

# *The* BEGONIAN

MARCH, 1968

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Editor.....Mrs. Mae Tagg  
2123 W. West Ave., Fullerton, Calif. 92633  
Eastern Editor.....Mrs. Hertha Benjamin  
1927 University Ave., New York, N.Y. 10453  
Southern Editor.....Mrs. Don Wagner  
3074 Seeland St., Baton Rouge, La. 70808  
Northwestern Editor.....Richard Hammond  
9401 26th Ave., S.W., Seattle, Wash. 98106  
Advertising Manager.....Anne L. Rose  
14036 E. Ramona Dr., Whittier, Calif. 90605

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## AIMS AND PURPOSES OF THE AMERICAN BEGONIA SOCIETY, INC.

The purpose of this Society shall be: To stimulate  
and promote interest in Begonias and other shade-  
loving plants; To encourage the introduction and develop-  
ment of new types of these plants; To standardize the  
nomenclature 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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11769  
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★ ★ ★

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

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

The past three months this column has been entirely devoted to the subject of increasing the dues. One of the greatest pleasures of this position has been meeting the fine members who live all over the world, mostly by correspondence. As might be expected, this subject has increased the amount of correspondence—and my pleasure—many times. If I could do nothing else special as President of the A.B.S., I would hope to get more of the members into the habit of expressing their wants to their officers.

While we're on the subject of letters, I'll ask for more. We've had members who are ready to pay more dues for an improved *Begonian*. None of these letters has given a clear statement of what would be considered an improvement. We can only hope to please you if you let us know exactly what you want. This applies to the other services of the A.B.S. also. For the first time in years we hope to have money to budget for those improved services, so we need your specific ideas now.

Another question has been asked and deserves an answer. Several have asked why we go to the expense and trouble of taking a vote for the dues increase. "Let the Board of Directors do it." Since the dues are specified in the by-laws and the Board of Directors does not have the authority to change those by-laws, a ballot is necessary. For those interested in reading all the fine points, the complete text of the Constitution and By-laws is included in *The Begonian* for April, 1966.

At the January board meeting, we got our wires crossed. A cursory look at one section of the bylaws made it appear that it would be necessary to initiate the bylaws amendment in a special meeting. A special meeting was called at the conclusion of the regular meeting in order to handle this. After everyone had gone home, we discovered that we did not have a

(Continued on Page 56)

## FROM THE EDITOR

Since becoming Editor in August, I have been overwhelmed at the eagerness of our members to write of their knowledge and experiences. Newcomers as well as "old-timers" are contributing material of excellent quality. My file already holds a nice stock of good articles: "Begonia Leaves," "Begonia Trichomes," "Beautiful Canes," "Seed Sowing," "The Mysteries of Nature," "Spring Fever Begonia Style," "Atomic Irradiation of Begonias"—these are only a few of the titles you have to look forward to. Good ideas, good suggestions, good material, praise, cooperation, and constructive criticism have overbalanced the scales tremendously. We have hope that this constructiveness will continue.

At the January board meeting, I made a motion stating "that if the dues increase becomes effective within six months, that *The Begonian* be automatically increased to 24 pages." This motion passed unanimously. This is a big step toward a better *Begonian* since it will provide one and a half times the space now used for these excellent articles. This is also good because since the motion is already passed, the issue which tells you the results of the dues ballot will be the first larger issue. This eases the frustration of the many fine articles I now don't have room to print.

The big question before me is: What makes a better *Begonian*? Do you like the "Announcements?" Should the "Letters" be continued and expanded? What companion shade plants would you like to read about? What subjects are not being covered thoroughly enough? This magazine is published for YOU. What do YOU want?

I am as eager for a better *Begonian* as anyone. Those who have written to encourage a better magazine have not always been specific about what they feel would improve the present situation. It has already been improved in several ways—getting it mailed on

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# LEAF DISC PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

By HARRY B. LAGERSTEDT, *Department of Horticulture, Oregon State University*

The propagation of Begonias from leaf disks may have advantages for both the commercial propagator and the Begonia hobbyist. The greatest advantage of leaf disk propagation is the number of new plants obtainable. The average sized Begonia leaf is capable of yielding from 30 to 50 leaf disks and/or potential plants. The practicality and advantages of this technique increases with the size of the parent leaf. Leaf disks can be cultured in Petri dishes or similar covered containers and thus require no special propagating facilities. Numerous disks can fit into a small area so extensive propagating space is not essential. Less frequent watering is needed by using a covered dish. A high relative humidity maintained within the dish retards moisture loss by the leaf disks. Being exposed to warm room temperatures and avoiding frequent cold irrigations, the leaf disks develop quite rapidly. With the proper variety, rooting of Begonia disks has been obtained in as little as ten days. On the other hand, varieties which do not root as leaf-petiole cuttings will not root or bud from leaf disks regardless of the treatment or environmental conditions.

The ease with which plants regenerate their lost parts differs greatly. This is well known to Begonia propagators who attempt to compare the speed of rooting the many different species and varieties available. Most woody and herbaceous plants can readily differentiate roots, but not a

growing point. A much smaller number of plants, usually herbaceous, can be propagated from leaves. This is because they have the capacity to differentiate *both* roots and a new growing point. The rhizomatous Begonia is one of the plants which can differentiate roots and buds from undifferentiated leaf tissue. However, even this inherent capacity for rooting and budding differs greatly and has much to do with how the various types of Begonias are propagated.

In 1965, a complete plant was regenerated from a single undifferentiated cell for the first time. This feat was long believed to be impossible. However, it does indicate that every cell in a living organism may contain the capacity to differentiate and grow into a complete and normal individual. It may be that the most limiting factor in propagation is man, as it is he who must learn how to culture and nurture these cells during their long period of development.

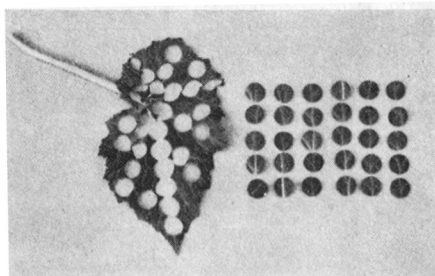
The leaf disk propagating technique proved useful as a research tool for investigating organ differentiation. It is limited to plants which normally are propagated from leaf cuttings, i.e., rex and rhizomatous Begonias, peperomias, and certain succulents.

