

The BEGONIAN



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Devoted to the Sheltered Garden

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BEGONIA STAFF

EditorMarge Kirchoff
1158 Kwis, Hacienda Heights, Ca. 91745

Co-EditorEdgar A. Bates
2007 Teodoro St., Placentia, Ca. 92670

Advertising ManagerJerry Rike
139 N. LeDoux Rd., Beverly Hills, Ca. 90211

Circulation ManagersArnie and Edie Krupnick
11506 McDonald, Culver City, Ca. 90230

Contributing Editors
Elda Haring.....Box 236 Ravenswood Loop Rd.
Flat Rock, N.C. 28731

Phyllis Wright.....536 N.E. 98th St.
Seattle, Wash. 98115

APPOINTED OFFICERS

Awards ChairmanWalter Pease
8101 Vicksburg Ave., L.A., Ca. 90045

Business ManagerJerry Rike
139 N. LeDoux Rd., Beverly Hills, Ca. 90211

HistorianAlice Broadhag
9619 Broadway, Temple City, Ca. 91780

Judging Course DirectorRuth Pease
8101 Vicksburg Ave., L.A., Ca. 90045

LibrarianLydia Austin
15329 Eastwood Ave., Lawndale, Ca. 90260

Membership SecretaryNorma Rike
139 N. LeDoux Rd., Beverly Hills, Ca. 90211

Nomenclature DirectorRudolf Ziesenhenne
1130 N. Milpas, Santa Barbara, Ca. 93103

ParliamentarianRigmor Clarke
460 Mountain, Santa Barbara 93103

Past Presidents Committee, Mrs. Margaret B. Taylor
111 Evelyn Drive, Anaheim, Ca. 92805

Research DirectorM. Carleton L'Hommedieu
370 Locust Ave., Oakdale, L.I., N.Y. 11769

Round Robin DirectorMae Blanton
118 Wildoak Drive, Lake Dallas, Texas 75065

Seed FundPearl Benell
10331 S. Colima Road, Whittier, Ca. 90604

Slide LibrarianKatharine Alberti
3322 Troy Dr., Hollywood, Ca. 90068

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New GuineaMrs. Phyl J. Setford
P. O. Box 417, Mildura, Victoria, Australia

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

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

It was with a great deal of embarrassment that I discovered too late that the cover picture of the August issue was not the semperflorens *B. 'Tence'*, but the rex *B. 'Helen Lewis'* grown by Mabel Corwin.

The cover picture on this issue was taken by Gordon Lepisto of St. Paul, Minnesota. He is growing this begonia indoors under humid conditions. Gordon's article describing his successful growing of *B. 'Tence'* appeared in the August issue.

This month's magazine is devoted to the subject of rex begonias. A description of *B. 'Helen Lewis'* by Mabel Corwin is printed on the next page. The picture was taken by me at Mabel's home in Vista, California.

I extend my apologies for the mix up, especially to Mabel and Gordon.

The ABS year is ending and this is the last issue of which I will be editor. Beginning with the October issue, Ed Bates will be editor and his wife, Phyllis, will be co-editor.

They are greatly interested in publishing a quality journal and with your contributions you can expect to see really fine issues throughout the next year.

It is with many regrets that I must give up the editorship of *The Begonian*, but I have become too

pressed for time to continue. It has been a very rewarding experience, and I particularly enjoy the friendships that have developed with ABS members around the world.

I hope to see many of you at the ABS convention in Goleta.

Thank you all for your support.

Marjorie Kirchoff, Editor

IN MEMORIAM

Mr. Bert Routh of Louisburg, Missouri, passed away July 14, 1974, at the age of 85.

Mrs. Routh has been an advertiser in *The Begonian* for many years. The February issue contained an article about Mr. and Mrs. Routh and the full and interesting life they made for themselves after they retired from farming.

Their many ABS friends extend their sympathy and best wishes to Mrs. Routh.

BEGONIAS HOUSE and GARDEN PLANTS

Send for List—10c

MRS. BERT ROUTH
Louisburg, Missouri 65685

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*.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Purposes of the American Begonia Society, Inc., are enumerated in each issue of *The Begonian*. I shall outline my views of these purposes as we attempt to bring them into being:

1. Our membership is the greatest promoter of interest in begonias and other shade plants. We may lose our perspective and think of the membership as the subscription list of *The Begonian*, but the "bulletin" is #5 in the list of purposes; the bulletin serves the membership, whose first purpose is to promote interest in begonias, etc. The membership is not to serve any particular branch; each member's aim is to instill a universal interest in begonias, etc.

The National Board is responsible for public relations and has representatives who promote publicity in newspapers, magazines, radio, television, etc; give speeches outside mere branch gatherings to instill interest in begonias, etc. and in the ABS; promotes begonia shows; encourages the use of ABS accredited judges at general shows where begonias are exhibited; publicizes our annual convention and special awards.

2. Encouraging introduction and development of new types of these plants is not left to chance. What an opportunity there is for amateur and professional hybridists when a new *Begonia* species is described and introduced. The ABS has encouraged this by publishing botanical descriptions and making available to growers the advertising columns of *The Begonian*; the ABS Nomenclature Director has published names and

descriptions of new cultivars for ABS members' information and as the International Registration Authority of *Begonia* cultivars. It is a lovely combination of taxonomy, hybridization, growing, and distribution which has made the ABS so interesting to members.

