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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Holiday Greetings to all of you, whether you are commemorating the birth of Jesus the Christ on December 25 or observing the Jewish Feast of the Lights during the eight days of Hanukkah early in December.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

HAPPY HANUKKAH!

We've met many challenges this year a crisis in the membership and mailing activities, rising costs of materials, changes from outmoded routines, an unprecedented increase in membership, log jams in seed fund and library activities, a new editor and co-editor, new ideas, new aims, more comfortable relations at headquarters and between distant members and branches; new plans to spread the word of 'begonias' in garden, home, art and research throughout the world; new publications in the offing. What a rich and busy year we've had and what a challenging new year is to come.

God bless you all!

Margaret Ziesenhenn

COVER PICTURE

Begonia 'Silver Jewel' grown and photographed by Gordon Lepisto, Saint Paul, Minnesota.

HOLIDAY HAPPINESS

By Thelma O'Reilly

Holiday happiness is sharing the beauty of nature with friends, old and new. This Christmas it gives me extra joy to share the warm and wonderful feeling of finding a new friend with you, my old friends in the American Begonia Society.

Subscribing to the "Orchid Digest" this past year gave me the opportunity to read several outstanding articles by Ganesh M. Pradhan, an orchid collector from far-away India. How exciting it was to join him in his search for rare and beautiful orchids in a country that has always intrigued me.

Mr. Pradhan's "gift" with words enables his readers to become an active participant in his collecting adventures. After sharing in several of his thrilling plant hunts, I wrote and commended him on the articles which gave me so much reading pleasure. Naturally, I inquired about the begonias native to India. An exchange of letters revealed his deepening interest in begonias, a willingness to exchange seed and a desire to learn about the American Begonia Society. I was delighted to send him a subscription to *The Begonian* as a Christmas gift.

(Continued on Page 324)

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 development of new types of these plants;

TO standardize the nomenclature of *Begonias*;

TO gather and publish information 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*.

IT'S A MERRY CHRISTMAS

Jack O. Langrell

Rex begonias are my favorite and among my favorites, I think *B.* 'Curly Merry Christmas' is sort of special.

As the President of the South Seattle Branch of the American Begonia Society and long time member, I have grown a multitude of Rex begonias. I find it is amazing the difference in the personalities and desires of the different varieties.

Last winter I kept *B.* "It" out in my enclosed patio where the day temperature averaged about 50 degrees and the night temperature ranged between 40-45 degrees fahrenheit. It showed no sign of dormancy such as dropping its leaves. Its growth slowed down and it endured the winter months with no ill effects.

On the other hand *B.* 'Carmelita' was on a bench in the greenhouse farthest from the heater and the temperature dropped occasionally to 55 degrees at night but normally stayed around 60 degrees. It went completely dormant and had a terrible time recovering.

I find *B.* 'Curly Merry Christmas' needs more light than many of my other Rex's. Last spring I had it in a portion of my greenhouse where I grow cattleya orchids, but I was afraid the leaves were going to burn. The plant was growing rapidly and promised to be a good exhibition plant by show time. I moved it to a more shady location where the standard *B.* 'Merry Christmas' had done so well the past two years and was then thriving in a twenty-four inch pot. *B.* 'Curly Merry Christmas'

didn't like the additional shade. It stopped growing and sulked. After a month of this I put it back where it was originally and within two weeks it perked up and resumed growing and within a month regained its cheerful disposition.

I think this is what makes growing rex begonias fun. The challenge of growing the different varieties and ever striving for perfection.



B. 'Merry Christmas'
enjoys good light

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- 'Begonias in General —
Basic culture' .50

Dc 1—*B. acetosa*

Rhizomatous, from Brazil. Neat, round, hairy leaves top short, stilt stems from rhizome below; on top, the effect of fuzz is subdued green; underneath ruby red. Sprays of white flowers in spring.

per pkt. \$1.00

Dc 2—*B. falciloba*

A tuberous species from Mexico, produces white blooms which are fimbriated. It produces bulbils at times.

per pkt. \$1.00

Dc 3—*B. 'Frutescans'*

A *B. fruticosa* seedling. This is a low-growing, fibrous plant with smooth, green leaves and white flowers. Makes a very beautiful plant.

per pkt. \$1.00

Dc 4—*B. incarnata*

Frilly, fluffy-looking plant with light green leaves charmingly fluted and scalloped on the edge. Flesh pink flowers in winter. Most lady-like and shapely when started from new cuttings each year. Per pkt. \$.50

Dc 5—*B. luxurians* seedling

A fibrous plant, grows to 4 feet high. Leaves are shiny, green, and lobes on the leaflet are wider than *B. luxurians*. It produces large clusters of white flowers. Per pkt. \$1.00

Dc 6—*B. 'Norah Bedson' X B. 'Sunderbruchi': rhizomatous*

No further information. Should make an interesting plant.

per pkt. \$1.00

Dc 7—*B. 'Rose'; (B. 'Hazel's Front Porch')*

A very pretty, fibrous cane. It can grow to 6 feet or more, in the ground if you allow it. Long lasting, large clusters of pink blooms.

per pkt. \$.50

Dc 8—*B. venosa*

Brazil species, growth shrubby, erect, medium height. Stems succulent, round, green with small white hairs. Leaves auricular, margins entire, and green background is covered with soft hairs. Flowers abundant, medium large, white spicy fragrant. It thrives best in warm locations.