The technique consists of cutting penny-sized disks across the leaf veins. This is usually done with a cork borer, but squares cut with a razor blade would serve just as well. The disks are surface sterilized for three

## COVER PICTURE

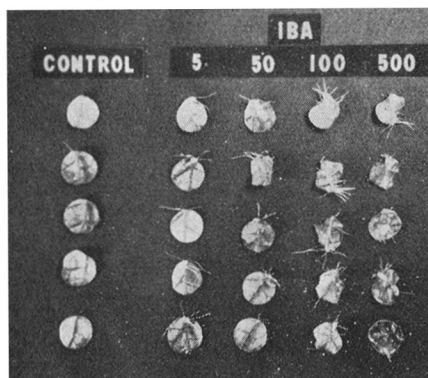
Rooting on upper and lower surface of leaf disk due to treating both surfaces with IBA. The different appearance of the upper surface roots is due to their having developed in moist air. Lower surface roots were in contact with moist filter paper.

*Photo by Harry B. Lagerstedt*



Medium sized leaf yielded 30 disks.





Results of rooting experiment using different concentrations of IBA. Leaf disks distorted at 100 and 500 ppm. Actually 500 ppm (1 hr.) produced less roots than 100 ppm and 50 ppm produced more buds than the higher concentrations. We settled on a half hour treatment of 100 ppm as a good general treatment.

to five minutes in a 10% Chlorox solution, followed by a rinse in water. The disks are then treated by floating them on various growth regulator solutions. Untreated disks will also root and bud, though more slowly.

The disks are cultured on moist filter paper in sterilized Petri dishes. Moist paper towels, vermiculite, perlite, and sand can also serve as the propagating medium. Peat moss retards rooting and is not recommended as a growing medium. Clean glass or plastic containers covered with clear glass or Saran wrap could be substituted for Petri dishes. The disks will break down if kept too wet or in direct contact with water. The propagating medium used should serve to keep the disks just above the water.

Temperature has a great influence on the speed of development of type of cutting. There is a marked difference in the speed of rooting leaf disks at 75° as compared to 65°. Even 80° is not too high for good results.

Light intensity has proved to be a critical environmental factor in Begonia propagation. A tremendous difference in rooting and budding responses has been noted at different light intensities. To date, tests have been made at 50, 125, 250, and 500 foot candles with the latter being

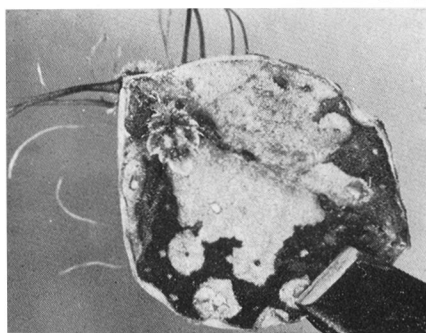
nearly inhibitory to growth. The 125 foot candle intensity has given the best results thus far.

No nutrients are used during the propagation period because they encourage other organisms to grow and result in contamination of the culture dishes.

There is yet another factor which can be imposed upon leaf disks, namely, plant growth regulators (PGR's). The PGR's promote rapid rooting, but if used in high concentrations they will retard or inhibit budding. The PGR most commonly found in so-called "rooting powders" is indolebutyric acid (IBA). This is a very effective compound which can increase both the speed and ultimate number of roots obtained on cuttings. It is most commonly used on the base of stem cuttings, however, excessively high concentrations of IBA on stem cuttings has caused leaf drop or a delay in bud break. Since leaf cuttings must differentiate buds as well as roots, the use of IBA with leaf cuttings has generally been avoided.

This does not necessarily mean that the use of IBA on Begonia petioles is a bad practice. By promoting rapid rooting, this practice assures the leaf cutting's survival in the propagating bench. It would be well to recognize, however, that IBA concentrations should be kept low; that budding may be retarded, and that there is usually little benefit from the use of IBA with varieties that are normally easy to root.

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Normal rooting and budding 30 days old.

# TUBEROUS BEGONIAS FROM SEEDLINGS

By OSCAR RHEINGOLD, *East Schodack, New York*

*Mr. Oscar Rheingold has a large dairy farm, which is his vocation, his avocation is that of growing tuberous Begonias to perfection.*

Hertha A. Benjamin  
Eastern Editor

A display of 2200 tuberous Begonia plants with dazzling blooms is the greatest pride in my garden. Perhaps, after I describe my method, you may become interested in growing them in your garden.

I obtain tuberous Begonia seedlings from Professor Harlow of Schenectady, New York that have been sown, I assume, in December. The seedlings come 50 to a flat with one to two inch centers, and arrive here at the end of March. The soil in my greenhouse is already prepared ahead of time and the seedlings are immediately transplanted 20 to a flat. This soil contains three parts top soil and one part peat with some perlite. The temperature in the greenhouse is kept at about 70° and the seedlings are fed once a week with fish emulsion.

About the fifteenth of May the seedlings are put in the cold frame, which is on the east side of the greenhouse, thus protecting the seedlings from the afternoon sun. Our area is not frost free until the tenth of June; at that time, the seedlings are set out.

The preparation of the bedding soil is as follows: The scrapings of the barnyard are mixed with top soil. Each year additional scrapings and top soil are added. This explains the raised bed that is enclosed on all sides by railroad ties (about eight inches high). The bed runs from east to west. The south side of the bed is flanked by a row of Norway spruce. This set-up has many important aspects. The foliage of the trees provides a lath-effect and the plants receive only staggered sunlight. The whole bed is amply protected from the hot afternoon sun, but it receives a

great deal of light. All this makes it a perfect set-up for tuberous Begonias.