3. Each member has the responsibility to help standardize the nomenclature of *Begonia*. It starts at home or in the nursery, but is most important in shows where corrections should be made with humility and kindness on the part of the corrector, and accepted with grace by the exhibitor. It's the joy of growing and exhibiting the plant that is important, and the friendly enjoyment of the plant.

4. The volunteer *The Begonian* staff has the largest responsibility for gathering and publishing information regarding kinds, propagation, and culture of begonias, etc. The eagerness with which the magazine is received indicates the editors are doing their part. Submitted without compensation, the articles on propagation, culture, nomenclature, research, judging, Round Robin, Seed Fund, etc., are most valuable and represent selfless labor and generous interest in helping others. The cultural bulletins, the Point Scoring and

(Continued on Next Page)

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REX CULTIVAR 'HELEN LEWIS'

by Mabel Corwin

Note: This lovely plant appeared on the cover of last month's issue due to an unfortunate mix-up. Ed.

'Helen Lewis' is my favorite rex begonia. It is very distinctive, one you can always recognize. The leaf is tender and silky. The color is royal purple with a silver band. The plant on the cover of the August *The Begonian* was grown in the greenhouse, but I also grow it successfully in the lathhouse. If it is watered and fertilized regularly it makes a handsome plant.

This plant was in the National Show last year. The judges only gave it a red ribbon, but the public really enjoyed it. There was always a group of people admiring this plant and

asking questions, such as "how did you grow it" and "where did you get it"? I have had B. rex 'Helen Lewis' for so many years, that I can't remember where I got it.

Last year after the show Helen Lewis (the hybridizer) came to see me. She saw the plant at the show, and wanted to meet the lady who grew it. She is a delightful person. Naturally, she went home with a small plant and some leaves. So now that I have met the hybridizer I enjoy the plant even more.

In 1957 'Helen Lewis' won the award for Best-in-Show at the Riverside Begonia Show. There is a picture on the cover of the June, 1957, issue of *The Begonian*.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

(Continued from Page 224)

Classification booklets are the result of the combined thinking of active growers and students of *Begonia*. But we must not forget our advertisements in other magazines, the individual articles submitted by members to other publications to publicize the *Begonia* and ABS events; the Historian needs reports of these.

5. *The Begonian* is our bulletin which is mailed to each member and to many institutions which use them extensively for reference and study. *The Begonian* staff, editor, co-editor, advertising manager, circulation manager, and contributing editors, all have worked to issue a timely, interesting, instructive magazine; or-

ganizational announcements have been included and paid advertising has helped to meet the costs. Support the advertisers and participate in the support of publication by obtaining advertisers in your communities — our circulation is countrywide.

6. Lastly, the bringing into friendly contact all who love and grow begonias is a bringing together through branches, the Round Robins, the Seed Fund, committee work, in friendly, joyful, appreciative, thoughtful contact, allowing each to develop in his own way, careful not to overburden already overburdened officers with requests outside that person's official assignment, slow to criticize, careful to praise, generous in offers to help — so all may have time to enjoy his own begonias.

NEW EDITORS TO TAKE OVER

Edgar and Phyllis Bates were named editor and co-editor of *The Begonian* beginning with the October issue by the American Begonia Society Board of Directors, upon the recommendation of the Editorial Board.

Ed brings a year's experience as co-editor to the job, and Phyllis, a graduate in chemistry from the University of Pittsburgh, has had newspaper experience with the Santa Ana Register and is now employed as advertising specialist by J. C. Penney Company.

Ed is presently employed in San Diego and the family will move there in the near future. In the meantime, keep your articles and calendar notices coming to Ed at 2007 Teodoro St., Placentia, Ca. 92670.

We are sorry to lose Marjorie Kirchoff from the staff but her own professional commitments and personal responsibilities preclude her continuing. She will help when needed, she says, and we will certainly see her around "begoniaing"! Thank you, Marge. You brought a

great deal to the enjoyment of our bulletin.

We need reporters for special events which Ed and Phyllis will not be able to attend because of their non-residency. Each president or chairman should appoint a member to submit advance notices of events at least a month and a half before the month of issue; i.e. if you want something in the November *The Begonian*, it should be in the Editor's hands by September 15. Changes of address for the branch notices should likewise be in by the 15th of the second month prior to issuance. In cases of emergency send the notices along anytime, but we must give the whole staff time to make up a proper magazine. Your copy goes through many hands before *The Begonian* is finally printed.

Dues and changes of mailing address should now be mailed to the American Begonia Society, 6333 W. 84th Pl., Los Angeles, CA 90045, where Mrs. Jacqueline Garinger will process both promptly. We are happy to have her on our staff.