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Dc 9—White, butterfly semperflorens

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Fern Spore: *Phyllitis scolopendrium*

Not too difficult to grow. Must have good light but no sun. Low growing. Plant near cement foundations or walks, or incorporate small pieces of cement 2 to 3 inches deep around root area. In containers, add 1/2 cup of oyster shell to a 6 inch pot of potting mix. per pkt. \$.50

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ABS CONVENTION '74 GARDEN TOUR

By Cecelia Russell, Pacific Grove, CA

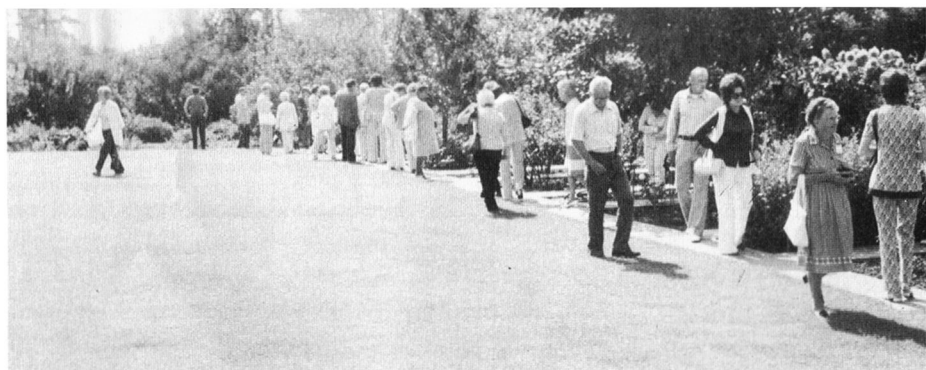
Early Sunday morning, two busses and several cars full of people went on a garden tour. First stop was Deyka's Nursery, a moderate wholesale operation. The owner and some of his helpers met us and told us about the many plants that they propagate. One area was filled with fuchsias, another with many cane begonias, azaleas, many varieties of coleus, and large hanging baskets of begonias, all in bloom and very beautiful.

The next place was a big ranch-type house and gardens, and a sort of farm with vegetables all around the outside of the decorative garden. This was the home of Ernest and Meta Thomsen. The patio was lovely: hanging baskets of begonias and fuchsias and other shade plants, and fuchsias, and fruit trees. Mrs. Thomsen took us through her greenhouses to see orchids, ferns, begonias, and many more plants. Succulents by the dozen lined the sunny fences. She had set a large table in a shady spot on the lawn with cook-

ies, coffee and a large bowl of lemonade for us.

From there the busses took us along a drive that overlooked the city of Santa Barbara. We drove past the Mission to the last garden at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Salud Sayhun, who guided us along the sidewalks which segregated all the different flowers. There were several magnolia trees — one was a descendent of an original old magnolia tree from the South. There were roses by the dozens and every kind of flower that I ever saw. There was even an area covered with raspberry bushes full of ripe berries. Extending from the house was a greenhouse with orchids and other plants which could not stand the normal climate conditions. Dr. Sayhun pointed out a tree called "Devil's Hand," which has blossoms like a large red hand. He apologized because it was no longer in bloom at the time.

It was a very fine garden tour. Everyone I met at this convention was friendly and helpful. I really enjoyed it.



Dr. Salud Sahyun's Garden — Santa Barbara



V. Pres. Charles Richardson at Deyka's Nursery



Dr. Salud Sahyun's Garden — Santa Barbara

CONVENTION SEMINARS

The next 6 short articles are synopses of seminars given at the Western and Eastern Conventions — Editor.

BEGONIAS FOR BEGINNERS — SYNOPSIS

By Walt Hansen

When you get your first begonia, don't be afraid of it. Begonias are not that hard to grow. Most begonias as purchased should be moved up in size of the pot to one that is one or two sizes larger. I prefer redwood tubs to plastic which holds the water too much, or clay which dries out too fast, but this can vary according to the humidity and temperature in your growing area. A mix should be very porous — I use

basically leaf mold with a small amount of fir bark, barnyard manure, blood and bone meal. Water the plant when the top half inch is dry to the touch. But experience will tell you more than feeling the plant. Any liquid fertilizer will work. I use Spoonit or Miracle Grow every two weeks. Wind protection is necessary. Saran or Propylene shade cloth gives good wind protection.

PLANT PHOTOGRAPHY

By Gene Daniels

Any single lens reflex 35mm camera, purchased with a 35mm or 28mm wide angle lens instead of the usual 50mm normal lens, is an excellent choice for garden photography. A telephoto lens of 85mm to 135mm is an excellent accessory lens with this wide angle choice. The f stop or speed of the lens makes very little difference. Kodachrome 64 or Kodacolor 64 are good film choices, the first for slides and the second for prints. Photos made under lath will show heavy shadows; photos made under fiberglass will turn greenish in color. Nursery shade cloth with no pattern is the best for providing adequate filtered shade for plants

and excellent conditions for picture taking. A garden partly under trees, partly in sun, is best photographed on a shady day which cuts contrasts. The background must be deemphasized so that it does not detract from the main subject. This can be done nicely with the telephoto lens used for one lone plant and the f stop kept at its maximum aperture with appropriate shutter speed to match. This will throw all background plants out of focus and force the eye to stay on the main subject. Most important, the photographer must always LOOK and THINK before he shoots.

HOW TO GROW A BEGONIA TREE

By J. O. Gilden

We have tree roses, tree fushias, why not TREE BEGONIAS? So now I will attempt to tell you how I have obtained success in growing my tree begonias.

First you must obtain a cane from your begonia with more than one joint close to the top, at a height of approximately 36 inches. Having found this cane, your next step is to "pinch" out the top. Let this cane remain with the mother plant until you feel it has sufficient roots for maintaining growth on its own. Now you may carefully remove your cane from the mother plant and transplant it to a container of its own. Now you must support your cane. I use a redwood stake with holes

drilled in it for my ties. I tie often to my cane, so that when it begins to crown, it cannot bend with the weight.

If as your tree begins to grow and you find it is growing unevenly, you must take steps to obtain a uniform plant. If you have light growth on one side and heavy on another, then you must trim the heavy side and turn the light side to the sun.

You must fertilize your tree begonia as you would your other begonias. Your tree will like the soil moist but not saturated.

Now all that is left is lots of tender loving care, and you will be sure to be successful in growing beautiful tree begonias as I have.

AUTOMATED VACATION GARDEN

The following ideas revolve about the use of narrow diameter "spaghetti" tubing leading into each individual plant. The single most important fact from this seminar is to have a plant mix that is extremely open, yet permits the water to spread throughout the pot. Usually this means coarse leaf mold combined with peat moss and very little drain holes in the pots. Adequate water pressure for each plant within a given watering system must be maintained or underwatered plants will

result. In general, electric valves made of modern plastics prove more trouble-free than the more expensive brass valves. Two separate three-stage electric timing clocks will give more versatility than one six stage clock, allowing certain areas of the garden to receive water at different intervals than others. It is imperative to set up the entire system and have it running for a month or longer, prior to letting it go by itself during a vacation.