The seedlings are set out about eight inches apart. With the high fertility (cow manure) of the soil, no commercial fertilizer is used. The high fertility seems also to hold moisture well and no watering is needed under normal conditions. The seedlings grow now into sturdy and stocky plants. They do not reach for the sun because they have enough daylight. I can count as many as ten to twelve large blooms to a plant. In spite of this heavy load, they do not need staking. During the summer of 1967, mildew was a real problem because of heavy rain. Formerly, mildex was used to keep the leaves healthy. But in 1967 Pipron made by Eli Lilly Company was applied. Each of these chemicals has its good and bad points. When I started to grow tuberous Begonias, I bought 200 Holland bulbs. The following year, I planted Holland and Belgian bulbs. The third year I tried Professor Harlow's seedlings and have remained faithful to them ever since.

Last year my bed contained 2200 plants. The variety of colors and forms was magnificent. I feel that in getting new seedlings every year from Professor Harlow, I am just in time for a new show every summer because new colors and new varieties appear. The plants seem to me more vigorous year after year.

Our region here has a short season. While some of our plants make bulblets, we do not dig them up. We just enjoy them until frost destroys them and start fresh all over again the following spring.

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A.B.S.  
NATIONAL CONVENTION  
AND SHOW  
August 24 & 25, 1968  
Hawthorne, California

# NORTHEAST BEGONIAS IN MARCH

By ELDA HARING

March is a blustery month in the Northeast. We can have near zero temperatures with snow one day and a few days later will come a day so mild that we delude ourselves into thinking we will have an early spring. Most of our winter-blooming Begonias have been blossoming for weeks, others are getting ready to open their buds. This is the month to start planning for April flower shows. Begonias should be kept free of dead or dying blooms and unsightly leaves. They should be watched carefully to be sure they are not getting too much sun. If they tend to lean toward the window, they should be given a quarter or half-turn daily to keep them symmetrical. They should be fed regularly and watered as often as necessary to insure that their leaves will be crisp and turgid.

To have good-sized bedding plants of *semperflorens* Begonias, this is the month to divide and repot old plants. Knock the plant out of its pot and pull or cut apart the sections. Repot in good potting soil, shading from the sun for a few days and then give all possible sunlight. It is preferable to start the divisions in two or three-inch pots and repot as necessary when the pots are filled with roots. This should give a good supply to plant outdoors in late May. While *semperflorens* do grow in full sun, it has been my experience that they are at their best in semi-shaded areas out-of-doors, here in the Northeast.

There are Begonias other than *semperflorens* which are fine for bedding purposes and should be more widely used. *B. 'Digswelliana'*, *B. 'Catalina'*, and *B. schmidtiana* for example are

some of my favorites. I take stem cuttings of the first two and make divisions of *B. schmidtiana*. For this reason, I prefer to use sand for propagating *B. schmidtiana* divisions and cuttings. As most of my readers know, I like to use a mixture of equal parts of vermiculite, perlite and milled sphagnum for propagating many of my Begonias and other house plants.

March is a good month to sow seed of tuberous Begonias. For a medium for all my seeds I use the mix already described for cuttings. One of my friends prefers milled sphagnum for this purpose. The medium should be thoroughly moistened with warm water before sowing the seed and the seed pan should be covered with a piece of plastic, making sure that the plastic does not rest on the medium. As soon as germination takes place, the plastic should be removed. Begonia seed will usually germinate more quickly if there is bottom heat but this is not essential. An even temperature of 70° is good. I find that they germinate more quickly under fluorescent lights than they do in my greenhouse which is kept at 60° nighttime temperature. At cooler temperatures, the seed may take as long as three or four weeks to germinate. When the little plants are about an eighth of an inch high, they should be fed with a quarter strength Rapid-Gro or some other water soluble fertilizer every ten days until they are large enough to handle. They may be transplanted to bulb pots or flats in good soil, spacing the plants about two inches apart. They are given strong light and when they have grown to the point where their leaves are touching, they are potted into two-inch pots, shifting to larger pots as necessary. Seedling plants will bloom by August in the Northeast, if they have been kept growing without any setback.

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A.B.S.

EASTERN REGIONAL  
CONVENTION AND SHOW

Hosted by the Connecticut Branch  
Old Saybrook, Connecticut

## WHAT IS A SEMP?

By EDNA STEWART  
Tarentum, Pennsylvania

*Mrs. Stewart is our cultural adviser. "A semp is a semp," to the advanced grower but the beginner is still asking "What is a semp?"*

Editor

Semperflorens — many flowers — always flowering. Better known as "wax" Begonias because of the shiny waxy appearance of the leaves. Also known as bedding Begonias and now carried by bedding plant growers by the dozen in flats and by potted plants, for spring planting.

The original *B. semperflorens* was accidentally introduced with the soil of other Brazilian plants in 1821. The original plant grew to a height of three feet under favorable conditions. Through crossing and recrossing, we now have our present semperflorens of low, compact growth.

"Wax" Begonias have green and dark foliage and also variegated in the form of the calla Begonia. Single and double flowers in shades of white, pink, rose, salmon, and various shades of red.

B. 'Gustave Lind' was the first double flowered semp and was distributed in 1934. The first double semp to come true from seed was B. 'Christmas Candle' introduced by the Park Seeds Company in 1957. Since then they have introduced several new

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B. 'Baby Bunting', a semperflorens cross by Marie Turner.  
Photo by W. Givens

## I'LL CRY TOMORROW

By RUBY MAE BUDD  
Los Angeles, California

As I cut back my Begonias, I will feel like I am cutting out a part of myself. I go through this every year. They always manage to come up more beautiful than last year because they have had a rest.

I'll cry tomorrow when I go out and see what I did to B. 'Sophie Cecile' and her daughter which I cut down to six inches above the pot. I did the same thing last year and I also cried then. But they do come up more beautiful and I have cuttings for many more daughters. By show time they will be in all their glory.

I am always being asked by Begonia friends this time of the year to visit them and show them how to cut back their Begonias. This is a big mistake because after I've had a pair of clippers in my hand, my friends are in a state of shock when I leave. But they soon learn how to do it. I cut back *B. scepstrum* to nine inches and it grew to nine feet that year to be entered in the Begonia shows.