Margaret Ziesenhenné, President

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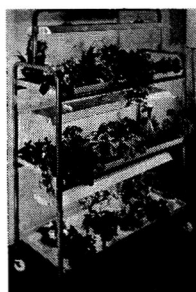
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PLANT TABLES

FRIDAY

10:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m.	Seminars
7:00 p.m.	Board of Directors' Meeting
8:00 p.m.	Show Preview & Plant Bargains

SATURDAY

8:30 a.m.	Scenic Tour
8:30-11:30 a.m.	Seminars
Noon-3 p.m.	ABS Annual Meeting & Luncheon
7:00 p.m.	ABS Annual Banquet; Installation

SUNDAY

8:30 a.m.	Garden Tour
2:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.	Seminars
5:00 p.m.	Show & Convention Closes

GROWING REXES IN AN UNCONTROLLED ENVIRONMENT

By Lois Covey

The most beautiful of all begonias, the rexes, have acquired the reputation of being difficult to grow. This is unfortunate as it prevents many people from experimenting with growing the rex cultivars, thus missing the great enjoyment they might bring. Very little helpful cultural information is available to the novice.

There are, among the membership of the ABS, a certain number of expert, dedicated growers who are growing rexes in a green house or special plant room in an artificially man made controlled environment. Using mechanical devices such as heaters, coolers, artificial lighting humidifiers, ventilators, turbulators, thermostats, timers, etc., etc. By means of these devices they are able to provide the ideal climate in which the rexes grow and flourish. These growers have learned the extremes of temperature, the proper light intensity, the right percentage of humidity, as well as which media are best for providing proper drainage and root aeration. Their plant rooms are buzzing with activity, with roars and bangs and hums and rattles and clangings.

But how about the rest of us? How about the silent majority of us who have to grow our rexes in an *uncontrolled* environment or one controlled largely by the whims and caprices of Old Mother Nature? What about the windowsill growers, the housewife with a fluorescent light cart in the living room or only

a back porch or a tree to protect her rexes? How about those of us who live in a year around mild climate in practically the great outdoors with maybe only a roof for shelter? How can we learn to grow rexes and grow them well? We are beset with many problems from the start.

We cannot provide the many mechanical devices nor are we sure we want them. We remind ourselves of that day long ago when the first *B. rex* was discovered growing in moss on a limestone cliff in faraway Assam, India. We know it grew there in peace and silence, without the hum and roar and clang and bang of man-made machinery. The only sounds there in that rocky cliff were the sweet lilting songs of birds, the steady drip, drip, drip of moisture falling from the leaves of the forest and perhaps the soft hum and buzz of insects.

Assam, India, is in the same latitude as Tarpon Springs, Florida, so it should be possible to grow rexes here under similar conditions. But there are no limestone cliffs in Florida. Mother Nature, who is said to create a universal balance of plant and animal life, often uses strange and unpredictable measures, such as freezes, floods, intolerable heat, hurricanes and meteorological disasters to accomplish her worthy ends. Instead of being pampered in a perfect temperature of 65° to 75° my rexes are often faced with a drop from 80° to 40° in a few hours, and many

times subjected to a gale wind of 70 mph. Do they perish? No!! In fact I think they like the cold; they color up beautifully, and show no ill effects from winds. Perhaps they are not as tender as the greenhouse experts lead us to believe or perhaps more readily adjustable to differing conditions than we think.

So we must put up with Mother Nature's vagaries and do the best we can. Many methods of propagation, from the old tried and true one of slitting the veins of a rex cultivar leaf and laying it on a damp medium to root, or rooting a tip cutting or petiole in water in a glass, or in holes in a block of styrofoam floating on a tray of water, or the tying wedge method. Some of these methods work and some do not, depending on fate, upon Mother Nature, and a thousand unpredictables.

As for mature rex plants, here again we try to imitate the expert, controlled grower. But how does one keep a fixed temperature of 60° to 75° when Mother Nature heats the mercury up to 95°? Is a fan the answer? How can we provide the proper humidity of 85% when Mother Nature, on a cool day in the dry season, drops down to 20% to 30%. One suggestion might be to use metal trays filled with river gravel covered with water and set plants on this with a humidifier nearby. Now the hardest question of all, how to prevent your rexes from dropping their leaves?

In Florida, rexes have a horrid habit of dropping their leaves during summer rainy season, and nothing can discourage an enthusiastic

grower more. Everyone says "dormancy." I've heard many varying opinions on dormancy. "I thought everyone knew that rexes go dormant in the north in winter and in Florida in the summer." Why? This does not make sense to me. "If you let them bloom they are sure to go dormant." "If you let them get too hot, or too cold, or too wet, or too dry, they will go dormant." "If you give them too much neglect, too much TLC, they

(Continued on Page 243)

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GROWING REXES IN A CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENT

By Gordon Lepisto, 1775 Field Ave., St. Paul, Minn. 55116

The rex cultivars I feel are truly the great beauties of the begonia world. Their multicolored, majestic foliage is rarely surpassed by any other plant. To grow them properly can be challenging, sometimes frustrating, but tremendously rewarding.

