of the Inglewood Branch, Pete LaMone, and also welcomed back Miss Gertrude Winsor, who has been away many months because of illness.

Roll was called, with twelve officers and eleven Branches reporting.

Correspondence was read, including a letter from Tru Peterson resigning as Editor of *The Begonian*. Mr. Ferguson made a motion to accept the resignation, seconded by Alice Martin. Carl Naumann stated that if the Editor stayed on till the end of the term there would be no need for a resignation, but Charles Tagg pointed out that there would be an overlapping date in order to get the October magazine out.

Floyd Neff suggested that the President-Elect get a committee and work on the situation. Vera Naumann made an amendment to Mr. Ferguson's motion to make the resignation effective September 1. This was seconded by Margaret Lee and the amendment and motion carried.

Charles Tagg read a letter from the Doubleday Book Club, advising that the book *All About Begonias*, by Bernice Brilmayer, will be reprinted October 6, 1967.

The Treasurer reported receipts of \$595.05 and disbursements of \$770.08, leaving a balance of \$567.24 on hand.

There was some discussion about the expenses for entering in Fern show. President Wright explained what the expense was for, for some bamboo and lights, which are the property of the American Begonia Society and will be turned over to the incoming president, to be used in future shows.

The Membership Secretary reported 144 new and renewal members for the month, with a total mailing list of 2518. She also received a note from the "Ventura" Branch expressing their thanks for having us all there in April.

The Advertising Manager reported accounts received in the amount of \$73.30 and receivables of \$115.00. She also spoke about the ads for the Christmas greetings. Charles Tagg made a motion that she request the ads, as in the past. This was seconded by Vera Naumann.

Public Relations Director Vera Naumann

reported that she had filled the chairmanship in the eastern area—Mrs. Lily Fine. She has received several letters from behind the "Iron Curtain" as well as from many other countries. Don, in New Zealand, wants to advertise in a paper there and try to get persons interested in the Begonia Society. Permission was granted for this to be done.

The Librarian reported that the 1934 edition of the reprinted *Begonians* were ready and the 1935 edition would be ready in about ten days. These may be had from the Librarian for \$6.00 for the set of four years.

Show Chairman Bert Slatter turned in a check for \$100.00 for the prize the A.B.S. won in the Fern Show. He asked the Secretary to write a letter of thanks to this club.

Everett Wright won a trophy at a show in Roosevelt Park.

Bert Slatter and Everett Wright put in a display at the show at the South Coast Botanical Gardens this month and won two trophies and an award certificate.

Sylvia Leatherman reported on the show held in Culver City. She will write an article about this show for the magazine.

Last week-end Charles Tagg and the Orange County Branch put in a display at the Fuchsia and Shade Plant Show of the California National Fuchsia Society in Costa Mesa.

San Diego Branch will have a garden tour July 9. On August 28, they will have a birthday pot-luck dinner and bingo. All are welcome.

Pearl Benell asked about having the Begonia Cultural Bulletin up-dated and reprinted. Sylvia Leatherman will help to bring this bulletin up to date, and Mr. Wright will talk to growers and report at the next meeting.

Sylvia Leatherman made a motion that, since we were only \$15.50 short of having reached our goal in the Dr. Creighton Fund, we take this amount from the treasury so the matter can be completed. Seconded by Pearl Benell, the motion carried.

President Everett Wright asked that all Branch representatives give him a list of all persons willing to help at the convention.

There was some discussion about getting another printer for the coming year. It was suggested that we contact several other printers. Charles Tagg was empowered to check with Knickerbocker Press, Day Publishing Co., and Jack Bergstrand, a broker, to determine whether or not the American Begonia Society will be able to better our present printing costs. If it appears that the

services of the present printer, Bert Joseph, will not be required next year, Mr. Tagg is to so notify him. Seconded by Anne Rose, this motion carried.

— LUCILLE WILLIAMS
Secretary

CALENDAR

August 3 — Whittier Branch: Color slides and commentary by Robert Jensen, member of Whittier Branch. Program on begonias and some "fun" pictures.

August 4-5 — Eastern Conference of A.B.S. in Lexington, Massachusetts.

August 5-6—Westchester Branch: Begonia and Shade Plant Show, Westchester Woman's Club.

August 9—Inglewood Branch: Guest speaker will be Steve Talnadge from Talnadge's Fern Gardens in Chula Vista, California. He will show slides, answer questions, and furnish plants for the plant table.

August 12-13 — Orange County Branch: Shade Plant Show at the Orange County Fairgrounds, Costa Mesa, California.

August 17—Football Branch: Pot-luck dinner at 7 p.m. with meeting at 8 p.m., at the home of Mrs. R. N. Weaver, 757 Fountain Spring Lane, Glendora, California. Ethel Talley will speak on "African Violets."

August 20—Redondo Area Branch: Annual fund-raising hamburger dinner at the home of John and Alice Martin, 4642 West 141st Street, Hawthorne, California. From 2 to 7 p.m. \$1.00 per person.

August 25-26-27—San Francisco County Fair Flower Show in the Hall of Flowers, Golden Gate Park, Ninth Avenue and Lincoln Way, San Francisco.

September 2-3-4 — American Begonia Society Begonia and Shade Plant Show and Convention.

September 7 — Whittier Branch: Installation of Officers, conducted by Everett Wright, President of A.B.S. Mr. Wright will also present a program on "Begonia Culture."

EXIT THE EDITOR

This, the August, 1967, issue of *The Begonian* is my last. The issue for August, 1959, was my first. Since then, excluding one term from November, 1964, to October, 1965, I have served as your editor for a total period of seven years and one month.

On the whole, the work has brought me pleasure. I have enjoyed the help and cooperation of many devoted members whose contributions made a good magazine, and have been pleased to receive articles from growers throughout the world who had valuable information to share. For all such assistance I am sincerely grateful.

It has been my objective to publish a magazine that would appeal to all members regardless of geographical location, and have avoided catering to any factions, although I have sometimes felt the ire of some persons who sought special privileges. If I have pleased the majority of the readers, then I feel that my work has been worthwhile.

Now, however, I find that the pressures of other interests and business affairs make it impossible for me to devote the time that is necessary to put out a good magazine. Therefore, I must relinquish the editor's chair to someone who can give the detailed attention *The Begonian* deserves.

N. TRUMOND PETERSON
Editor

NEW EDITOR

Beginning with the September issue, the editor of *The Begonian* will be:

Mrs. Mae Tagg
2123 West West Avenue
Fullerton, Calif. 92633

All material for publication should be sent to her.

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