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HANGING CONTAINERS

By Ed Thompson

Hanging containers are usually used for begonias that normally have hanging qualities. However, hanging containers can be used for many other types of begonias. If your garden space is limited, you can add more by creating a garden in the air using hanging baskets which can be hung from trees, brackets, lamp posts and many other interesting places. Our property is very small about 150 ft. by 50 ft. but we still manage to hang 150 hanging baskets and we hang over 400 other plants on pot clips from our cedar woven fences and around our tree trunks.

There are many types of hanging baskets. We do not like plastic baskets because they hold too much water. The redwood type baskets are very successful but are heavier than most types. An instant hanging container can be created very quickly by simply using pot hangers.

We prefer and strongly advise using the wire moss-lined baskets. Plants appear to do much better in this type of basket probably because there is excellent drainage and salts can't accumulate as they do in other types of containers. The one major disadvantage of this type of container is that it must be watered more frequently.

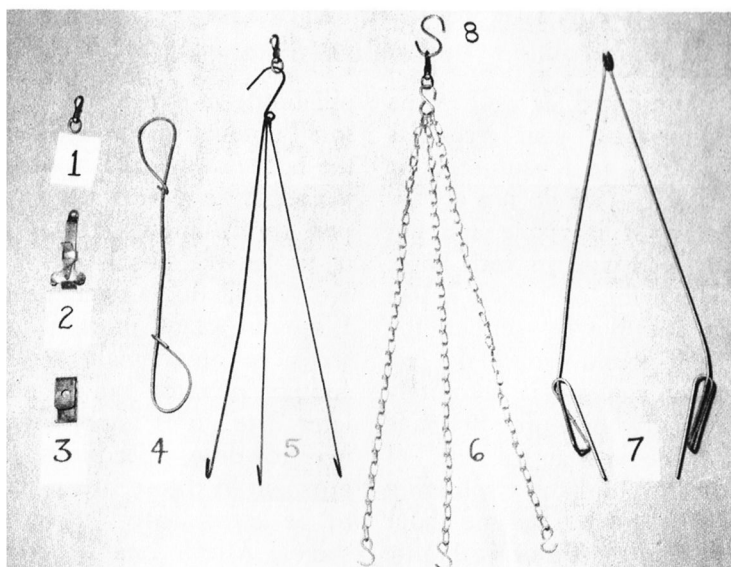
The soil we use for all our begonias in hanging baskets is the same we use for all our other begonias. It consists of 2 parts sterile top soil, 1 part JIFFY MIX, 1 part perlite, and 1 part sphagnum moss. The most important thing for good

specimen basket begonias is the regular fertilizing required for all plants. Of course regular grooming is essential and should be started when the plants are young. The grooming should be done according to the same principles you use for your other begonias with the exception of staking.

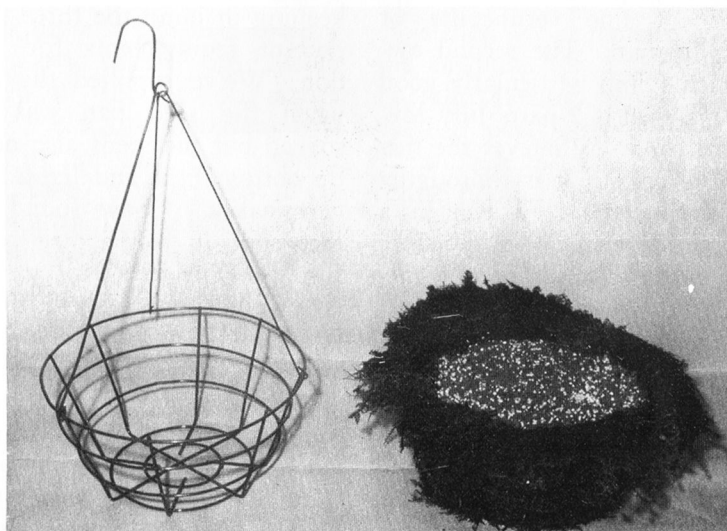
We make our wire baskets with sheet moss and our regular begonia soil. The sheet moss is thoroughly soaked in water. You line the wire container with this moss making certain you have no holes. You may use pieces of sheet moss by overlapping them. At the top, the moss should overhang the wire container all the way around so that the soil will not wash out. You then fasten the wire hanger that comes with the basket. When you hang your baskets outdoors, we suggest using swivels on the hook part of the hanger. This prevents damage from wind by enabling the basket to turn as the wind blows. To add interest I like to hang our baskets at many different levels in our trees by using "safety pin wires" which I make up in all different sizes. See photos for examples of the above.

If you do not have enough trees, fences and posts to hang baskets from, you can make your own basket tree out of pipe or redwood. Being a plumber and living in a farm area, I naturally made mine out of pipe and old hay rakes.

(Continued on Page 325)



1. brass swivel. 2. pot clip. 3. another type of pot clip for hanging pots to walls or fences. 4. "safety pin" wire. 5. wire-hanger that comes with wire baskets. 6. chain arrangement that can be used in place of the wire hanger that accompanies the wire baskets. 7. pot clip that can be used to make an immediate hanging container by attaching it to a clay or plastic pot. 8. S hook.



Left: empty wire hanging container; right: the same type container lined with sheet moss and then filled with begonia potting soil.

SEED PROPAGATION FOR ADVANCED GROWERS

By Zelma Clark

For the uninitiated, as well as the advanced, growing your begonias from seed is truly an adventure. Start with good seed—we do not always know whether it is viable and not old but the seed is sown with hope.

For seed sowing containers I like soft margarine bowls—either the pound or half-pound size. Make certain whatever you use is absolutely clean. About five holes for drainage are easily made with an ice pick. (I used to use my husband's soldering iron until a friend warned me about the fumes from plastic being highly toxic.)