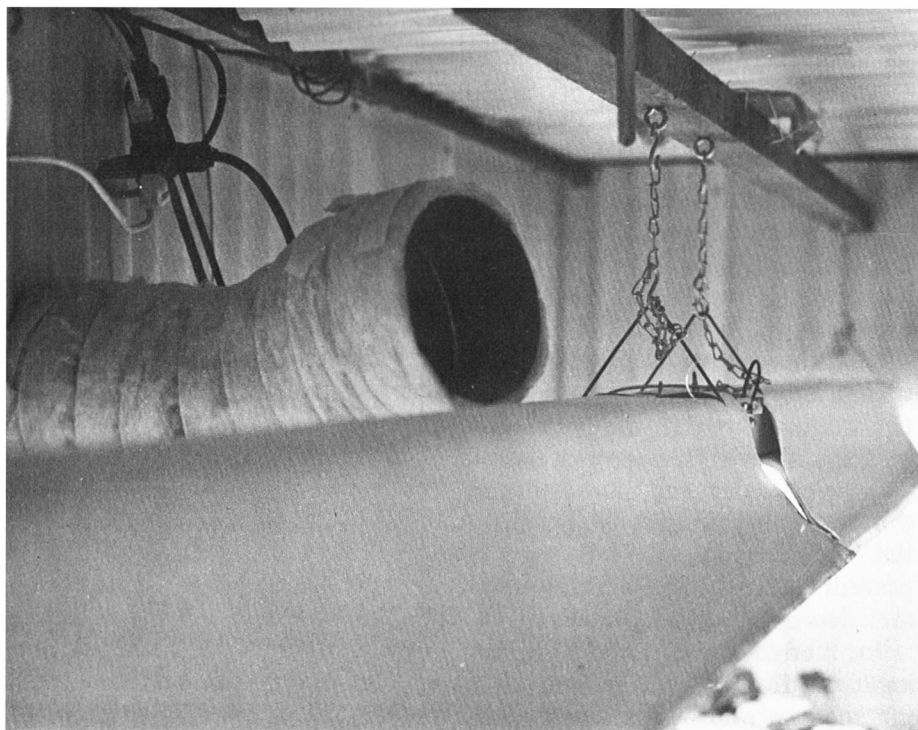
Since I live in a climate hostile to rex culture and do not have a greenhouse, I grow my begonias indoors under fluorescent lights.

About a year and a half ago I decided to re-design and build a fluorescent-light plant room in our basement specifically for the culture of rex begonias and plants of similar demands. I previously grew my vari-

ous begonias in the uncontrolled atmosphere of an unused bedroom. The new room would be much the same as a tropical greenhouse except for more control and more humidity but without natural light.

The idea wasn't unique, but for me the anticipation of finally having a place to grow these gems, giving them the climate they so desire, was thrilling. And incidentally, I have since found I can grow such species as *B. ficicola* and *B. versicolor* outside of glass bowls on the open bench.

The design of the room is basically simple. I enclosed an area 15' x 8' x 7' high entirely with corrugated



Photos by Gordon Lepisto

fiberglass (ceiling included). The benches are also made of corrugated fiberglass, double decked, 13' long each. They are supported by red cedar posts. Thin strips of redwood are spaced over the fiberglass benches on which the plants rest. The corrugation allows the water to drain away at the end of each bench. (See photo)

As to ventilation, I have provided a forced-fresh-air vent direct from the outside of the room, which is turned on daily for short periods both winter and summer. An exhaust vent is provided to take off excess heat and stale humid air. The air is rapidly moved around the room by a 14" turbulator and occasional use of a small fan. The humidity is pro-

vided by a simple attachment to our water system which creates a dense vapor. It's controlled by a humidistat set at 80% relative humidity year around.

The temperature during lights out is 60-65 degrees and it is 70-75 degrees during light hours (13 hours by timer). Even during the heat of summer the temperature seldom rises above 75 degrees because of the coolness of the basement. The basement is heated during the winter just enough to keep the temperature slightly above 60 degrees.

The 48 inch light fixtures are adjustable above the benches and only cool white tubes are used because not only are they easily obtainable locally but I have found that rexes and other



rhizomatous begonias grow well under them. Gro-lux and similar growth tubes have bleached my rexes.

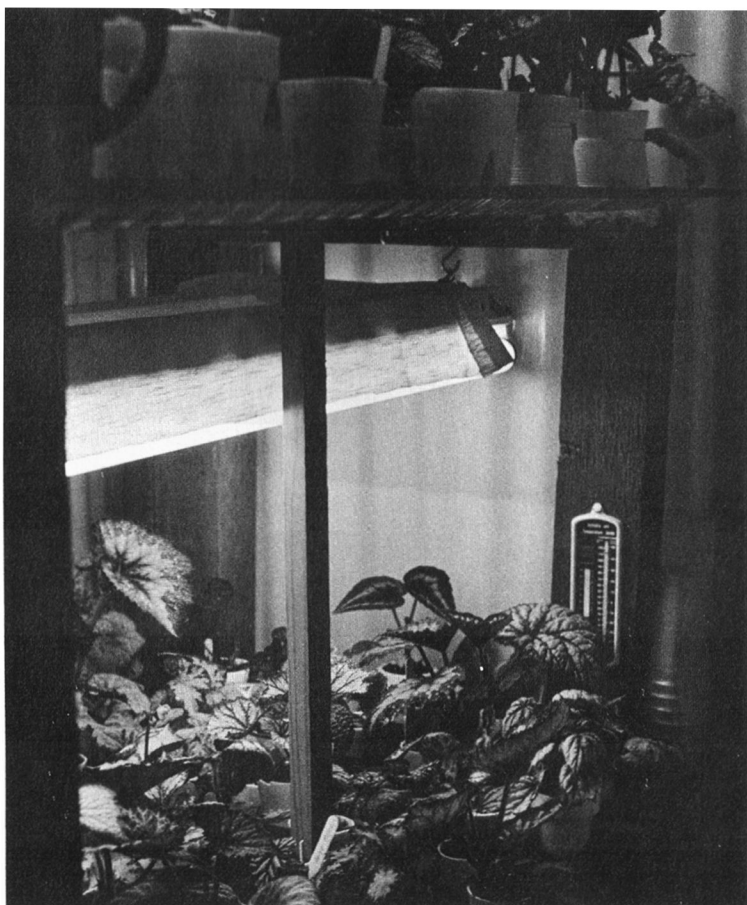
The climate in my room requires the use of long fibered sphagnum moss as a growing medium for all begonias, even as a propagating medium for cuttings set in uncovered individual pots. All plants are potted in styrofoam containers, slotted up the sides to allow more air to the roots. Fertilization is done at every watering at the rate of 1/20th the recommended amount.

