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*The* BEGONIAN



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# The BEGONIAN

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## IN THIS ISSUE

B. fernando-costae Irmscher	107
Some Older Favorites	110
A Visit to Rosecroft	113
Great Beginnings	114
Michel Bégon	118
Nominations for 1979 Awards	122
Round Robin Notes	123
Seed Fund	125
Minutes	128
New Branches	129
Question Box	130

Cover: B. fernando-costae Irmscher  
By Ed and Mildred Thompson

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## AIMS AND PURPOSES OF THE AMERICAN BEGONIA SOCIETY

The purpose of this Society shall be:

TO stimulate and promote interest in *Begonia*  
and other shade-loving plants;

TO encourage the introduction and development  
of new types of these plants;

TO standardize the nomenclature of *Begonia*;

TO gather and publish information in regard to  
kinds, propagation and culture of *Begonia* 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 *Begonia*.

## B. FERNANDO-COSTAE IRMSCHER

By Mildred L. Thompson

Cover Photograph by Ed & Mildred Thompson

In the late 1940's Mulford Foster, of Orlando, Florida, brought back seeds of an unidentified species from an exploring trip in South America. This seed was distributed to American Begonia Society members in February 1949 as No. 2366, and later the species became known as "*Fernando, Costal*." It was thought that this species was named for the place where it was collected; however, on page 61 in the March 1953 *Begonian* appeared this: ". . . we received a note from Mr. Mulford Foster, Orlando, Florida, to the effect that it should be *Begonia Fernando-Costae*, after a man by that name, as christened by Senor Brade, the foremost South American authority on Begonias at the Botanic Garden of Rio de Janeiro." In the *Buxton Check List of Begonias* [1957] *B. Fernando-Costal* was listed as being in the Royal Botanic Gardens of Edinburgh in 1948.

Up until 1953, however, the name and description of this species was not validly published. In 1953 Dr. Edgar Irmischer, a renowned German botanist and Begoniaceae specialist, wrote an extensive article based on his studies of a large collection from the Herbarium of the Botanical Institute of Sao Paulo sent him by Professor F. C. Hoehne, and material sent by Dr. A. C. Brade of the Botanical Garden of Rio de Janeiro. Within this article, which appeared in *Botanische Jahrbücher*, Vol. 76, Dr. Irmischer published the name and description of *B. fernando-costae* on pp. 52-54. Dr. Irmischer lists three

herbarium specimens of this Brazilian species that he studied. The first one listed (No. 27343) was collected in the state of Sao Paulo by Hoehne on March 16, 1931 near Cubatao, on the Atlantic Coast in the Serra do Mar coastal mountain range. The other two were collected by Luederwaldt at separate times on the Ipiranga Plain in the state of Sao Paulo: April 1912 (No. 8765) and April 1917 (No. 18011). These specimens were from the Herbarium of the Botanical Institute of Sao Paulo. Dr. Irmischer placed this species in the section *Pritzelia*. Dr. Irmischer named *Begonia fernando-costae* in honor of Dr. Fernando Costa, the meritorious founder of the Botanical Gardens in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Seeds of *B. fernando-costae* have been offered by the Clayton M. Kelly Seed Fund of the American Begonia Society on a somewhat regular basis since it was introduced into the United States by Mr. Foster in 1949. In the 1965 seed offering, the seed was mentioned as having been collected in a shady forest 100 to 1000 ft. from the ocean, at low elevations from 30 to 300 ft.

In the areas where *B. fernando-costae* has been collected, the average temperatures in the summer are between 78° F. and 85° F. during the day and 65° F. and 75° F. at night. The winter temperatures average 65° F. to 75° F. during the day and 50° F. to 60° F. at night. There are extremes between 90° F. and 100° F. during the summer and 30° F. and 40° F. in the winter with an

occasional frost. The relative humidity is within the 70% to 90% range. The weather is rainy all year, and especially rainy during the spring and summer. Rainfall on the coast is 80 to 90 inches a year and about 50 to 60 inches inland. It should be noted, however, that most tropical regions experience rainfall as showers with sunshine in between; this allows ample time for the leaves and soil to dry between showers. Prolonged dark, rainy periods are almost non-existent in tropical regions.

Growers have shown a great interest in this species, and among begonia enthusiasts it is fairly well known. Some hybridizers recognized the possibilities of *B. fernando-costae*, and as a result several important hybrid cultivars were introduced. In 1953 Jack Lighthart, of Cardoza Gardens, California registered *B. 'Lillian Sloan,'* which resulted when *B. metallica* was used as the female parent. In 1956 Louise Schwerdtfeger introduced *B. 'Raythel,'* a sparsely hairy, large-leaved shrub-like begonia, using *B. epipsila* as the male parent. F. O. Michelson, of Miami, Florida registered two cultivars: *B. 'Fernan-Vell,'* a lovely compact type, using *B. olsoniae* as the male parent and *B. 'Lorene Brown,'* a beautiful, hairy, large-leaved shrub-like begonia using an unidentified species as the male parent. *B. fernando-costae* is classified horticulturally as shrub-like, hairy-leaved, wide-leaved (generally over 3" at maturity). This species is a full plant that sends up many basal shoots; however, there is little branching along the stems. The light green stems are covered with red-tinted, green hairs. The stems grow to approximately 25";

the internodes average 1" to 2" in length. The petioles measure about 4" to 10" in length and are also covered with red-tinted, green hairs. The large, light green stipules turn brown quickly and remain on the stem for a long time.