I've two favorite seeding mixes—one is the North Platte Mix which is 1 part milled sphagnum moss, 2 parts perlite and 2 parts fine vermiculite. For tiny seed such as begonia cover the surface with a thin sprinkling of fine vermiculite or milled sphagnum. The second medium which I find particularly good for begonia seed is 2 parts Jiffy Mix and 1 part sand. Whatever the medium, make certain it is thoroughly wet by setting the seed pan in a shallow pan of water until moisture appears on the surface of the medium. For this initial moistening I add a soil drench such as Dexon, Truban or Banrot, combined with Benlate, a systemic, both at the recommended strength. This seems to protect the seedlings through the critical first transplanting.

Prepare a label, writing on it the variety, the date and the seed source. Open the seed packet and carefully transfer the seed to a small plastic

pill bottle in which you have a very small amount of sterilized sand. Cap the bottle and shake it well. Uncap it and move it very slowly over the pan, gently tapping it so as to vibrate it to let the seeds and sand fall evenly and thinly over the medium. I seldom plant more than a few seeds to this small seed pan—another planting can be made at a later date. It is important to avoid overcrowding. Seedlings that can grow on in the seed pan don't have to be transplanted at such a tiny stage. Attach one or two plastic clothespins to the top edge and put the seed pan into a plastic baggie. Fasten it closed with another clothespin.

Somewhere around your home there has to be an ideal place for the seed pan for germination—keeping in mind the three most important requirements for germination. We've supplied the moisture when the seed pan was initially soaked but the seeds also need gentle bottom heat and light for good germination. I have found the perfect spot in my home—over the furnace. The seed pans are elevated about eight inches above the burner jacket and a one-strip fluorescent 40 W. light is suspended immediately above. The hot water is heated by the furnace so that even in the summer the burner comes on often enough to maintain an air temperature of 70° to 75° which is a minimum for maintaining a soil temperature of 65° to 70°. No further moistening of the medium is neces-

sary for this period of germination which takes varying lengths of time. In my experience five days has been the least for a begonia seed. Tuberous begonia seed takes eight days. The germination date is noted on the label.

The seed pan is removed from over the furnace to one of the basement light set-ups, but I do not place begonia seedlings the usual four to six inches below the tubes as I do for annuals and vegetables. I prefer to have them stretch a bit at this stage of development and place the pan, still in the baggie, about eight to ten inches below the tubes. Since plastic baggies do permit some exchange of air I do not feel any necessity for a daily opening for that purpose but it is important to check the pan daily for moisture. For newly germinated seeds when the medium is still sufficiently moist I mist them with one-fourth strength PETER'S 20-20-20. For a first watering, I set the seed pan in a shallow pan of water to which I have added the 20-20-20 for a one-eighth strength. Eventually the strength is increased to one-sixth for constant feeding. Keep in mind that there is very little drying of the medium while still in the baggie and in all probability they won't be fed again for weeks. If the seedlings seem to be overcrowded and while they are still only specks, I remove small clumps to a market pak filled

with the Jiffy Mix and sand medium which again has been thoroughly moistened with the drench mixture. The tiny seedlings are very, very gently settled into the medium using a watering aid. The market pak is placed in a baggie with the plastic clip clothespins attached to each side and put back under the lights, keeping them the eight to ten inches from the tubes. As these grow, I separate them carefully for a second transplanting. You do need a pricking out tool — either the bent pen, a toothpick, label or a nail file.

A few weeks more and the seedlings have established a good root system with their leaves beginning to touch. It's time to transplant. Again I'll use a market pak and a well mixed and moistened medium. This is one I mix myself and first moisten with water to which I've added a wetting agent called Aqua-Gro — $\frac{1}{4}$ th tsp. to a qt. of water. This assures me every particle is moistened and it remains effective in the medium for future waterings. For the medium, I use 2 heaping pans of peat moss, 1 level pan of Terra-lite and one-half pan of super-coarse perlite. To this I add 1 tbsp. dolomitic lime, 1 tbsp. of MagAmp and 3 tbsps. of charcoal. If there are many seedlings of one variety, instead of the market pak I use a so-called Ball half flat with 36 seedlings to a flat spaced approximately 2 inches apart.

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BEGONIA LIMMINGHEI, ED. PYNAERT

By Alice M. Clark, San Diego, California

Twenty-four years after the publication of the following article by Alice M. Clark, the mysterious origin of B. limminghei was established by Lyman B. Smith and Ruth C. Smith. Their determination was published in "Begoniaceas", which is the Begonia section of "Flora Illustrada Catarinense" edited by P. Raulino Reitz, Santa Catarina, Brazil.

In the study the Smiths identify this begonia of many names as B. procumbens Vell., 1835. Growers of this begonia after 1953 called it B. limmingheana Morr as established by Dr. Irmscher, the German botanist, in "Botanischer Jahrbucher." Another name applied in recent years was B. fritz-mulleri Brade.

—Thelma O'Reilly

Old-timers in begonia culture will resent the name that heads the sketch of the plant they have long raised and admired as *B. glaucophylla*. This is the story behind the correction.

In 1866, according to Charles Chevalier, a colored plate of this begonia, published in *Belgique Horticole*, was dedicated by Ed. Morren to Comte Alfred de Limminghe. This was followed in 1875, by an article, with a painting in color, written for the Belgian *Revue de l'Horticulture*, by Ed. Pynaert, describing and naming this begonia, *B. Limminghei*. Seventeen years later, in 1892, it appeared in the

Curtis Botanical Magazine as *B. glaucophylla*, under which title Hooker Fils said it had been known in England for some time. That was how our begonia came to be deprived of the name of the fine horticulturist, in whose garden it is supposed to have been found. It is even possible, since no definite information has ever been uncovered as to its origin, that it is a hybrid made by the Count, himself.

B. Limminghei always comes true from seed, which should give credit to the belief that it is a species, some say from Brazil. Despite that, the

(Continued on Page 316)

This full page color reproduction is presented with HOLIDAY GREETINGS from the printer of *The Begonian*. The painting by Alice M. Clark of the Alfred D. Robinson branch in San Diego was reproduced in black and white along with the accompanying article in April 1947.