All my plants, even the more temperamental demanding begonias are

left uncovered on the open bench with the exception of sterile seed flats. They are enclosed in zip-loc bags until well after germination to prevent formation of algae.

I have a constant rex cultivar hybridization program going which involves careful research and *time*. It's a satisfying creative experience that will never end.

Nothing, and I mean nothing, is more exhilarating than coming out of a winter snow storm at 15° below zero into a warm and humid plant room where I can rub elbows with the magnificent *Begonia* Rex cultivar.





AMERICAN BEGONIA SOCIETY CULTURAL BULLETIN

Accepted as a valuable course of information on all types of begonias, a 12 page pamphlet on the care and culture of begonias is being distributed through the ABS librarian.

Compiled and edited by experienced, accredited ABS judges and growers, it gives valuable information with special emphasis on helping new growers.

Individual copies are 50 cents. Branches may augment their treasuries by ordering in lots of 50 copies or more at a greatly reduced cost.

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CALENDAR

Sept. 27 — Redondo Area Branch — 6:30 p.m. at Dana School, 135th Street and Aviation Blvd. Jitney Dinner (bring your own table service). Donation Plant Table and Round Table Discussion — panel speakers are members:

Margaret Buell — Begonias

Henry Meyers — Ferns

Alice Martin — Fuchsias and
African Violets

Everyone welcome.

Sept. 14-15 — Santa Clara Valley Branch — Third Annual Show — Saturday and Sunday at Mayfield

Please contribute slides of Begonias to the A.B.S. Slide Library.

Mall Shopping Center, San Antonio Road and Central Expressway in Mountain View. There will be no admission charge and the show will be open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and from noon to 5 p.m. Sunday.

Sept. 20, 21 — show by the Connecticut Chapter of the American Gloxinia and Gesneriad Society. Lafayette Plaza, 333 State Street, Bridgeport, Conn. Exit 27, Conn. thruway (I-95). Fri. 12-9:30 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.-9:30 p.m.

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REX "PIGGY BACK"

By Lois Lenski Covey

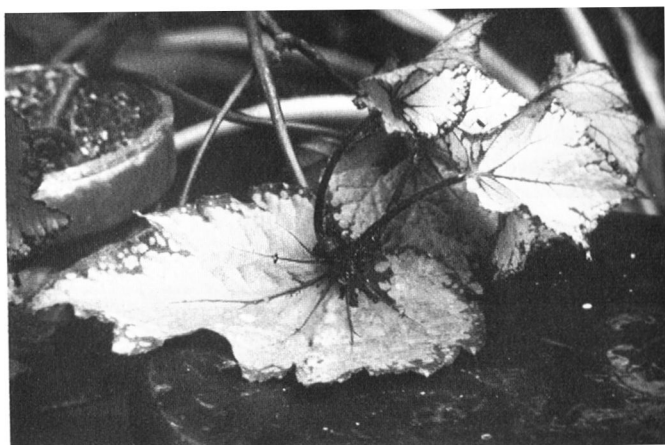
A unique rex begonia has been grown in Florida for many years. No one seems to know its real name or has been able to identify it. Because of its unusual habit of forming first bulblets and then plantlets at the sinus of a leaf, while that leaf is still growing on the mother plant, it is commonly called "piggy-back." This is definitely NOT adventitious growth.

The many-pointed leaf is silvery green in color, with a darker green edge, and a small dark green star in the center. It is a rapid grower and becomes a sturdy plant much stronger than many rexes. The bulblets and plantlets often start appearing on the leaves when the petioles are only three or four inches high. A large cluster of plantlets on the leaf will often cause the leaf to bend over from their weight. A mature plant with twenty leaves each supporting a cluster of plantlets becomes a remarkable specimen.

The plant was first mentioned in a 1950 *The Begonian* when it was exhibited by the then thriving Orlando Branch of the A.B.S. Dora Lee Dorsey, a long time grower of rexes in Florida, says she has grown it for many years but knows nothing of its origin. Inquiry about it has brought no information. I have learned of no other rex that produces "piggy-back" plantlets in a similar manner. No special culture is required, leaves root easily and grow rapidly in a common begonia mix. The plantlet with the bulblet can be taken off and rooted to make a new plant.