The deep rich green leaves measure about 5" to 8" long and 3" to 7" wide; the light green undersurface of some leaves is heavily tinted red. Both sides of the leaves are covered with soft hairs; on the upper surface the light green hairs measure about 1/10", and on the undersurface the red-tinted, light green hairs are a little shorter, and each hair is split at one-half of its length into two to four thread-like branches. The leaf shape is ovate-oblique with a cordate base and a shortly acuminate apex. The margin is slightly undulate, densely ciliate, and slightly dentate.

The hairy flower stalks are about 18" to 20" long and rise well above the foliage with multifloral cymes of white flowers. The male flowers have four tepals; the female flowers have five tepals. *B. fernando-costae* blooms in late fall and winter.

*B. fernando-costae* is an adaptable species that can tolerate adverse conditions for short periods of time without too much difficulty. Nevertheless, when given the same routine culture as any other hairy-leaved shrub-like begonia, it will respond elegantly. During the spring, summer, and fall months, a lot of bright light with early morning and late afternoon sun is the ideal light situation for keeping the good rich green leaf color and to get adequate blooming. In most areas, plenty of slightly filtered sunlight in the win-

ter is especially important. For good, rich leaf coloring proper lighting is crucial; too much light and/or sunlight will cause the coloring to become pale.

Judging from the heavy rainfall and the proximity to the ocean of its natural habitat, it is not difficult to understand why this species will do best when the relative humidity is about 60% or more. This species is tolerant of a wide range of temperatures in its natural habitat and will survive under the same circumstances in cultivation, but there is no question about the fact that it will grow more luxuriantly when the temperatures range between 60° F. and 70° F. and when there is high humidity.

We have been growing this Brazilian species satisfactorily in squatty clay pots although we would prefer to grow it in moss-lined containers where it should do even better. We use the same potting mix that we use for most of our begonias.

For an erect and stately plant, the stems should be staked, although some growers prefer to grow it unstaked in a hanging container which works well too. No matter which type of container is chosen the plant should never be over-potted, because it does have a tendency to become "leggy" unless it has the proper potting accommodations. Pinching some of the growing tips of some of the young shoots also helps to keep the plant full. You should never underestimate the importance of regular fertilizing using a well-balanced fertilizer. We have believed in preventive care, so we spray regularly with broad spectrum insecticides and fungicides.

Propagation can be accomplished

by any of three methods: leaf cuttings, stem cuttings, or seeds. The leaf cuttings will produce fuller plants more quickly, but the propagation time will be longer than with stem cuttings.

*B. fernando-costae* was added to our collection in May 1974, when we received seeds of this species from the Clayton M. Kelly Seed Fund. We have always enjoyed growing it, and we have found it delightfully easy to grow.

I am grateful to Dr. Benjamin Herman for the information concerning the climatic conditions of the natural habitat of this species. I am also grateful to Jack Golding, Carrie Karegeannes, and Rudy Zieshenne for their assistance in trying to get more definite information concerning the origin of the name.

## New Editors

The Editorial Board announces that new editors for the *Begonian* have been selected. They are Charles Anderson and Karen Bartholomew whose names should be familiar to ABS members since they have contributed articles over the last several years. They will take over after the June issue. New materials for the magazine should be sent to them at 826 Santa Rita Avenue, Los Altos, CA 94022.

## Texas Growers

Several of our ABS members in the Wichita Falls, Texas area were in the path of the recent tornado. Although most of them lost home and plants and belongings, according to reports no one was seriously hurt. It will be months before all the damage can be repaired. Not everyone has had phone service restored, but the same addresses will take mail to them.

## SOME OLDER FAVORITES

By Bob Hamm, Wichita Falls, Texas

Often when dealing with people buying plants, I get the question "What's new?", and think to myself, "Is new automatically better?" My answer to that has to be a categorical NO! New plants are the spice of life, and as you go along in plant collecting you gradually find yourself restricted to having to search for either very new hybrids or very-rare-to-find to keep your collecting going. I think the attitude of looking for the "New" hybrid has become too widespread and is harmful. It is especially detrimental to the new grower who should be asking "What's good?" rather than "What's new?".

I've seen too many new growers completely bypass some very good-growing plants and struggle along with what are sometimes much harder "New" plants due to catching the "New" bug. So to counter a little of this, and to give the newer begonia hobbyist some ideas of what I like among older hybrids and species I'd like to present a set of plants that I think every new grower should try before becoming involved in the newer or more sensitive begonias.

Growers who have success continue; growers who fail, even when it is not really their fault, often give up. Too many growers are failing because they start off wrong. I could cry over the many people in Texas who have given up on begonias because the nurseries push Rex hybrids; and a person has to be mighty good to raise those gorgeous but temperamental beauties through our 8 degree winters and 108° summers. A person who fails with one set of be-

gonias is NOT easy to convince to try others!

So without further ado, here we go with some I think are good and easy for the beginner, and nice for the advanced grower too!

*B. albo-picta* — now called *B. maculata* — is one I think every beginner should try. Introduced in the mid 1800s, this is definitely an "oldie but goodie". It is from Brazil and has rather small spotted leaves to maybe 4 inches, and hanging blooms of an interesting pink-blushed white. It is often listed as a low grower, and younger plants that are kept pot bound will tend to grow low and spread, but older plants with room slowly send taller canes up to 4 feet. A young bloomer, it will bloom in a 3" pot and branches well and responds well to pinching. It blooms heavily, covering the branch tips in flowers. Also the upper canes grow up and then outwards, so that a larger plant has a layered effect and reminds me of oriental bamboo. A sharp chill will bring the leaves tumbling down, but it rapidly comes back fuller than ever.