I'll cry tomorrow when I cut back B. 'Helen Nicholson' which was such a beautiful Begonia at the A.B.S. Show where it won the Edna Korts Perpetual Trophy. I will cut it back to nothing but 'Helen' will come back again and will throw new growth from her base as I tip prune her during the spring as I do on all my canes.

I'll cry tomorrow when I cut back B. 'Jill Adair' for it looks sick after going through the rain and cold. She also will bloom for me to thank me for taking care of her. I have heard many speakers say to cut back your Begonias two or three nodes every two weeks, but by the time you get through doing this the season is over. The best Begonia grower I've known, the late John Thieben, cut every Begonia he had whether in the ground or pot down to nothing, but he always managed to win most all the trophies in every show. In fact, other Begonia

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## BEGONIAS UNDER CLOTH

By IRVING H. GRAY  
*Burlington, Vermont*

In the course of our experience with Begonias we have learned several of their requirements. They must have light, but exposure to the direct rays of the sun is apt to burn the delicate leaves of some varieties. They must have moisture in air and soil. The air in the ordinary living room is too dry for them and oftentimes when we think the soil is wet enough, it is wet only on the surface and the fine thread-like roots in the middle of the pot are wasting away in a dry powdery soil. This is occasioned when the pots are left standing on shelves exposed to the drying atmosphere of the room.

They require plenty of fresh air, but their stems are so slender and their leaves so large that they are easily ruined by the switching of the wind. They need plenty of room so that when one is handled, its neighbor is not in danger of being broken. Then too over-crowding tends to breed disease.

We have discovered a method of raising them that has proven so satisfactory during the two seasons that we have used it that we would like to pass on the idea to others. We built a frame four feet wide, eight feet long and two and one-half feet high, using one and three-quarter inch by three-quarter inch material. This is covered with cheese cloth. The corner posts are about twelve inches longer than the height of the frame so they can be driven into the ground. The frame is made in four pieces, put to-

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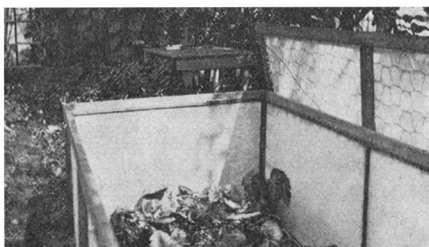


Photo from Elsie Bean

## REPOTTING ROOTBOUND PLANTS

By DAVID MARKS  
*Anaheim, California*

As spring approaches, many of us will be planting some of our Begonias in the ground. They can make a wonderful addition to our semi-sun or shaded landscaping areas.

Some growers have complained that their pot grown plants did not do well after being transplanted into the ground or window boxes. If you have been watering correctly, feeding adequately, and they refuse to grow, perhaps the roots became too confined while still in the pot.

Once roots have formed a matted surface covering the ball of soil in a pot, they seldom are able to develop into the surrounding soil without assistance. Use a very sharp knife or razor blade to make a shallow cut through the surface of the root ball, from top to bottom, on three or four sides. These cuts need not be more than a quarter inch deep. After planting, new roots will develop at the cuts, growing out into the surrounding soil.

If the potting mix in the pot is very different from that used to fill the window box, a watering problem may occur. The water may keep the surrounding soil soaked, but the original root ball may dry out completely. Sometimes this may be corrected in a planter by plugging the drain holes,

*(Continued on Page 54)*



### American Begonia Society INSIGNIA PIN

for Begonia Society Members

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# CLAYTON M. KELLY SEED FUND

## No. 1—*B. paulensis*—

This plant was discovered many years ago in Brazil, but still is not common in cultivation. It was first grown in this country by Mrs. Louise Schwerdtfeger, Santa Barbara, California, from seed brought from Germany. Leaves are medium green, shiny, and peltate, distinctively striking with its ivory-colored sinus from which the main veins radiate. The radial veins are joined by cross veins which form a circle giving an interesting spider-web effect. Each spider-web section is covered with short white hairs but on the underside of the leaf the hairs are red, showing up distinctly on an apple-green background. The leaf petiole is light green covered with pinkish hairs and a small collar of red hairs appears at the leaf petiole junctions. Flowers are one and a half to two inches in diameter and are white inside. This is a stately and handsome Begonia that will add great beauty to any collection. Price \$1.00 per pkt.

## No. 2—*B. 'Thrush' X (B. dregei X B. 'Thrush')*—

American hybrids from some of the best and most colorful plants. Note that *B. 'Thrush'* is the result of a *B. rex cultorum X B. dregei*. The pollen parent (unnamed) is similar in shape to *B. dregei* but not in size. Its leaf surface is completely covered with tiny silver speckles, on an olive-green background. The underside of the leaves are dark red. *B. dregei* is a semi-tuberous Begonia with a natural tendency to rest. The *rex Begonia* also takes a decided rest, so with this background in mind, growers should keep plants on the dry side during the rest period. Very fresh seed that will germinate in about three weeks. Price \$1.00 per pkt.

## No. 3—*B. rex cultorum*—

Seed from colorful German type *rexes* just received from grower who states that plants have been given gold and silver medals in shows and gardens throughout Germany where they

have been shown. Price \$1.00 per pkt.

## Close Out Sale Number Two

### *B. rotundifolia*—

Small terrarium plant with roundish overlapping leaves, pink flowers.

### *B. evansiana*—

Hardy outdoor type with rex-like leaves and many pink flowers in summer. Bulbils in leaf axils that appear in early summer.

### Cane Type Begonias—

From the Philippine Islands. Red leaves, pink flowers.

### *B. boliviensis*—

Semi-tuberous hanging type with brilliant red flowers.

### *B. heracleifolia nigricans*—

Strong star-leaf valued for its ornamental leaf, rhizomatous.

### *B. coccinea*—

Cane type with sometimes silver spotted leaves and red flowers.

### *B. 'Kallaking'*—

Crosses of Chester Nave. Calla type with pink flowers.

### *B. semperflorens cultorum*—

Second generation x-rayed seed. Calla type and plain.

### *B. sceptrum*—

Brazil. Silky, dark green leaves with sunken veins, irregular, silver spotted leaves; flowers pink.