The plant will stand down to 40° of cold, and seems to resent extreme humidity in confinement. Under average outdoor conditions it makes plantlets freely.

Perhaps this brief description of this unique rex will lead to its proper identification and more knowledge of its ancestry.



Rex 'Piggy-back' — Photo by Lois Covey

CLAYTON M. KELLY SEED FUND

Pamphlets:

"Begonias From Seeds —
Sowing and Growing"
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"Begonias in General —
Culture of Begonias"
each \$.50

Sp 1—*B. acida*

Shrub-like, hairy leaved, compact plant. Large seer-sucker, puckered leaves of fresh apple-green. Flowers in spring, dainty white on stems standing well above foliage.

per pkt. \$1.00

Sp 2—*B. boliviensis*

1857, South America; 2 to 3 ft. high, branches well. Long pointed leaves are sharply serrate, 3 to 5 inches long, flowers in drooping panicles, are scarlet or orange-red. This tuberous is widely used in hybridizing, and is a parent of the first hybrid tuberous.

per pkt. \$1.00

Sp 3—*B. dipetala*

1828. A handsome fibrous, grows to 18", with brown, half-heart shaped leaves, spotted white. Likes warmth and humidity.

per pkt. \$.50

Sp 4—*B. dregei*

Semi-tuberous. A beautiful, dainty plant, young leaves are spotted, but as it grows older spots disappear. Makes a nice basket, does not go entirely dormant. White flowers. Watch this for mildew, needs good air circulation.

per pkt. \$.50

Sp 5—*B. 'Fleecealba'*

This hybrid does come true from seed. It is an offspring of *B. sunderbruchi* and *B. 'Manda's Wooly Bear'*.

Huge cluster bouquets of white flowers, fleecy white leaves. Beautiful plant.

per pkt. \$.50

Sp 6—*B. foliosa*

1825, fibrous. Good basket plant, graceful, lacy appearance. Foliage small, almost fern-like. Tips should be removed to make a nicer fuller plant. Loveiest of the small leafed group. Likes lots of moisture.

per pkt. \$1.00

Sp 7—*B. mollicaulis*

Shrub-like cane. Wide hairy, apple-green leaves. Grows to 24 inches, with pure white flowers.

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Sp 8—*B. 'Odorata-alba'*

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1879, Brazil. Blooms white with pink cast. Fibrous grows to 12 inches, bushy habit. Prolific bloomer with handsome olive-green foliage. Minimum care.

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Sp 10—*Star rex*

I have no more information on these, but they promise to have many interesting and beautiful plants.

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(Continued on Next Page)

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IN QUEST OF THE BLUE BEGONIA

Reprinted from San Francisco Examiner, July 17, 1974

The splashy begonia comes in every color but blue—a fact that irks the numerous lovers of the flower.

They have spent years of experimenting to try to change nature.

But now Dr. Ernest Weitz, a begonia-loving orthopedic surgeon here, has hit upon the idea of exposing the plant to radiation in hopes of mutating the plant's genetic makeup.

Plant cuttings supplied by members of the San Francisco Begonia Society have been placed in front of an X-ray machine at Mount Zion Hospital.

Now members are eagerly awaiting results. Any radiation-induced abnormalities will be reported. If the horticultural breakthrough occurs . . . to quote one member of the society:

"You'll hear me scream clear across town. Then I'll pass out. And if it happens to be one of my begonias, I'll name it after myself. I'll call it an Alice Bluegown Begonia. Imagine, a species named after me!"

Among the members of the begonia society are Isadore and Alice Gold.

Gold, who works at Lachman

Sp 11—Pink *Semperflorens*

Something easy to grow, and will produce an abundance of color in pots, or a beautiful mass planting. Can be used as a border plant.

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Make all checks payable to American Begonia Society, and mail to Mrs. Pearl E. Benell, 10331 Colima Rd., Whittier, Ca. 90604.

Bros. furnishings, is president of the San Francisco begonia group.

The Golds have spent years growing some of the best begonias in town. To prove their success, they have enough trophies to fill a greenhouse.

Besides caring for begonias, Mrs. Gold does volunteer work for the Josephine Randall Museum for children and transcribes braille.

In fact, it was a blind person who started the Golds in growing begonias.

"When Alice and I first went to a begonia club meeting we were impressed by this big, beautiful red flower. Then we found out it was grown by Bill Peck, the blind man who sells sandwiches at City Hall. I thought if he could grow something so beautiful without sight, then there was hope for me," Isadore said.

NEW BRANCH IN PENNSYLVANIA

We welcome a new branch to ABS, the Edna Stewart Pittsburgh Branch, which was chartered in May, 1974. Frank A. Kerin is president, and Beverly Coyle, 144 McCurdy Drive, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15235, is corresponding secretary.

This fast growing group of hard working plant enthusiasts have as their objective to grow and promote begonias.

Their meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 8 p.m., at the Phipps Conservatory in Pittsburgh.