BEGONIA LIMMINGHEI

(Continued from Page 314)

theory that it is a hybrid still persists. The author of *Les Begonias* thinks its slender creeping stems come from *B. scandens*, Sw. (*B. glabra*, Aubl.) and its flower form and seed organs point to *B. coccinea*, Hook., as the other parent. Ed. Morren and Dr. Regel agree on the latter but suggest *B. undulata* as the first parent. Hooker favors *B. maculata* and Ed. Pynaert proposes *B. fagifolia*, which Chevalier objects to because it is hairy. Some of this discussion must have reached Mrs. Shepherd, in Ventura, because she crossed *B. Limminghei* back on one of its possible parents, *B. Coccinea*, and obtained the well-known *B. Marjorie Daw*, in 1901. Let us hope the mysterious origin of this month's subject will come to light some day.

If you are not impressed by the fairness of going back to the name of the man who sponsored *B. Limminghei*, then at least you may object, as I do, to the poor choice of the handle we have known it by. "Glaucophylla" means either "bluish-green leaves" or "leaves covered with a whitish bloom." How that description could ever have been attached to this plant of exceptionally shining, yellow-green leaves, is beyond me. The name, "scandens," sometimes coupled with it, is descriptive, but was never authoritative. The correct name is easy to pronounce — Limming-eye. Come on Begonians, let's get behind it!

B. Limminghei has always charmed me by its graceful growth. Mr. Robinson always advocated planting it on a mound, so it could run over the

ground and send out roots from some of its joints, where little spurs appear in the leaf axils. However, it is usually treated as a hanging basket, where its many stems make a fountain of green, which has been known to reach a length of six feet, although most, that I have seen, stop at three. This begonia enjoys heat and high shade so the flowers get plenty of light. In the east it is known as a winter bloomer, which may account for the fact that it is not very satisfactory there. With us it is only dormant in the cold season, and should be cut back severely at that time, I am told that it will die back at the top if the runners are not trimmed. The cuttings root readily and should be pinched to promote bushy growth.

This month's favorite begins to show color in March and continues to bloom until December, with extra display in warm periods. It was during one of these stages that I painted it, in the summer of 1946. The seed-pods develop more at that time and are particularly good if there is a hot spell in the late fall.

There were so many branches on this begonia, when I began my painting, that I had to start at the end of a runner and leave out some of its length, to keep it on the page. The stems have many joints, red-flushed at the nodes and on top near the tips. The young sections are dashed with white flecks. At this season the stipules, incasing the leaf, are as red as the bloom itself. They are in pairs, an inch or more long, looking like a slender pointed pencil. These fall away from a much be-ruffled leaf, stained bright red on the back.

In alternate positions on a stem, these unfold into pointed ellipses about four by two and one-fourth inches. A delicate apple-green at first, they mature into fairly thick, smooth, bright-green leaves with lighter green veins out to the slightly rippled edges. The under side is paler, with raised venation. Petioles are short, with such an intense red at the apex of the leaf that it shows on top. The plant would be treasured for its foliage, even without the bloom.

The short red peduncle comes from a joint just below the new leaf and shows two sets of almost brick-red bracts, that are keeled around more red buds in more bracts. A male flower on a slender pedicel subtends each pair of bracts. These groups go on branching until a drooping, close-knit cluster is formed. This thins out as the female flowers expand, but the plant always seems tipped with fire.

The blooms of *B. Limminghei* are the most amazing in the begonia family. The heart-shaped male bud, about a half-inch across is white at the point where it meets its delicate pedicel and the swelling over the inside stamen catches a bright high-light on its flame-orange surface, that defies reproduction in water-

color. The narrow white border all around the petals is in startling contrast to their brilliant red. Inside, the two oval petals are flanked by two narrow ones, around the ball of pale lemon stamen. The inner petals are a soft coral-pink, sprinkled with diamond dust.

As a cluster of flowers gets older, the female blooms begin to show. The expanding ovaries, with their red-orange wings, fading into pearl-white over the seed portions, are spectacular. The one in the picture is an inch across, life size, but the plant itself is on a slightly smaller scale so it is out of proportion. The petals of this flower are shown in the lower right-hand corner. There is a quartet of pointed ovals, with a fifth narrow one, centered around four pair of pale velvety stigma, only slightly twisted. The same white edge outlines the sepals.

Words and brush fail to describe the sheer beauty of *B. Limminghei*, so why not grow and see it for yourself?



THE SPECIES OF THE BEGONIACEAE

Fred A. Barkley & Jack Golding

A compendium of the published names of the species, varieties, synonymy of the *Begoniaceae*, including place and date of publication, original habitat, and section of the genus.

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There is a little bit of Luther Burbank in the make-up of most serious gardeners. Though no one may aspire to equal Burbank's record of producing over 1000 new kinds of plants, still the challenge is there to breed a better rose, day-lily, gladiolus or african violet.

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In this field, the newest up-to-date guide is the handbook, "BREEDING PLANTS FOR HOME AND GARDEN," just released by the Brooklyn Botanic Garden.

Here, in layman's language, twenty experts explain how to start in this exciting hobby. Beginning with a simple explanation of the principles of heredity, each contributor charts a course to follow to produce a prize flower or plant of your own.

The prime objective today in breeding modern gladiolus is greater resistance to disease. Any backyard gardener, using the list of healthy parents provided in the handbook, can help meet this goal. The flower structure of gladiolus is simple, and pollinating is easily done. Within five weeks after pollination, the seed is ready to harvest.

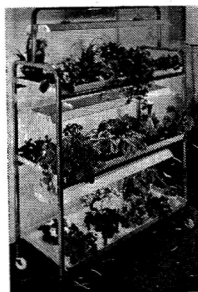
In separate articles, breeding techniques and objectives are provided for roses, lilies, hemerocallis or day-lily, iris, daffodils, camellias, rhododendrons and azaleas, magnolias and lilacs. Of special interest to indoor

gardeners are the feature articles on orchids, begonias, african violets and other gesneriads, and cacti.

No one, so far, has been able to breed a red-flowered Japanese dogwood, a species greatly admired for its late-flowering habit. Likewise, no red-flowered form of the Pacific dogwood is known. The handbook reviews breeding work with three dogwoods up to date, as well as the prospects for great progress in working with several hundred species of hollies.

Another target for plant breeders — blight resistant chestnuts — is covered in a discussion of hybridizing nut trees.