### *B. cameroun sp. #1005*—

Rhizomatous with bright crimson flowers edged white; a new Begonia.

### *B. 'Bow-Nigra'*—

A hybrid with star-shaped leaves, lighter veins. Pink flowers.

### *Streptocarpus*—

Mixed species from Africa. You may purchase the above twelve varieties for \$4.00 or 50 cents for each single pkt. Anyone requesting the entire collection will receive without charge one pkt. of mixed Begonia seed. Seed contained in the free pkts. have not been offered in either of the collections or singly.

Our semperflorens collections have been so popular we cannot resist offering another list for your growing pleasure. They are versatile and easy to grow as bedding plants or pots producing masses of color throughout the year. They will grow in sun where some protection is provided such as trees or in a lath house.

**B. 'Linda'—**

Six inch plants with rose-salmon bloom, compact habit. F1 hybrid. Price 50 cents per pkt.

**B. 'Sleeping Beauty'—**

Six inches, bright carmine, extremely free-flowering. Sun and rain proof. F1 hybrid. Price 50 cents per pkt.

**B. 'Derby'—**

New. Six inch plant with coral-salmon with light center bloom. Unusual. Price 50 cents per pkt.

**B. 'Glow'—**

Intermediate, large flowers, dark red, excellent for pots. Price 50 cents per pkt.

**B. 'Kathy'—**

Glistening white flowers and bronze foliage. Effective. Price 50 cents per pkt.

The above five varieties may be purchased for \$2.00, otherwise, priced as noted.

Comment: A few months ago, seed was offered by the Seed Fund as *B. xanthina*, India species. We now have information that they did not produce the Begonia that we know by this name. However, the original seed came to us from a grower in India labeled as offered. We could only offer them as they came to us and if we held them until the seed germinated and produced mature flowering plants, they would no longer be viable. It sometimes requires several months or even years to establish the true identity of a plant. We are always disturbed when this situation occurs but it is beyond our control even though we try to obtain seed from reliable sources, they sometimes are incorrectly labeled. We advise that you keep these plants labeled with the

## GESNERIAD NOTES

Sue McCarthy, who grows Gesneriads as well as Begonias in Alsip, Illinois had quite a large Aeschynanthus (lip-stick vine) in a two-and-a-half-inch pot. It had not bloomed in a long time, so Sue repotted it into a five-inch pot. It seemed no time before it had buds all over it.

Carl L'Hommedieu of Oakdale, New York finds Aeschynanthus plants are much more difficult to flower than Columneas. They probably need more light. Columneas seem to bloom for him almost anywhere, eventually, but not Aeschynanthus. He plans to move his to the lights. Mike Kartuz says these vines are especially suited for fluorescent light growing.

Cornell University has released a new Columnea species, *C. jamaicensis*, with unusual foliage and a very attractive small flower. Carl crossed this species with *C. 'Yellow Dragon'*, an almost everblooming hybrid, hoping to develop an everblooming Columnea that looks like *C. jamaicensis*.

Hypocyrtas, also members of the Gesneriad family, are nice foliage plants, but also do not flower enough for Carl. *H. wetsteinei* and *H. radicans* are especially beautiful, with beautiful, glossy, dark green leaves.

Ruth Wille of Jackson, Mississippi told how a friend in her climate area sunk pots of velvety Episcia into the ground under a shrub near the house. Stolons rooted and made a beautiful ground cover. She planned to let the frost kill the old plant and to move only the rooted stolons indoors for winter. Ruth, herself, likes Episcias in baskets, but agrees they are beautiful when allowed to browse over potting mix and attach themselves, becoming fuller that way.

---

month and item number of the Seed Fund listing and watch this column for possible identification.

Mrs. Florence Gee  
Seed Fund Administrator  
234 Birch Street  
Roseville, Calif. 95678

## ROUND ROBIN NOTES

Questions? Ideas? Experiences to share? These make up round robins.

### Hybridizing:

Reverse crosses of the same parents showed marked differences for Pat Burdick of Burnsville, Minnesota. Her *B. kenworthyi* x *B. 'Bow-Nigra'* seedlings, four months old, were showing some red and leaves like the seed parent, *B. kenworthyi*. Her *B. 'Bow-Nigra'* x *B. kenworthyi* seedlings were showing blanket stitchings on the leaves (from *B. boweri* through seed parent *B. 'Bow-Nigra'*). She was watching for changes as they grew.

(The August 1965 *Begonian* column "So Say The Experts" quoted a saying that the father influences leaf color and the mother influences leaf shape. In Pat's crosses, the mother appeared, so far, to give both color and shape to the offspring. Charles Chevalier, in Alva Graham's translation of his *Les Begonias*, noted that many say the father influences leaf color and the mother, temperament, etc., but that instances differ. It may be the strength of the trait itself that affects inheritance.)

### Sterility:

Pat could not get seed to set on *B. 'Preusen'* or *B. 'Venus'* (Big Leaf Venus), although both are good bloomers. In an earlier robin, another member wondered if *B. 'Preusen'* is sterile.

### *B. sceptrum* seedling:

Chuck and Mae Tagg find their *B. sceptrum* seedling takes an amazing amount of sun to look well. It was getting full sun to eleven a.m., then was shaded lightly by a fan palm the rest of the day, in Fullerton, California. It grew slowly, dropped leaves as fast as it grew them, and mildewed even in their dry air. When moved in the summer, it was straggly and an unhealthy color, three feet tall. North of the house, with full sky light all day and full sun after one p.m., it became full of new canes, seven feet tall in an eight-inch pot, healthy, vigorous,

blooming, beautiful. It drops leaves even there if overwatered, needs to be dry before watering. They say it should be slightly potbound.

### *B. goegoensis*:

Chuck gave further notes on globe culture of this humidity-loving rhizomatous *Begonia* from Sumatra. Last spring, he moved it from a three-inch pot to an eight-inch globe covered with glass; the glass held up one-eighth inch by plastic clips on the edge of the globe, for ventilation. The soil mix is compost and leafmold with sponge rock, barely damp when he waters, an ounce at a time. For all watering, he uses a solution of one-fifth tablespoon of 20-20-20 fertilizer to a gallon of water. The globe, under lights, became crowded; so Chuck began to take rhizome cuttings, has a second globe almost filled.