ROUND ROBIN NOTES

Thanks to help from the robins and *The Begonian*, Linda Record of Maryland was encouraged to set up an educational display at her local spring flower show, using the show schedule in *The Begonian*. Many people were very interested since most of them knew only about wax and angelwing begonias.

Dora Lee Dorsey, Florida, likes her cane begonias to get early morning sun. She finds most begonias will take more sun than is usually given them, making them more compact and sturdy. The prettiest *B. serratifolia* she'd ever seen was out in a shrubby border (in a pot) where it received noonday sun — in fact, several hours of sun. Its sturdiness and color were fabulous.

Dora Lee said her *B. versicolor* plants on the open bench in the greenhouse were growing nicely in soil mix. Some had 5-6" leaves, some in bloom. One in a brandysniffer in sphagnum was growing but looked frail with 2" leaves, no bloom, little of the silver color or red hairs so prominent on those in the bench.

Dora Lee feels that anyone who can grow African Violets should be able to grow rexes since they like about the same care. She advised not to overfeed as too much nitrogen for leaf growth sometimes make them more green or less colorful. She finds they can go dormant anytime when they are not in satisfactory environment. Sometimes it is good to clean old soil off the roots and any decayed rhizome parts, dust with fungicide and start over in vermiculite/perlite or sphagnum moss.

Priscilla Beck, Connecticut, had only one rex, *B. 'Dottie'*, go dormant due to the cooler temperatures last winter. Since 90% of them are under lights under the greenhouse benches, she is beginning to wonder if, in their case, light and day length aren't more important than temperature. Her lights run 12 hours winter and summer.

Mildred Rowland of Oregon uses water in trays under some of her plants under lights to increase humidity. She even uses a broiler pan from the oven, filling the lower portion with water, using upper portion on which to set plants.

Rosetta White, Kansas, said since she has been putting her cuttings in long sphagnum moss that has been ground up, she gets much sturdier plants when they are left growing in the moss. She always had healthy plants in her potting mix but, since giving the moss a trial, finds her sturdiest plants grow in the moss.

Zelda Isaacs of New York, finds that rooting in 'kitty litter' is faster by two weeks than other materials she has tried. *B. versicolor* was up in exactly two months. She put wedges down in soilless mix, in sphagnum moss and in 'kitty litter'. Every wedge in the 'kitty litter' grew plants while there were some failures using the other two mediums.

Elda Haring, North Carolina, put a leaf of *B. gracilis* in a little pot last fall and set it in a sweater box. This spring when the leaf started to rot she dug it up and found a big marble-sized tuber, which she potted up.

Elda keeps all her seed pans in

plastic bags until germination. At a garden club meeting she shared seeds with each member during a workshop, with all members planting seeds in plastic cups placed in bags which they took home. At the next meeting all reported those placed in windows germinated more quickly than those placed under lights! Once in Connecticut she sowed seeds of *B. masoniana* leaving pan in greenhouse with night temperature at 58°. Having no germination, she placed impatiens slips in pan. When temperatures went to 80° at night, the begonias came up all around the impatiens!

Dorcas Resleff, Washington, finds some seeds do better in one mix and some do better in other mixes but she feels atmosphere seems to make a difference, too. For her, rex seed seems to do best in Jiffy 7s crumbled. Experiment with your own mixes of perlite, vermiculite and sphagnum moss to see for yourself which is best for you, she advises.

Debi Miller, California, has many seedlings under lights. After reading in *The Begonian* that apparently seedlings won't develop past a certain point unless they have soil around their stems, she found this seemed to be the case with hers. After about six weeks her seedlings hit a standstill where they remained for another six weeks. After transplanting them, they doubled in size in a week!!

Norman and Betty Tillotson of California give their begonias a shot of "Begonia Tonic" — epsom salts. Using one tablespoon of epsom salts to a gallon of water, they apply like

fertilizer and it greens up the plants fast. Use it only once a month, they advise.

Barbara Neptune, California, says her rex begonias go into a steamy shower stall for two hours after arrival in the mail. Crumpled leaves can then be straightened without damage. Then into a terrarium, dimly lighted, for three days, increasing closeness to window and with vent opened each day. Then onto her rex table, out of the terrariums. If they can take plant room conditions, that's where they stay. If not, they go back into a light terrarium but she still tries to gradually work them back onto the table by leaving them out a few hours a day until they can take it.

Write me soon to join in these lively discussions in the robins.

Mrs. Mae Blanton
Round Robin Director
118 Wildoak Drive
Lake Dallas, Texas 75065

SAN MIGUEL BRANCH HISTORY

In the January issue the organization date of 1955 was published for the San Miguel branch. Branch National Representative Marge Lee notes that the branch was first organized in 1945 as the La Mesa Branch. In 1955 the branch changed its name to San Miguel Branch.

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REGISTRATION OF BEGONIA CULTIVARS

Note: The American Begonia Society is the International Registration Authority for cultivars of the genus *Begonia*. Information regarding registration may be obtained from Rudolf Ziesenhenné, 1130 N. Milpas St., Santa Barbara, CA 93103.