"BREEDING PLANTS FOR HOME AND GARDEN" is the seventy-fifth in a series of popular public-service handbooks published by the Garden. This 76-page paperback, printed on book-quality stock, contains 40 illustrations and charts. Reference lists are a helpful guide to further reading. Copies are available by mail for \$1.50 from the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Brooklyn, New York 11225.



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TUBEROUS BEGONIAS FOR WINTER

By Robert B. Hamm

While reading through back issues of *The Begonian*, I happened to notice numerous complaints and laments from people who could not grow tuberous begonias due to intolerable summer weather. At the same time, I could find only two comments on growing tuberous begonias under lights in the winter. So I decided to write this piece.

As you probably know, tuberous begonias are photoperiodic. That is,

they bloom in response to day length; in order to set buds, the hiemalis, or winter-flowering, types need a short (less than 12 hour) day, and the tuberhybrida types need a long (12 hours or longer) day length. Since the tuberhybrida need long days, they have traditionally been summer plants: however, for many parts of the country, this has meant *no* tuberous begonias, as the weather spells disaster by being hot, dry and windy, totally intolerable for these damp shade-loving beauties, when the days are sufficiently long to set the buds.

This no longer has to be a problem since these gorgeous beauties can be grown all winter simply by using lighting to increase the daylength to 12 hours or more. Commercial growers have long known that to successfully grow tuberous seedlings for early sale in the north, they had to light the growing areas. They supplied this light by burning incandescent bulbs for a few hours each night. You can use this principle to grow tuberous plants all winter.

By starting seeds (or tubers) in the fall, and growing either under natural light plus incandescent bulb light to produce a daylength of 12 hours or more, or by growing under fluorescent set-ups with long days, you can have magnificent blooms for Christmas, New Years, Easter, and enjoyment all winter.

There are some special notes on this, however! While, in theory you
(Continued on Next Page)

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BEGONIAS AS HOUSE PLANTS

Seminar Presented at ABS Convention '74

By Jim Wyrzten, Long Island, New York

Begonias make excellent house plants providing consideration is given to location, light, humidity and temperature.

Let's first see what locations are available to us. North — this location is good providing it is cool 50-60 degrees at night. My wife has had a rex growing on our back porch all winter. If it is warm then you will need artificial light. Our kitchen also faces north but it is much warmer so lights were installed above the window. This added light makes growing possible where it would otherwise be impossible; small begonias such as: *B. 'Baby Rainbow'*, *B. bowerae nigramarga*

and *B. 'Miyo Berger'*. Our living room faces the west. Let's say the house is kept at 72 degrees day and night. This means that the humidity is quite low unless you have a humidifier. In this location, if there is good light, terrariums would be ideal. *B. rajah* or *B. versicolor* grown in a large bowl will develop into a specimen plant. Don't forget a turn every day to keep it symetrical. Now suppose you would like to grow begonias or gesneriads where there is no natural light available. There is nothing more lovely than two ten gallon fish tanks on a wrought iron stand; one planted with begonias and one with gesner-

TUBEROUS BEGONIAS

(Continued from Page 319)

could grow the same plants year round using this method, in practice, the plants get too lanky and ragged. Just letting the plants go dormant would seem to be a simple solution to this problem. This cannot be done quite that simply with light-grown tuberous plants, for they do not produce tubers when grown entirely under long days! The solutions are either to force tuber production (11 hours will do) or to take cuttings and discard the parent plants.

A reversal of the lighting trick is blooming the winter-flowering begonias (rhizomatous as well as tuberous) at any time of the year by regulating the day length to under 10 hours until they set buds. I have done this with numerous

hiemalis hybrids (it will increase bud set for Riegers though not required for it) and with several of the rhizomatous from tiny *B. bowerae nigramarga* to a four foot *B. 'Ricinifolia'*.

I would appreciate hearing from readers who have experimented with reversing the seasons. Data needed include plant name, daylength used, date started under short (long) days, date removed to normal conditions, date of bud set, and date of bloom. If I get enough responses, I will tabulate all the data and submit it for inclusion in *The Begonian*. Perhaps we can get enough conclusive information so that growers can use it to time blooming of their plants for shows and special occasions.

Send letters to

Robert B. Hamm

PSC 2, Box 6447

Sheppard AFB, Texas 76311

iads. Put one inch of marble chips on the bottom of the tank for drainage and two to three inches of long grained sphagnum moss. Wet the moss thoroughly with $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of 15-30-15 per gallon of water. Be sure it is long grained sphagnum moss and not milled which packs too close and will not let the roots spread or get enough air. Cut a piece of glass slightly longer and wider than the top of the fish tank. Allow about one sixteenth inch opening at the top. This will keep it from fogging up the glass. Then place a 24" — 2 tube light fixture right on top of the glass. It is preferable that the fixture have a shield to shade the light from your eyes.

Now to the south — which is the best location for growing plants — there you can always shade plants from the sun with a curtain or move them back from the window. Many of my begonias are wintered on the porch. Hot water heat is controlled by a thermostat set at 60 degrees. A pan of water with a fan blowing over it creates all the humidity necessary. The porch is 10 feet wide and 25 feet long. It faces east on the right for 10 feet, 25 feet south, and west 15 feet. The floor on the east is covered with polyethylene 3 feet wide by 10 feet long and is covered with marble chips. This is where hibiscus in redwood containers are grown. In the fall they are cut back to about 1 foot in height and the

roots are pruned to a small ball, then they are planted in fresh soil. Around Christmas they start blooming and by spring when I put them out they are 3 feet tall. Above these I have hanging baskets of begonias and gesneriads. Window boxes which are planted with achimenes, geraniums, and impatiens are brought in and placed in the south windows on each side of the door. A shelf $21\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide extends the entire length of the porch. Furring lath is nailed along the edge; polyethylene is used to prevent leakage; furring lath is placed on the top and hardware cloth is stapled to this. This allows the plants to drain without removing them. Cane begonias are placed near the window and the rexes in back of them as they do not need as much light. Next to the inside door I have a *Monstera deliciosa* growing in a redwood container which is standing in a tray with about 1 inch of marble chips on the bottom. This covers the wall up to the ceiling. A table 48 inches long x $21\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide which has 4 48-inch fluorescent light tubes over it has many smaller begonias on it. This faces on the living room window and is a delight to look at from the inside. There is another 4 foot long table which is also lit with 4 48-inch fluorescent light tubes. Several clips on the wall and posts hold large rex begonias. Above the long shelf a wire holds hanging begonias.