### *B. 'Dorothy Barton'*:

Stefanie Swatsek of Hawthorne, California lost her *B. 'Dorothy Barton'* (cane *Begonia* from *B. 'Lenore Olivier'* x *B. dregei*) to mildew, as have some of her more experienced friends, but she thinks it is beautiful. Bea Blake of Barneveld, New York bought a plant, also lost it.

### *B. cathayana*:

Anita Sickmon of Cheney, Kansas has had this glowing, velvety Chinese species drop all its leaves and come up again from the bottom two or three times, cannot seem to grow a nice plant. (References say *B. cathayana* is sensitive, requiring warmth and protection from drafts and sunlight, needing high humidity—and may drop some leaves when resting.)

### Cuttings:

Elaine Wilkerson of Baton Rouge, Louisiana has seen her nurseryman drop all his cuttings into a weak potassium permanganate solution to prevent wilting and to sterilize. Mildred Samartin of Holmes, Pennsylvania rooted a leaf of *B. masoniana* (Iron Cross) in water and had tiny plantlets right along the stem. She laid it on sphagnum moss in a plastic

bag. Gener Thurmon of Homer, Louisiana also has had small plants grow on stems of leaf cuttings, two inches from the soil—from rhizomatous Begonias 'Cool Waters' and 'Joe Hayden'. B. 'Black Beauty' does this often for a Virginia member, when humidity and light are good.

Rosetta White of Newton, Kansas had a plantlet from each of two leaves from B. 'Heracleicotyle' (B. 'Mrs. Townsend'—*B. heracleifolia* x *B. hydrocotylifolia*), one like its parent, the other with lighter green leaves black stitched around edges. If she had not taken the cuttings at the same time and marked them then, she might think she had the wrong name. Members are waiting to hear if the leaves eventually will develop like the parent.

### Adventitious Growth:

Anita's palm-leafed *B. luxurians* had small leaflets growing from the center of its leaves in November. She had not had it long enough to know if this growth is unusual. Ruth Wille of Jackson, Mississippi said she believed it rather characteristic. (Bernice Brilmayer's book describes another fingered Begonia species, *B. hemsleyana*, as having adventitious growth, but does not mention it on *B. luxurians*.)

*B. rex* c. 'Husband's Favorite' produced a little plant at the sinus of a leaf for Winifred Smith of Hillsboro, Oregon. The plant had not done this for her before.

### Terrariums:

Ben Marcus of Brooklyn writes that charcoal keeps springtails and gnats out of terrariums, is a must to keep the growing medium sweet. Priscilla Beck of Mystic, Connecticut finds *B. 'Dawn'* and *B. brooksii* are beautiful terrarium plants. (*B. brooksii* is a Mexican species also known as *B. checkerboard*, according to Rudy Ziesenhenné, who says he has plants from Honduras and Panama and that a plant so widely spread is most likely to have been found and named early. He is still looking for the correct name, therefore.) Priscilla also finds *B. bartonea* (Winter Jewel) grows

well in a terrarium, but requires more light than many rhizomatous Begonias to keep it from getting leggy.

### Tuberous Begonias:

Doris Robertson of Loveland, Colorado told members of her tuberous specialty flight about the British National Begonia Society, whose members are particularly interested in tuberous Begonias and are hybridizing for flower size and color. They advocate storing tubers in pots; less drying out. Members are asking if anyone in the United States has done work in grafting tuberous Begonias, which Doris assumes would be grafting two portions of a tuber or perhaps a growing shoot.

Florence Bettis of College Grove, Oregon also stores her tubers in pots, laid on their sides under a bench; they do not shrivel as they do when removed. She cuts her fuchsia plants back also and hangs the pots on nails until plants show growth.

### For Reading:

Pat cited articles of interest: "Never-Say-Die House Plants," November, 1967 *House and Garden*; "Color Your Windows Begonia," November, 1967 *American Home*; "Winter Flowering Begonias—Color From Frost Till Spring," October, *Home Garden*.

To join a round robin, write:

Mrs. Carrie Karengéannes  
Round Robin Director  
3916 Lake Boulevard  
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## LEAF DISK

*(Continued from Page 45)*

There is a second class of PGR's known as cytokinins, and the most common one of this class is kinetin. Kinetin can illicit many fascinating responses of which the promotion of budding is one and the retardation of rooting is another. Thus kinetin has generally the opposite effect of that of IBA. A current area of research is to establish levels of IBA and kinetin which exhibit only their favorable responses, i.e., promotion of rooting and budding respectively.

By using different PGR's and varying their concentrations, it has been possible to manipulate tissue differentiation in *Begonia* leaf disks as follows:

1. The use of IBA has increased the speed of rooting and the number of roots obtained.
2. High concentrations of IBA in solution applied to the upper surface of leaf disks has caused rooting of both surfaces of the disks while completely inhibiting budding.
3. Low concentrations of kinetin applied to the lower surface of leaf disks has caused buds to arise on the lower surface rather than on the upper surface where they normally occur. Thus in separate instances, roots have been caused to grow on the upper leaf surface and buds on the lower surface; just the reverse of normal tissue differentiation. While these unusual responses have no practical value, they do indicate the potential of PGR's and that there is yet much to be done.

The relative ease of rooting or budding of the members of the *Begonia* genus varies so much that PGR concentrations satisfactory for one variety may be wholly unsuitable for another. For example, the variety B. 'Reiga' was very sensitive to IBA. Good rooting results were obtained with this variety while using only one-tenth the IBA concentration normally used. Furthermore, the normal IBA concentra-

tion tended to inhibit the budding of B. 'Reiga'.

To date, nearly 250 named *Begonia* varieties have been tested for response to the leaf disk propagating technique. Of this number, almost all of them produced roots, about 70% produced both roots and buds, and slightly over 30% were brought to the transplanting stage. There is no doubt that the success figures could be substantially increased if the ideal conditions could be found for each variety.