*B. 'Corallina de Lucerna'* is probably the grandparent of all "Angelwing" begonias, being the cane most widely distributed among the general public. Whenever growers say they have an "Angelwing" given to them by their grandmother, I guess at *B. 'Lucerna'* and am generally correct. This cane is often rejected because it grows too large for most people, however, it has a number of characteristics that endear it to all beginners. First, it blooms easily if

given lots of sun; second, it's easy to grow and will grow when underwatered, overwatered, underfed and overfed. This monster is best left in a small pot (as small as will hold it upright), not fed too much and let dry between waterings. Coupled with this and lots of sun, it produces flowers freely. But watch out! If you pamper it with good soil, a large pot, and fertilizer, you will have Jack's Beanstalk, and rapidly. For a hardy cane that stands a lot of neglect and still blooms (bright pink to red depending on light) try this one. P.S. It does not like cold drafts and tends to become a nudist if chilled.

*B. cubensis* hort., an interesting shrub-like plant with dark reddish leaves with crinkled edges and pinkish flowers, is a good choice for a basket. It grows well, is bright and colorful, and with just a little pinching becomes very full. Let it dry slightly between waterings and, if it gets too stringy, give it more light. Generally it is not fussy.

*B. 'Richmondensis'* is for anyone who wants to grow a large basket, and have a strong vigorous plant that grows rapidly and blooms well. When given room in its pot and a good supply of dilute fertilizer it will grow to goodly proportions in a very short time. Its blooms are light pink in shade, almost red in sunlight, and it requires a greater amount of sun than many. This makes it a good choice for outdoor baskets. However, for those with limited space this is one that will require pruning back or starting a new basket each fall when bringing it indoors. It roots easily from cuttings.

*B. 'Catalina'* is another strong grower, but not as rampant and large

as *B. 'Richmondensis'*, though it resembles a smaller, denser version of it. Good for those who want something strong but smaller than the above.

*B. 'Erythrophylla'*, this old (from 1847) rhizomatous plant, is also known as the "Beefsteak Begonia" due to the bright red undersides of the leaves. A very common begonia, it is nevertheless a good choice for beginners and even for advanced growers as it can be a beautiful plant. It is a strong grower, and stands more abuse than many of the newer hybrids. A winter bloomer, its pink blooms are a nice touch above its rounded leaves, green above and red below. This plant can tolerate fairly low humidity, and wide variance in light and watering. It should be allowed to dry between watering to prevent rotting the rhizome and a rapid draining soil is preferred. I've seen this grown everywhere from an office filing cabinet under the ceiling light with no sun at all, to the sunny end of a greenhouse, and everything in between.

*B. 'Elaine Wilkerson'* is an easy-to-grow smaller rhizomatous plant, with leaves that vary with light from green and dark chocolate to almost black. Leaves are covered with hairs and the effect is very pleasing. A winter bloomer, it tends to bloom heavily for me. It is easy to grow in either a pot or wire basket in a well-drained medium.

*B. dregei*, and the related *B. suffruticosa* are two of the semi-tuberous "maple leaf" types and are very pretty. They are easy to grow if you understand two things: first, they require a well drained medium, and second, in the fall both of these go

into a rest period and drop leaves, and sometimes stems, and at this time they should be grown with minimal watering and cut back. When new growth starts, resume watering and feeding as normal. Both of these are very pretty with small lobed leaves, green, often edged in red with pink or white flowers (light factor again) and a very bushy full growth. Can be grown as a pot or basket.

*B.* 'Joan Strong', a very strong-growing semp, has bronze foliage and fully double pink blooms. It is very pretty, easy to grow, and a bit larger than some. Give strong light and let become pot bound to promote bloom.

*B.* 'Christmas Candle' is not really an oldie, but very pretty. A dwarf, dense-growing semp with bright green foliage and fully double bright red blooms, it is not hard to grow. Keep the pot size tight and light bright.

*B.* 'Dorothy Grant' is a large grower but a very pretty shrub-like plant with bronzish leaves, red underneath, and a strong growth habit. It blooms in spring with pink blooms. This common plant has become very widespread and its ease in growing has endured it to many a store window.

Some others that are easy are:

*B.* 'Rosie Murphisk' — a nice compact, cane.

*B.* 'Helen' — a larger grower with white blooms.

*B.* 'White Christmas' — a double white flowered semp.

*B.* 'Medora' — a common small-leaved cane.

*B.* 'Argenteo-gutatta' — an old cane with heavily spotted leaves but few blooms.

*B.* 'Maphil' — also called *B.* 'Cleopatra' — rhizomatous with variable leaves (from green and chocolate to almost black), pink blooms in winter.

*B.* 'Perfectifolia' — a plain green leaf, white blooms, a strong grower.

*B.* 'Ricinifolia' — a rhizomatous for those who like large plants, large green leaves, and rings of red hairs around the leaf petioles. Very interesting and impressive if you have the room for it.

To all the new growers who are trying to learn how to grow begonias, I would caution that you not think "New" means better, but stay with some of the older, tried-but-true favorites. Not only will results be a lot better, but the plants are much cheaper than the new hybrids. It's better to learn, killing plants at 75¢ or \$1.00, than to experiment on plants that may cost you much more.

Remember, if you don't have it, it's new to you.

## Mabel Corwin to Speak at Redondo Branch

Mabel Corwin, ABS Round Robin Director, will be speaking at the June meeting of the Redondo Area Branch. She will also furnish the plant table. The meeting will be held at the R. H. Dana School Cafeteria, 135th Street and Aviation Blvd., in Hawthorne, Calif., on June 22 at 7:30 p.m. Visitors are welcome.

**SANTA BARBARA BRANCH**  
invites you to their 39th Birthday  
Celebration Dinner  
Mabel Corwin, Speaker  
Saturday, May 26 at 6:30 p.m.  
1232 De la Vina St. DO COME!