All plants are fertilized with 15-30-15 or 20-20-20 — 1 teaspoon to a gallon, about every two weeks. Spraying with Benlate and Kelthane about once a month keeps them free of disease and mites.

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ROUND ROBIN NOTES

Nothing can cheer up a cold winter day like the arrival of a packet of round robin letters! Whether you grow under lights, on the windowsill or in terrariums, you'd enjoy being a part of a robin flight discussing YOUR favorites. Membership in some of these is yours for the asking!

For seeds under lights, Bob Hamm of Texas recommends an 18-20 hour day for the first three weeks after germination, with lights 4-6 inches from the pans. This really explodes seedlings into a fast start but requires extra feeding.

Arline Peck, Rhode Island, had a friend tell her about breaking up styrofoam (such as cups or meat trays) and putting them into her blender with 1/2 cup of water, grinding them into a nice sterile mix in which to plant seeds.

Mickey Meyer of Australia highly recommends the use of seaweed extract such as MAXICRIP. It doesn't take very long at all to see the results of it being given to your plants every week and it is especially good for seedlings after they get their second lot of true leaves. Mickey has *B. 'Exotica'* in an up-ended fish tank so it can grow quite tall before she has to worry about it. She finds it doesn't like to be pruned back hard — only the tiniest growing tip is all she dares to nip out.

June Morris, Texas, loves *B. cathayana*. This fall, blooming, it outgrew the terrarium it was in so June put it in a pot and set the pot on a saucer in a tall slender terrarium with water under the saucer. It had one stalk the end of August and

a month later had three stalks. June raised *B. wollnyi* from seeds and gave quite a few plants away, kept some in pots and put the rest into a hanging basket. It is so pretty looking up into the basket at its lovely leaves.

Mike Michelson of Florida has found a way to raise bowl plants without bowls under his conditions. He took a small plant from a leaf cutting of *B. 'Exotica'*, planted in his regular mix in a 3" pot, then took damp sphagnum moss and wrapped it around the outside of the pot. To hold the moss in place, he put a narrow piece of plastic screening around it. This outfit was put on top of pebbles in 1" deep saucer. As the sphagnum never dries out and is constantly drawing moisture from saucer by capillary action, the leaves never lack for moisture in the air. When he first put the plant in the pot, he put a plastic bag over the pot to harden it off, later removing the bag.

Orby Clemence, Michigan, uses widemouthed glass jars or aluminum bread tins or round 1-11/2" deep pie tins filled with water and sitting among his plants under lights. He put a few washed stones in the jars and tins so they won't tip over with a bump or two. He advises keeping your plants damp, NOT SOPPY WET, all the time. He has a large plastic enclosed bench under lights. When he gets new plants through the mail, he puts them on this bench for a few days until they get used to their new home. He likes to cover the top of the pots with coarse

sphagnum moss, keeping it damp, and leaving it for a week or two. Orby finds *B. rajah* starts slow but once it gets a little growth, it goes right along. He feeds this plant at least twice every month. The leaves will get large but you can keep the plant in check to keep within bounds of container.

Rosetta White, Kansas, doesn't use fungicide on her plants. At the present she is using hot water from the faucet, sprayed on her plants. It seems to kill the mildew spores on any of the leaves. Rosetta says she has found that if a rex isn't growing like it should, she can repot it in the long fibered sphagnum moss (her husband chops it into short pieces with the mulch grinder) to revive the plant. If the plant is planted in the moss, a plastic bag should be put over the plant and fastened around the pot with a rubber band for the plant will probably wilt, being disturbed from the growing place it had. Putting it in an enclosed area didn't seem to do the job for her. She finds the plastic bag is the only way to keep them from wilting until the plants get a start in the new medium. She thinks many times when plants don't do well in a potting mix it is because they have started out with a poor root system. She has had two plants of the same size and variety start out at the same time; one plant will grow with no trouble and the other will seem to stand still. So don't think it is always the fault of the potting mix if the plant fails.

Hazel Jessen, California, remembers one of the prettiest things she ever saw was a big wall planting. It was about 3' x 4', a big board with

moss and plant mix held on with chicken wire stretched over it and tacked on, with beautiful begonias and ferns planted all over it — gorgeous for a patio.

Linda Record of Maryland has *B. r. c. 'Peridot'*, finding it the tiniest thing. Holding it to the light a certain way, she finds the leaves look like they were overlaid with crushed emeralds! Hers is about 4" high and wide, quite bushy.

Many people are cutting glass bottles for terrariums or building terrariums for themselves from glass. Henry Meyers of California said if anyone decides to cut glass here are two thoughts: 1. Dip the cutter in kerosene or oil before cutting. 2. Push hard enough to make the scratch with only ONE stroke.

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B. SKEEZAR

By Phyllis Wright
Seattle Begonia Club

There are several variations of this plant, all equally beautiful. *B.* 'Silver Skeezer'-glistening silver, white and green. *B.* 'Skeezer Brown Lake' green leaves above, oxblood below. *B.* 'Skeezer Frosty Lake', green leaves, reddish back, uneven marks of silver along the veins. *B.* 'Skeezer Mirror Lake', green leaves overlaid with silver. The one I have is *B.* 'Silver Skeezer'.

I am sure this would be an excellent plant for anyone to grow, especially if you tend to neglect either watering or fertilizing. This is truly one begonia that is not the least fussy. I have had the original plant for 7 years. It was started from a wedge, shifted from a 2 inch pot into a 4, then into the 8 that it is still in. I have kept the rhizomes cut back away from the edges of the pot. This keeps it a nice neat plant. I certainly do not emphasize neglecting any plant, but for some reason *B.* 'Skeezer' did not appeal to me, still I did not have the heart to destroy it. The pot was set aside, it was watered and fed along with the other plants, but it got no special care. The plant continued to grow, stayed symmetrical and it is still a lovely plant. When in the greenhouse sitting on the edge of the bench it takes on a glistening silver sheen, up close to the glass the colors become more pronounced, the leaves and the stems thicker, it blooms freely. At the very edge of the fluorescent lights it again takes on a lovely delicate appearance, the silver predominating.