*(Photos by Harry B. Lagerstedt)*

## REPOTTING

*(Continued from Page 49)*

flooding with water, then waiting until no more air bubbles rise before unplugging. After the roots start to spread this will not be necessary. In the ground, lay a soaker hose by the plant and soak slowly for several hours. A basin around the plant helps.

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## WHAT IS A SEMP?

*(Continued from Page 48)*

double varieties from seed. Not all plants from seed will be double, perhaps fifty percent, the rest being single or semi-doubles of some form.

The B. 'Geneva' group was developed in 1936 in California at Geneva Nurseries by crossing B. 'Gustave Lind' with a single flower of the same strain. B. 'Geneva Pink Beauty' and B. 'Geneva White Beauty' were developed from the same strain. I do not know where B. 'Geneva Pink Beauty' can be purchased at this time. B. 'Geneva Red Beauty' and B. 'Geneva White Beauty' are still in cultivation. They are very floriferous, bushy low-growing plants, and easy to grow from cuttings.

Semps are easily grown from seed and make very full bushy plants. They come in mixed seed or in separate colors.

Crossing and recrossing is continually in progress and each year new

## BEGONIAS UNDER CLOTH

*(Continued from Page 49)*

gether with screws, so it may be easily taken apart for winter storage. Then there is another frame to be used as a cover, reinforced with poultry wire as a protection against cats that might jump up on it. This cover is held in place with hooks and screw eyes.

We set the pots full depth into the ground. This retains the moisture. The cloth cover and sides protect from the winds and the sun, and yet admit sufficient light and air to afford an ideal condition for the Begonias. They grow luxuriantly and the highly colored ones lose none of their brightness. We put them into this "coop" about the first of April and can leave them there until the middle of October.

varieties are introduced. Of better form and new shades of color, resistance to disease and everblooming—semperflorens—semps.

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### LISTS AVAILABLE

Send for additional list of unusual plants or our complete Bromeliad list. 10c each.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT . . .

(Continued from Page 43)

quorum for a special meeting, so the action taken there is void.

Many members will still be interested in that action, even though it is not valid. The Board of Directors voted unanimously to present a ballot for an amendment to the bylaws. That amendment would have changed nothing except the amount of dues charged per year; from \$2.50 to \$4.00. This increase should make it possible to balance our budget and still have the funds to increase the services we maintain for our members. These services have been cut since 1951 as funds were short, and it is time to restore them. Read the editorial "From The Editor" for one instance.

The amendment is on the agenda and will have been presented to the Board of Directors again by the time you read this. We had hoped to include the ballot in this issue of *The Begonian*, but now plan for including it in the April issue. Look for it next month.

We are especially happy that the motion to decrease the size of *The Begonian* was defeated. The Board of Directors decided to wait to see how the ballot count goes, and then determine whether to decrease each issue or publish fewer issues. It is fortunate that it was not necessary to cut this service again yet. Several branches have been very generous in their unsolicited donations. One individual sent a separate donation, and many of our members have voluntarily increased their dues in support of this change. These funds have made it possible to continue our present services until the ballots are counted. We sincerely appreciate such voluntary cooperation.

Chuck Tagg

*Have you moved to a new location?  
Tell our Membership Secretary of  
this occasion.*

## FROM THE EDITOR

(Continued from Page 43)

time, more varied articles, and now a larger magazine. The cooperation of so many members is involved that I could not begin to list their names here. It is a thrilling experience to work with so many wonderfully cooperative people.

We have hope that through continued cooperation and better communication between members and editor, we will have a bigger and better *Begonian* before the year is out.

Mae Tagg

## I'LL CRY

(Continued from Page 48)

growers would have a field day when he did this for they were there with their boxes and sacks collecting cuttings.

Yes, I'll cry tomorrow as I pass by my many once beautiful Begonias remembering what they looked like last year. But I'll smile in the spring as I see the new growth showing their new leaves and I'll laugh in the summer when they are in full bloom and showing off for all Begonia lovers to see.



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## LETTERS

As I sit here reading my January issue of *The Begonian* I could not but feel your enthusiasm and love of Begonias shine through, because you have cared enough to research the "beginnings" of our organization and tell us about it in our publication. So many of us newer members can learn much from the past articles about Begonias but we do not have those first early years of *The Begonian*. I'm sure this will be a great year because of you and your husband's leadership.

Margaret Elmore

*(I would like to remind all of you that reprints of the early Begonians 1934 to 1937 are now available at a cost of \$6.00. See the Library Bookstore ad on page 59 for details.)*

You are just NOT going to believe what I am about to relate to you now. Turn to page seven, January, to the column "Free Begonias", the article which appeared in 1936 in *Sunset*. Well, I have had to return at least six requests for free seed and bulbils as mentioned in this story.

Florence Gee

*(My apologies to all who have been inconvenienced by requests for free seed and all those disappointed in not receiving them. In the February Editor's Note, I asked "do you actually think about what you are reading?" If you didn't, you may want to turn back and read it again. It is still a good "sales gimmick.")*

## COMING

"Index of The Begonian for 1967" compiled for us again by May Taft Drew of Narberth, Pennsylvania will appear in the April issue.

### "THE BEGONIAN"

Advertising rates

	Once	Monthly
Full Page.....	\$30.00	\$25.00
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## LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

"The Chicago Public Library system has discovered a great source of books. In one day, the source produced 104,893 volumes—all at no cost to the library system." These books were owned by the library and were returned without penalty on the library's first "day of amnesty."

The A.B.S. Library could also use such a "shot in the arm." Unfortunately, we do not charge a fine for overdue books and so cannot declare a "day of amnesty." All we can do is ask our library users to please check their bookshelves and return any books which belong to our A.B.S. Library.

Those of you who plan to do a lot of "throwing away" during your spring housecleaning, might consider sending some of your old garden books and especially old *Begonians* to the A.B.S. Library. The need for more books—both new and old—is tremendous. The demand for copies of the old *Begonians* 1938 through 1940 is frustrating since there are no copies presently available. Many of our members and branches donate money to help the A.B.S. Donations of old *Begonians* would help the A.B.S. financially and also help to serve our newer members better by providing them a ready source of the copies they want so much.