## A VISIT TO ROSECROFT

By Keith J. Mautino, Santa Barbara, Calif.

I traveled to the San Diego area last June looking forward to seeing the legendary Rosecroft Begonia Garden on Point Loma. I had heard many stories about the beauty of the garden which was the home of Alfred D. Robinson.

As I entered the shady lane which leads to Rosecroft, I caught glimpses of many colorful tuberous begonias through the slats of the lathhouses. At the entrance stood an old weather-beaten sign welcoming visitors. At the entrance there are many large hanging ferns of all types. I found out later that some of these were over 40 years old. I soon saw a plant of *Begonia convolvulacea* which had climbed up the trunk of a large tree fern. Decorating the lava rock waterfall were many tuberous begonias, all of which were laden with blossoms of light pink edged with deep rose. Among the picotee flowered tuberous were large bunches of *B. 'Ricinifolia'* with their last sprays of pink flowers.

In the large glasshouse there were many rhizomatous begonias which were grown to perfection by the present owner of Rosecroft, Kathryn Hunter, who gave me a tour of the grounds. Very few of the begonias here are labeled, a fact that may be lamented by those who come for named varieties. But begonias are present in profusion to be enjoyed by all who come to Rosecroft, as they have been doing for many years.

A few of the ones I recognized included *B. listida*, *B. 'Crestabruclii'*, *B. 'Joe Hayden'*, *B. scharffiana*, *B. 'Orange Rubra'*, and *B. foliosa*.



A carnation form, the staminate blossom is red, leaf is light green and fuzzy.

Photo by K. Mautino

Many canes and small leafed shrubs were interspersed among the tuberous varieties in the large lathhouses. The tuberous were just starting to bloom heavily and were gorgeous. A begonia lover would have a hard time choosing a favorite. All the different types of tyberhybrida were represented here — rose form, camellia flowered, crested margin types, all shades of picotees, and hanging varieties. The colors ran the full gamut of possibilities. I was especially impressed with a ruffled white beauty with a deep orange edge.

I left Rosecroft with many beautiful memories and I really want to go back for another visit.

## GREAT BEGINNINGS

By Kit Jeans, New Johnsonville, Tenn.

The Cheekwood Branch of the ABS got launched with a bang better than a bottle of champagne across the prow. We had a weekend with Joy Logee Martin to begin our official status.

Of course, we are spoiled to begin with. Our branch meets at its namesake: Cheekwood, the lovely home of the Tennessee Botanical Gardens and Fine Arts Center. If you aren't inspired to grow begonias — or anything else, for that matter — in that atmosphere, well, let's face it, you have a *concrete* thumb.

Cheekwood, which plays host to a number of plant societies, offered to do for us what they had done for others in the past: sponsor a weekend workshop for begonia growers, hobbyists, and assorted fellow travelers. Speaking of travelers, we had a few. When word got out that Joy Martin of Logee's Greenhouses was going to conduct our workshop, begonias fairly tumbled out of the snowbanks. I know that Eric Steinger had to drive through snow to get to Nashville from Ohio. The Wades of Louisville braved a blizzard on their way home. The Zimmers had to travel the snowy mountains of east Tennessee as did Dr. Rice and his wife. The branch members and Nashvillians made up the rest of the audience. The weather did keep the participation down to a comfortable forum.

Joy herself flew in from New England on the heels of a blizzard which paralyzed Washington and Baltimore. Evidently there was not too much snow for Rhode Island's

snowplows to manage. I think she was somewhat surprised to find Tennessee languishing in the 50s on that Friday. It didn't last, of course. We had our own blizzard on Sunday, which delighted Bert Selph, to whom snow is a rare and lovely treat. Bert had driven here from Texas to lend a hand and help me get my act together. I had to chase all over Nashville for a projector that would handle 2 1/4" slides for the presentation on Saturday, but if you've ever seen 2 1/4 inch slides, you'd never bother with 35mm film again. Joy's transparencies were worth all the effort. Imagine the Brazilian species and *B. deliciosa* on a 10 foot screen!

Everyone was pleased by Joy's descriptions of how they raise begonias at Logee's Greenhouses. For instance, all their cuttings are put down in sand. To keep down fungus and other enemies, they must have a porous medium that is cheap, because it must be changed completely every three months. The cheapest material for such a purpose is sand. They also use granite dust in their potting mix, another New England specialty. When the greenhouses have been in the family for three generations, you know fascinating stories are bound to accumulate. Joy had a mesmerized audience.

The plant show, because of the weather, was a real effort for most of our members. Most begonias are not really at their best in February, particularly when the grower doesn't have a greenhouse. But there was nothing second rate about our members' efforts. Edith Phenicie brought

us a 3-foot basket of *Begonia* 'Charm' covered with pink. Carol Ann Bonner's huge terrariums were missing only the leprechauns perched under the begonia leaves. Dr. Rice brought a tall handsome specimen of *B. drostii* from Knoxville only to have Joy tell him it was really *B. 'Alta Loma'*. "But Mrs. Martin," he grinned, "it was labeled *B. drostii* when we bought it at your greenhouse. . ." *B. drostii* or 'Loma Alta', it won a blue ribbon. Marge Mitchell's *B. 'Edith M.'* was a cloud of creamy pink which also goes well with blue. *B. paulensis* in a 12" pot won Best in Show, I'm proud to say because it's mine. How could I miss? The seedling stock came from Logees.

In spite of spring snow, an incompetent projector operator (me), dazzling orchid and camellia displays which competed for our visitors' attention, and pouring rain on Grand Old Opry night, we had a great time at our Begonia Gala at Cheekwood.