It is easy to propagate. A leaf

with about a $\frac{1}{2}$ inch petiole, a wedge cutting placed in damp vermiculite soon put out small plants. The quickest way to produce a small plant is to take a small piece of the rhizome, dust with hormone powder and place in vermiculite. When good growth appears, pot into $2\frac{1}{2}$ inch pots, I use as a mix, equal parts of sterilized leaf mold and perlite, placed on the heating cable for a while a nice small plant is grown in a short time.

If the members want a nice plant and one that is easy to care for, I do hope they will try one of the *B.* 'Skeezer' group.

HOLIDAY HAPPINESS

(Continued from Page 303)

Recently, I received seed of *B. picta* which was collected October 8, 1974. Seed germinated within four days. Mr. Pradhan wrote, "*B. picta* is very common around here and they are still in flower along huge rock faces and ledges. Around August, they cover the entire growing area with their pink flowers . . . the late bloomers are still in bloom."

Mr. Pradhan's philosophy is so appropriate at this time of year that I am going to share it with you. "I am 34 and feel like 24 and in love with all things in life . . . it couldn't be a better time to be living in and if one thought and took notice of all the good things in life that are around us, possibly the world would be a happier place."

Mr. Pradhan has promised to share his knowledge of Indian begonias. I know his participation in our Society will be an enriching experience for all.

*Merry Christmas and
Happy Growing in the
Coming Year.*

Western Pennsylvania Branch



*Happy Growing
in the
Coming Year.*

Alfred D. Robinson Branch



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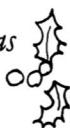


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the Peace of Christmas
be with You Always.*



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Guide You,
the Peace of Christmas
be with You Always.*

ORANGE COUNTY BRANCH



HANGING CONTAINERS

(Continued from page 310)

We rotate our baskets according to their needs throughout the summer and never keep them in any one place. All types of begonias can be used in baskets. Upright plants can be put in baskets by merely making longer hangers using chain. There is no limit to what can be done with baskets if you use your imagination.

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and
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in the Coming Year.*



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**CONDENSED MINUTES OF
MEETINGS OF THE BOARD
OF DIRECTORS OF THE
AMERICAN BEGONIA SOCIETY
JULY 22, 1974**

Meeting called to order by Margaret Ziesenhenne in South Gate Auditorium, 7:40 p.m. After opening services, minutes of last meeting were read and approved.

President announced appointment of assistant membership secretary Jacqueline Garinger, now doing the mailing of **The Begonian**; approved. J. R. Hinds, new Garden Grove representative introduced. Treasurer's report approved. Membership report 3400 members. President announced resignation of editor Marge Kirchoff; new editors nominated by Editorial Committee approved effective August 15, 1974, Edgar and Phyllis Bates; motion to approve appointment made by Margaret Taylor, seconded, carried unanimously.

Margaret Lee moved that ten copies of the membership list be made for distribution by the president to those needing copies; seconded, passed unanimously.

Finance Committee report recommendation that \$250 per month be paid Mrs. Garinger for membership and mailing services for July and August and be renewed for another six months was moved for adoption by Edith Krupnick, with stipulation the \$250 is for a membership of 3500; thereafter an additional five cents will be paid per issue per name; motion seconded and carried with one negative vote. Increased cost of mailing will be passed on to the subscriber.

Cost of placards were informally raised to \$1.25; ABS pins are in short supply; the treasurer was to investigate reordering and report back.

Motion by Mrs. Lee that Mrs. Garinger's address be used on masthead of **The Begonian**; seconded and approved.

Committee reports by chairman given by Awards, Membership, Past Presidents, Research by Pearl Benell, Round Robin by secretary, Seed Fund, and Slide and Speakers Bureau. President gave report of Show Committee; lunches of judges and clerks of ABS show will be paid by ABS.

President appointed annual auditors of treasurer's books and report; Esther Pas-set and Margaret Taylor. Ballot Committee for officers' election: Gary Olson, Sandra Olson, and Dr. William Ireton of Bakersfield appointed by president.

Next meeting of Board to be August 26 at South Gate Auditorium. Meeting adjourned about 10 p.m.

Margaret Ireton, Secretary

SEPTEMBER 23, 1974

Meeting called to order by Margaret Ziesenhenne in South Gate Auditorium at 7:45 p.m. After opening services, minutes of the Board meeting on September 6, 1974 at 7 p.m. and annual membership meeting at 1 p.m. September 7 were read and approved as read. There was no treasurer's report of finances, but report was given of interesting talks at eastern convention which he had just attended; mentioned possibility of national convention in Pennsylvania for 1976 bicentennial.

Budget not ready for submittal because of treasurer's absence, president stated.

Vice President Walter Hansen gave preliminary report of ABS Show committee; estimated net is \$4,124.61 complete report will be given in October.

Committee reports given for Judging School, Research, Round Robin, and Seed Fund. Mrs. Benell moved that ten per cent of the profit from the Seed Fund be sent monthly to Research Fund effective in October in addition to 10% already designated for catalogue fund; motion seconded and passed.

Peggy McGrath moved that tapes be made for the Speakers Bureau to be made available for an undesignated charge to individuals and branches wanting programs; motion seconded and passed.

Mrs. McGrath moved the ballots for the ABS election be destroyed; motion seconded and passed.

President presented partial list of appointees for approval: VP Charles Richardson, committee for Members-at-Large; Evelyn Cronin, Buxton Branch, Branch Relations Director; Millie Thompson, public relations director, Middle Atlantic states; Corliss Engle public relations director Northeastern states; Judges Course director, Mrs. Ruth Pease with Margaret Lee co-director; Betty Tillotson, historian; and Peggy McGrath, parliamentarian. Mrs. McGrath moved slate to be approved; motion seconded and passed.

Hazel Evans, Whittier, moved 4400 Begonians be printed in the current print order; motion seconded and passed.

Meeting adjourned about 10 p.m.; next meeting again at South Gate Auditorium on October 28, 1974.

Margaret Ireton, Secretary

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