Any of you who have such material to donate should contact me and I will reimburse you for the postage. Your donation will be greatly appreciated.

Mrs. Lucile Wright

Librarian

4508 West 133rd St.

Hawthorne, Calif. 90250

## PLASTIC POTS

Sue McCarthy of Alsip, Illinois suggests using plastic pots for hanging containers. Use a hot ice pick or nail to melt holes near the top and insert the necessary wires for hanging.

David Arnold of Pana, Illinois uses colorful plastic pots filled with sand for the convenience of smoking friends who visit her plant houses.

# MINUTES OF THE JANUARY A.B.S. BOARD MEETING

The Board of Directors met at 7:50 p.m., January 22, 1968 in South Gate Auditorium. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Past-President Everett Wright. The Aims and Purposes were read by President Tagg. Ten officers and eleven branch representatives answered the roll call. The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved.

President Tagg reported receiving news from Mrs. Kingsbury, Vice-President, concerning plans for the Eastern Convention. He also reported that Carl Naumann, President-Elect, is back at work.

Everett Wright reported that due to illness, he would have to resign as Show Chairman. A motion was made by Walter Pease, seconded by Ralph Sparks that we accept Mr. Wright's resignation with regret.

President Tagg appointed James Somes of Redondo Beach to fill the position of Show Chairman. Walter Barnett made a motion, seconded by Margaret Lee, that we accept this appointment.

Treasurer Walter Barnett reported a balance of \$947.11 on hand, receipts of \$1,545.85, disbursements of \$1,630.55, leaving a balance of \$862.41. He also reported the Eastside Branch made a donation of \$3.00, and will continue to do so on a monthly basis for the rest of the year to help the Society's finances (See "From the President," page 43). He noted that the final payment was made to Alva Graham for printing the Buxton Check List. Mae Tagg made a motion, seconded by Thelma O'Reilly, that a letter of appreciation be sent to Mrs. Graham, Unanimous.

A report by Walter Pease, Chairman of the Bylaws Committee, included several recommendations for Amendments to the Bylaws.

President Tagg noted a number of donations—some anonymous. Appreciation was expressed for these.

Margaret Lee, Awards Chairman, gave her report. The committee suggested that an "Award for Service" be established and be given annually. After discussion, Walter Barnett made a motion that the Society establish this award, seconded by Walter Pease. Carried.

Muriel Perz gave the Business Manager's report.

Walter Pease reported for the Judging Course Director. Four have registered since the Convention.

Lucile Wright reported the activities of the Library. She has operated her department without any previous funds, and has been showing a steady income.

Anne Rose gave the report for Pearl Benell, who has had surgery. There were 175 new memberships processed from November through January, and 2,645 Begonians disbursed in December.

After the Advertising Manager's report, Mae Tagg made a motion, seconded by Everett Wright, that the Treasurer renew the ad in the Horticultural Magazine. It was decided to deny the request for a membership list for Hyponex to mail a circular to each member. Motion by Mae Tagg, seconded by Walter Pease. Carried.

The Round Robin Director reported one new flight in December, and 68 letters and cards written in addition to letters and robins processed by co-directors.

The Editor made a motion to increase **The Begonian** by four pages if the dues increase goes through, seconded by Everett Wright. Carried. The Editor also made a motion to decrease **The Begonian** four pages if the dues increase does not go through. This motion did not carry. Publishing the magazine every other month was discussed as an alternative for further study (See "From The Editor," page 43).

Jim Somes, Show Chairman, announced February 2 as the first meeting of that committee. Hawthorne Memorial Auditorium was suggested as the location for the Convention and Show. The dates set were August 24 and 25. Motion was made by Margaret Lee, seconded by Thelma O'Reilly that they be accepted. Carried.

Mrs. Joyce of the Glendale Branch extended an invitation to the Board for a Regional meeting to be held in Glendale, July 28, at the Glendale Federal Savings and Loan. There would be a donation plant table. Mae Tagg made a motion that we accept the invitation, seconded by Walter Pease. Carried. A letter of acceptance will be sent to Mrs. Edna Korts, President of the Glendale Branch.

After the Branch reports, the meeting adjourned at 10:25 p.m.

Virginia Barnett  
Secretary

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**CALENDAR**

March 5—Theodosia Burr Shepherd  
Branch: Chuck Tagg, "Begonias  
From Cuttings—Why and Which  
How." 7:30 p.m.

March 7—Westchester Branch: "Cym-  
bidiums" by Bob Smith. 7:30 p.m.

March 7—Whittier Branch: Sylvia  
Leatherman, "Ferns — New, Rare,  
and Unusual." 7:30 p.m.

March 13—Inglewood Branch: Mrs.  
Mabel Corwin, "Spring care of Be-  
gonias." 7:30 p.m.

March 15—North Long Beach Branch:  
Ken Terry, "Miniature Roses." 7:30  
p.m.

March 16-24 — Massachusetts Horti-  
cultural Society's annual New Eng-  
land Spring Garden and Flower  
Show at Suffolk Downs, East Bos-  
ton, Massachusetts.

March 25—A.B.S. BOARD: South  
Gate City Auditorium, 4900 South-  
ern Ave., South Gate, Calif. 7:30  
p.m.

April 1—DEADLINE for all material  
for the May issue of *The Begonian*.

April 3—San Miguel Branch: Chuck  
Tagg, "Begonias From Cuttings—  
Why and Which How." 7:30 p.m.

April 7—Whittier Branch: Jean Kerlin  
"Bromeliads." 7:30 p.m.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**FILM AVAILABLE:**

"The Belgian Begonia" 16mm, full  
color sound film; 20 minutes. For com-  
plete details write: Belgian Begonia  
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is free except for return postage and  
insurance.

**HISTORIAN:**

Mrs. Edna Burkett asks that the  
Branches who have not sent any news  
items to her for the Historian's Book,  
please do so. She would like very  
much to hear from the Branches in  
the Middle West, South, East Coast,  
and those outside our United States,  
in order that all will have a part in  
the History of our Society.



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