Joy Logee Martin



*B. 'Marguerite'*



*B.* 'Alice Mack'

### Begonias at Tennessee Botanical Gardens

*B.* 'Fascination'





*B.* 'Leprechaun'

Photos at Cheekwood by Pam Braun

*B.* 'Confederate Gray'



## MICHEL BEGON

By Maurer Maurer, Montgomery, Alabama

Publishing the genus *Begonia* in the year 1700, French botanist Joseph Pitton de Tournefort reported that Charles Plumier had named it in honor of Michel Begon. Tournefort identified the latter as a royal official, the superintendent of marine affairs on the coast of Saintonge (a district on the west coast of France). Repeating Tournefort's statement, Jonas Dryander told fellow members of the Linnean Society of London in 1789 that the man so honored by Plumier must have had some connection with botany, but he did not know what it was.

In recent times Begon has been described variously as a botanist, a patron of botany, or both. He has been referred to as an amateur horticulturist, a French antiquarian, a marine administrator, the governor of Canada, and as the governor or superintendent or royal commissioner of Santo Domingo. One writer said Begon discovered the *Begonia*; another that Plumier made the discovery while accompanying his patron, Begon, on a scientific expedition to the West Indies. Some of the apparent uncertainty can perhaps be traced to varying translations of the title of the position (*intendant*) Begon held in the service of Louis XIV, and to the fact that one Michel Begon has been mistaken for another.

The man for whom the *Begonia* is named was born at Blois, on the Loire River in north central France, on December 26, 1638. The Begon family was one of some means and distinction. Michel's father, also named Michel (as was the eldest son

of the family through at least eight generations from the 16th to the 18th centuries) was *seigneur* (lord of the manor) of Bussiere and Villecoulon, a royal councillor, and the King's tax collector in the district of Blois. After studying law at Paris, young Michel returned to Blois and acquired a good reputation in his profession. A whole new career was opened to him when he was appointed paymaster at the naval base at Toulon in 1677. Then 38 years old, he had been married to Madeleine Druillon for twelve years and had five children.

For his new job Begon was indebted to Jean Baptiste Colbert, King Louis XIV's controller-general of finance and minister of marine. This was the great Colbert, the man who reformed the nation's finances, stimulated agriculture, trade, and manufacturing, constructed roads and canals, built up the navy, expanded and developed the colonies, and encouraged the arts and sciences. A great administrator, Colbert created a corps of loyal and able men, many recruited from among his relatives, to fill important administrative positions at home and in the colonies. Among the beneficiaries of Colbert's nepotism were some of his wife's relatives, including cousin Michel.

In 1680 Begon was promoted and transferred to the naval base at Brest, his place at Toulon being taken by a younger brother, Francois. The following year Michel received another promotion and moved again, this time to Le Havre, where he became *Intendant de la Marine*. There



Portrait etched by P. Sellier  
reproduced from  
Duplessis, *Un curieux  
du XVIIe siècle*

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- Tournefort, Joseph Pitton de. *Institutiones rei herbariae.* 1700.

as elsewhere throughout the navy Colbert kept administrative and sea-going affairs completely separate. Bégon was the chief civilian admin-

istrative official at the naval base. His responsibilities included superintending the construction, graving, repairing, and refitting of ships, and

seeing that they were armed, equipped, supplied, and ready for the captains to take to sea.

He had scarcely entered those duties when he was selected to be sent to Canada to succeed Jacques Duchesneau as intendant of New France, where Lefebvre de la Barre was to replace Count de Frontenac as governor. At the last moment, however, there was a change. The post of intendant of New France went to Begon's brother-in-law, Jacques de Meulles. Begon learned from Jean Jacques Charron, Madame Colbert's brother, that he was to go to America as intendant of the French West Indies. Sailing from La Rochelle with his family in mid-October 1682, Begon arrived at Martinique after a passage of 37 days.

The French, like the English, had begun colonizing in the Caribbean early in the 17th century. By the 1680's they had settlements on Guadeloupe, St. Christopher, St. Croix, Santo Domingo, and some other islands, the capital being at Martinique. The governor of the French military and sea forces in the area was Count de Blenac. Begon, with the title *Intendant de Justice, de Police et de Finance*, was responsible for the civil administration of the islands.

Begon had the task of establishing a good system of government for the islands which the crown had taken over from the bankrupt French West India Company. Among the many other things which required his attention, as well as that of the governor-general, was Louis XIV's order to suppress the buccaneers who were raiding settlements and shipping in the Caribbean. He also was involved,

with Blenac, in furnishing supplies to La Salle when the great French explorer stopped in the West Indies in 1684 on his ill-fated expedition to found a colony at the mouth of the Mississippi River.

A son, the last of the eight children of Michel and Madeleine Begon, was born in Martinique. It was there, too, that Begon learned of the deaths of his father and Colbert. Embarking in March, 1685, Begon sailed for France and a new job. He was to be intendant of galleys at Marseille under the new minister of marine, Colbert's son, Marquis de Seignelay.

The French navy was still using ships propelled by gangs of oarsmen as part of its Mediterranean fleet. The principal base for the galleys was at Marseille, where the navy had ship yards, rope walks, armories for muskets, sabers, cannon, and shells, factories for oars and sails, and magazines for anchors, chains, and general stores. The naval base had some impressive administrative buildings, a fine residence for the intendant, formal gardens, and a park. Begon was responsible for the construction and maintenance of the fleet of galleys, and for procurement of munitions and victuals. He also was responsible for administrative matters concerning the convicts, vagrants, and slaves, black and white, Christian and infidel, who were pressed as oarsmen.