No. 409 — *Begonia* (B. *rex* cultorum unnamed varieties) 'Sea Foam'

Dora Lee Dorsey, 8110 N. Edison Ave., Tampa, Fla. 33604 originated this large-leaved rex in 1969, it first bloomed in 1971, and was first distributed in 1972 by the originator. The leaves are double-spiraled heart-shaped, 8 x 10"; margin dentate with short red hairs, texture metallic lustre, bubbled, pustulate; veins heavy, distinct, silver top, red below; petioles red-hairy, heavy, 8-10"; stipules red-hairy, 1"; color deep sea green, silver pustules between veins with short hairs, green with a netting of red veins under. Flowers pink, spring and fall on 5" stems. Registered January 31, 1974.

No. 410 — *Begonia* (B. *rex* cultorum, unnamed varieties) 'Margaret Aman'

Developed by Dora Lee Dorsey, address above, the basal lobes of this large-leaved rex are over-lapped but not spiralled; leaves are unequal heart-shaped to a long point, 11 x 7"; margin dentate; texture heavy, crumpled between veins; veins change color with zones; petioles red-brown, light short hairs, slightly concave on top, 6-8" long; stipules red 1 x 1/2"; color dark bronze area center follows veins, silver, bright

green, narrow maroon-edged zones in order named. Flowers pink, 2", season of bloom various. Developed 1969, first bloomed 1970, first distributed 1972. Registered January 31, 1974.

No. 411 — *Begonia* (B. 'Verde Grande' X unknown) 'Green Giant'

This large star-leaf rhizomatous begonia was originated by Paul P. Lowe, 23045 S.W. 123 Rd., Goulds, Fla. 33170 in 1972 and first bloomed and was distributed to the trade in 1974. Leaf is 12 x 7"; margin eyelashed; texture soft, hairy; veins light green; petioles green; and color apple green. Flowers 1/2" petals, white flushed pink; bunched at top of tall 12-16" stem, in late winter. Registered February 28, 1974.

No. 412 — *Begonia* (B. 'Virbob' X B. 'Libby Lee') 'Little Joe'

Developed in 1972, first bloomed and first distributed in 1974, this modified-star-leaf begonia, has a leaf shallowly cut, 2 x 2 1/2"; margin eyelashed; texture silky, petioles spotted red; color light-green along veins, marbled-brown between veins and around edges. Flowers light pink, 1/2" petals, bunched at top of 4" stem, in late winter. Available from originator Paul P. Lowe, address above. Registered February 28, 1974.

No. 413 — *Begonia* (B. 'Chumash' X B. 'Verde Grande') 'Ray Weakley'

Soft emerald-green with narrow reddish-brown edges, the leaves of this rhizomatous begonia are star-shaped, 5 x 4"; margin plain; texture soft satiny; veins and petioles green.

Flowers are rosy pink, $\frac{1}{4}$ " petals, bunched at top of 4" stem, in late winter. Available from originator, Paul P. Lowe, address above. Developed 1973, first bloomed and distributed 1974. Registered February 28, 1974.

No. 414 — Begonia (B. 'Verde Grande' X B. 'Chumash') 'Vermash'

This deeply-cut, star-leaved begonia was developed by Paul P. Lowe, address above, in 1973; first bloomed and distributed in 1974. Leaves are 5 x 3"; margin eyelashed; texture soft, silky; veins greenish bronze; petioles green, mottled red; color purplish brown with slashes of green. Flowers pink, $\frac{1}{2}$ " petals, single on 8" branched stem, in late winter. Registered February 28, 1974.

No. 415 — Begonia (B. convulvulacea X B. 'Orange Rubra') 'Rubacon'

Undulated leaf margin, glossy crinkled texture, and green sunken veins characterize this cane-like trailer whose $7\frac{1}{2}$ " leaves, bright green, are irregular. Originated by Paul P. Lowe, address above, in 1972 it was first distributed and first bloomed in early 1974 with creamy white flowers, petals $\frac{1}{8}$ " in circular bunches at top of 5" stem. Registered March 4, 1974.

Rudolf Ziesenhenn
Nomenclature Director

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Rosamond Meriwether, Secretary
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Kansas City, Mo. 64109

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Mrs. John W. Watson, Secy.
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GROWING REXES IN AN UNCONTROLLED ENVIRONMENT

(Continued from Page 229)

will go dormant." "Set them aside and keep them moist and they will 'come back'." Maybe! Those that "come back" for me have not been worth keeping, so out they go, just another casualty.

The problem of leaf dropping for whatever the reason is the biggest problem of the uncontrolled grower of rexes. I have not solved this problem, but have worked out a way of circumventing it so that I need not become rex-less. I try to replace the dead or dormant leafless rexes. I try to have young plants rooted from wedges, about three or four inches high, ready for the hot and rainy summer. They will come through the heat without leaf dropping and replace losses. But it seems such a pity to have to sacrifice on the altar of expediency all those unspeakable beautiful leaves, which should have had the right to grow into beautiful specimen plants.

There may be others' problems which I have forgotten or overlooked, but the above is enough. This article is written not to tell the novice grower how to grow rexes, but simply to present some of the problems which are encountered. Among the members of the ABS there must be more able growers than I, who can come forward with answers to these problems. Let us hear from them. That rexes can and will be grown for their sheer beauty to provide lasting joy to the grower is my firm belief.

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