Begon made one more move, in 1689, to the great naval base and arsenal Colbert had built at Rochefort on the west coast of France. There Begon lived and served as intendant of marine for some 20 years. During most of that time France was

at war on land and at sea. In the War of the League of Augsburg (1688-1697) and again in the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1713) the French depended heavily upon the strategically situated base at Rochefort, and upon the intendant, Michel Begon, for ships and arms. But Begon's official duties were not confined to marine affairs. From 1694 on, he was also intendant of the province of La Rochelle, which included the regions of Aunis and Saintonge.

Begon added considerably to the family's wealth and position. Two of his three sons followed in his steps, occupying various government posts. The oldest, Michel, was intendant of Canada from 1711 to 1725 and afterwards intendant of marine at Le Havre. The youngest, Claude-Michel, also served in Canada, as the King's lieutenant at Trois-Rivieres and later at Montreal before becoming governor of Trois-Rivieres in 1743. The other son, Scipion-Jerome, became Bishop of Toul. Of the five daughters of Michel and Madeleine Begon, two entered the Carmelite order, one was married to a marquis, another to a naval officer, and the other to the governor of Blois.

Michel Begon died on March 14, 1710 and was buried in the Church of the Capucins in Rochefort. He left a large estate which included a library of more than 7,000 volumes on law, history, theology, science, and other subjects, all catalogued by the librarian he had employed to arrange his books. He also left a large and valuable collection of manuscripts, paintings, pictures of plants and flowers, drawings, engravings,

medals, maps, globes, and scientific instruments. His collection of portraits of eminent men of the 17th century had been published in two volumes in 1696 and 1700 with text by Charles Perrault, who is better known for his Mother Goose Tales.

Michel Begon had a reputation as a *savant*, a scholar. Like many other men of his day he was curious about the people and natural history of the New World. He had begun collecting novel and interesting objects while in the West Indies. After returning to France he sought out and corresponded with colonial officials, missionaries, and others who shared his interest or who might help him add to his collection. Among the many objects he acquired were rocks, plants, the tooth of a beaver, porcupine quills, Indian moccasins, pipes, tomahawks, feathered headdresses, a large North American bark canoe with six paddles, an Eskimo kayak, and a Central American dugout canoe.

Attracted to the plants of the Caribbean, Begon had compiled a list while in the West Indies. While intendant of galleys he had, on orders from Louis XIV, arranged a plant-hunting expedition to the islands. The man he selected to be sent to the West Indies in 1689 for this work was Joseph Donat Surian, a physician and apothecary of Marseille. Commissioned to find an assistant, Surian invited botanist Charles Plumier to accompany him on the voyage. Plumier later made two more trips to the islands before the end of the century. Among the many new plants Plumier found during these trips was the genus he named for Michel Begon.

# NOMINATIONS FOR THE 1979 ABS AWARDS

By Thelma O'Reilly, Awards Chairman

IT IS TIME to give serious consideration to your nominations for the three top American Begonia Society Awards for 1979: the Eva Kenworthy Gray Award, the Herbert Dyckman Service Award and the Alfred D. Robinson Memorial Medal. Nominations may be made by any member of the ABS and must be submitted in writing. Please take note that these awards are not given for friendship or popularity but performance and exceptional service. The rules governing these awards are as follows:

## EVA KENWORTHY GRAY AWARD

This award is presented to a person who has contributed literary material which aided members in their study and knowledge of begonias, or who has been outstanding in his or her promotion of interest in the culture of begonias and understanding between the members in their pursuit for knowledge of begonias. He or she need not be a member of the American Begonia Society.

## HERBERT P. DYCKMAN SERVICE AWARD

This award is to be presented to a

member who has rendered long-time or very outstanding service above and beyond the normal duties of a member or officer of the ABS.

## ALFRED D. ROBINSON MEMORIAL AWARD

This medal is awarded to an outstanding *Begonia* cultivar or hybrid. The following rules govern this award:

1. All *Begonia* nominees must have been registered with the ABS Nomenclature Director.
2. The originator of the *Begonia* nominee must be a member of ABS.
3. The *Begonia* nominee must have been released to the public for at least five years but not more than ten years prior to nomination.

All nominations must reach the Chairman of the Awards Committee by July 2, 1979. Letters of nomination must include reasons for considering the nominees worthy of consideration. Please send to:

Mrs. T. M. O'Reilly  
Awards Chairman ABS  
10942 Sunray Place  
La Mesa, CA 92041

## REPLACEMENT COPIES OF THE BEGONIAN

*The Begonian* is mailed by third class bulk mail. If a member moves and fails to send in a new address ahead of time and also has not guaranteed to pay postage to forward magazines, the ABS is charged for returned issues.

At its last meeting the Board of

Directors decided that it would be necessary to charge \$1.00 for each replacement copy, since the number of these is growing. This charge can be minimized or avoided altogether by notifying the Membership Secretary of the new address as soon as possible.

## ROUND ROBIN NOTES

Many of the flights going around have room for one or more members. Some of the subjects are Miniature Begonias, Learning, Growing Under Lights, General Culture, Rhizomatous Begonias, International, All Male, Gesneriads, All Florida, Terrariums, and Organic Begonia Growing. Some flights are full and have a waiting list. These are Growing from Seed, Hybridizing, Rex Begonias, Species, and Begonias in Arid Climates. However, any time that I have enough requests I start new flights. If you are an ABS member and would like to participate in any of these flights, let me know. I will be happy to send you a list of all the flights available. This is an excellent way to make new friends and learn more about begonias.

### **Under lights**

Gordon Buchler, Michigan, wrote: All my plants are grown under fluorescent lamps. I currently have two four-level gardens, each measuring 7 ft. high by 10 ft. wide by 18 inches deep. These are overflowing with all kinds of plants. I am going to add another light garden soon. I use two 8-ft. fixtures, each containing two 8-ft. tubes. I prefer to use a combination of one power-twist wide spectrum, and one Gro-lux wide spectrum tube. My best growing results are obtained when my begonias are from 14 to 18 inches below the tubes. My high intensity light plants such as cacti, succulents, and orchids, which I also collect, are spaced closer — from 6 to 10 inches below the lights.

Dottie Lillstrand, Minnesota, also wrote about her light garden: I buy plastic trays 11 by 21 inches and set them crosswise, 4 to 48 inch shelf. I put about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch of perlite in the bottom of the tray. Over this I place a piece of  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch hardware cloth, cut just a little smaller than the inside measurement of the tray. I set the pots of begonias on the hardware cloth and put water in the bottom of the tray for humidity. I'm careful so the water does not touch the hardware cloth. I add just a little chlorox to the water in the tray to discourage mildew. Hardware cloth is a stiff wire mesh that comes in 24 and 36 inch widths and is sold by the yard. If you use it, be sure to wear gloves while you cut it. You can get badly scratched otherwise. I use perlite in the trays instead of pebbles because it is lighter weight. My husband mounted a small fan on the wall. I have this on for several hours a day for air circulation.

Carolyn Collman, California, reminded us to dust our fluorescent tubes once a week. It is amazing how much dusts collect. She uses a damp cloth and dries with another cloth.

### **Vacation care**

Ellen Jacobson, Colorado, told how she left her plants when she was on vacation: I just returned from twelve days in California. I had a wonderful time, but was quite concerned about my plants. I've left the larger ones as long as two weeks in the tub with lots of wet newspapers with no problem, but have never left small pots on their own. This time I

layered wet newspapers on the bottoms of an assortment of trays and pans. I set the lights to go on for 1 hour per day, and covered the whole set up with a shower curtain. It worked beautifully. Many needed no water when I returned and there was no rot either. The plants didn't bleach out and the African violets didn't even lose their buds. I was delighted.

### Mildew prevention

Mildred Swyka, Delaware, wrote concerning mildew: I have sprayed every plant with warm epsom salts water, 1 tablespoon to a gallon. I just make up a pint at a time and mist every plant (cactus, succulents, ferns, etc.). I read in a garden book that it makes large, dark green leaves

on geraniums. Could this be the reason that I don't have mildew? Everything is doing great. My succulents never looked better and my lace cactus is lovely. Begonia leaves certainly never looked better. Just mist the plants. Once a week is enough.

### Cutting Tip

Some begonias die back when cut. Kit Jeans, Tennessee, has been experimenting with candle wax. She puts a drop on the cut and this seems to prevent the death of the plant.

Please send me your new address when you move. We don't want to lose you.

Mabel Corwin  
1119 Loma Vista Way  
Vista, CA 92083



*B. ebolowensis* Gilg. Seed Fund, MY 4. Photo by R. Jansen

# CLAYTON M. KELLY SEED FUND

Linda Miller, Director

## SPECIES

- MY 1 — *B. carolineifolia*: Mexico. Graceful species with erect, thick rhizome. Leaves are glossy green, palmately compound. Lovely sprays of pink flowers in winter. Germination time: 8 days. per pkt 1.00
- MY 2 — *B. costello*. Rhizomatous, similar to *B. acetosa*, but leaves are larger and light green on both sides. A sturdy grower with white flowers. Germination time: 12 days. per pkt 1.00
- MY 3 — *B. dregei*: Africa. This semi-tuberous species is a beautiful plant. Young leaves are spotted, but as it grows older spots disappear. Makes a lovely basket plant or bonzai. An abundance of white flowers. Does not go completely dormant. Germination time: 12 days. per pkt 1.00
- MY 4 — *B. ebolowensis*: Cameroon. Stems upright, or more or less scandent, leaves elliptic, 6-10 cm. long. Flowers are insignificant, fruits to 2 inches long, banana-shaped, orange. First time offered. Germination time: 5 days. Limited amount. per pkt 1.25
- MY 5 — *B. grandis* ssp *evansiana*: China. Stems erect, to 1 ft. tall. Leaves are medium size, narrowing towards the pointed tips and are green with purple veins. Bulbils form in leaf axils, drop to the ground to form new plants in spring. Flowers are bright pink. Hardy type which may be grown outdoors as far north as southern New York in protected area. Germination time: 8 days. per pkt .50
- MY 6 — *B. involucrata*: Costa Rica. Thick stemmed, with green leaves, lobed and toothed, hairy. Flowers white. Germination time: 8 days. per pkt 1.00
- MY 7 — Unidentified New Guinea species. Recently collected *Begonia*, Lae species, found in a track near Gamwabila, New Guinea. Plants are beautiful. Leaves are green, lightly spotted white, with a white edging, red veining. Grows shrub-like, with succulent stems. Has not bloomed yet, to my knowledge. Germination time: 10 days. per pkt 1.00
- MY 8 — *B. obscura*. Shrub-like with small leaves, lightly tinted pink. Flowers in profusion, white. Makes a nice plant. Germination time: 18 days. per pkt 1.00
- MY 9 — *B. ottonis*. Shrub-like, with small, green leaves. Does not branch readily, but can be trained into a very interesting plant. Germination time: 8 days. per pkt 1.00
- MY 10 — *B. putzeysii*. No real information available on this one. It has been tested, and as soon as a description is available it will be published. Let me know how this one does for you. Germination time: 18 days. per pkt 1.00

- MY 11 — *B. scharffiana*: Brazil. Shrub-like with wide, hairy leaves, green with pink underneath. Flowers pink, covered with hair. Very special. Germination time: 12 days. .... per pkt 1.00
- MY 12 — *B. suffruticosa*: Africa. Semi-tuberous with tubers resembling a small potato. Low growing. Tiny, thin-textured leaves, deeply cleft. Flowers white. Delicate. Incomplete dormancy. Germination time: 12 days. .... per pkt 1.00

### HYBRIDS

- MY 13 — MM Special. Mickey Meyer of Australia has generously been furnishing the Seed Fund with seed offered as mixed Australian hybrids for many years. It is with great pleasure I offer this special: 5 pkts of her named crosses for 4.00 or  
1 pkt for 1.00  
Many lovely plants will come out of this seed. Give it a try.

### GESNERIADS

- MY 14 — *Alloplectus ambiguus*  
MY 15 — *Alloplectus capitatus*  
MY 16 — *Chirita hamosa*  
MY 17 — *Columnea consanguinea*  
MY 18 — *Columnea sanguinea*  
MY 19 — *Gesneria christii*

### OTHER PLANTS

- MY 20 — *Ficus diversifolia*  
MY 21 — Mixed Succulent and Cactus. All sorts of interesting forms.

Free packet of mixed Gesneriads with every order this month. Thank you for your support!

### Pamphlets available

- "Begonias from Seeds — Sowing and Growing" .....\$ .25  
"Begonias In General —  
Basic Descriptions of Classes and Culture" ..... .50

Calif. residents please add 6% sales tax on all orders. All customers please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope with all seed orders. Make all checks or money orders payable to: Clayton M. Kelly Seed Fund. (Foreign orders please make out in U.S. funds only.) Mail to: Mrs. Linda Miller, 4613 Cochran St., Simi Valley, CA 93063.

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## Mini-Ads

The rate for advertising in this column is \$1 per line (about 36 characters) with a minimum charge of \$4. Payment for the ad must accompany order. Send order to Advertising Manager, Pat Maley, 1471 E. Madison, El Cajon, CA 92021.

### Violets - Begonias - Episcias

Cuttings only. Send 35¢ for list.  
Wilson's Greenhouse, Route 1  
Box 165-4 Ozark, MO 65721

**BEGONIAS.** Featuring Wally Wagner hybrids, gesneriads, miniatures for light gardens. List 50¢. Pat Morrison/Jim Heffner, 5305 S.W. Hamilton St., Portland, OR 97221.

**The Gift Horse Greenhouse** — begonias, violets, episcias, cuttings only. List 75¢. Kit Jeans, Rt. #1, New Johnsonville, TN 37134 (615) 535-2026.

**The Good, The Rare and The Beautiful in begonias.** Rex, rhizomatous, cane and shrubs. 25¢ for list. Visitors welcome. Lera's Greenhouse, P. O. Box 551, Wailer, Texas 77484 (713) 372-2800.

**Exhibition Manual.** Optional supplement of The Thompson Begonia Guide for subscribers and non-subscribers, 100 pages. Price \$4.95, optional binder \$3.50, including packaging and shipping. N.Y. residents add state tax. Thompson, P.O. Drawer PP, Southampton, NY 11968.

**Beautiful cyclopedia TROPICA** by Dr. A. B. Graf; 7,000 all-color photos of Exotic Plants, including 215 Begonias, 1,120 pages; list price \$115.00, postpaid if check with order. Circulars gladly sent. ROEHRS COMPANY, Box 125, E. Rutherford, NJ 07073.

## Cultivated Code Available From AHS

Copies of the *Code of Nomenclature of Cultivated Plants* may be purchased for \$1.75 each from the American Horticultural Society, 7931 East Boulevard Drive, Alexandria, VA 22308. This is the publication that was referred to in the article, "What's in a Name" by Louise Bower, in the previous issue.

**The Plant Shop's Botanical Gardens**, 18007 Topham, Reseda, CA 91335, (213) 881-4831—Welcome Wed thru Sun, 10 am-6 pm. Progressive catalog, \$2.00, refunded with first order. Poster of 18 species staghorns, \$4.00.

**Begonias. Blue Ribbon Winners.** Odd. Rare. Unusual. Price list 50¢ or stamps. Begonia Paradise Gardens, 9471 Dana Rd., Cutler Ridge, FL 33157. (305) 251-5836.

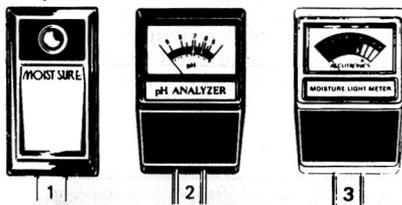
**BEGONIAS.** Healthy plants at low prices. Unusual varieties. of rex, rhiz, cane, shrub. List 30¢ OHNO Nursery, 31504 Foxfield Drive, Westlake Village, CA 91361.

**MILLER'S GREENHOUSE** — Begonias, Gesneriad and Exotics. Specializing in species and terrarium plants. Sorry, no shipping at this time. By appointment: (805) 522-0067. 4613 Cochran St., Simi Valley, Ca. 93063.

**African Violet Leaves** — 16 for \$4.50, my choice. All different, labeled, postpaid. Cedar Hill Greenhouse, Rt. 1, Box 285A, Omaha, TX 75571.

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**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE AMERICAN BEGONIA SOCIETY**  
**March 19, 1979**

The meeting was called to order at 7:45 p.m. by President Randall in Fullerton Savings and Loan Building in Anaheim. Mabel Corwin led the Pledge of Allegiance and Gil Estrada read the Aims and Purposes.

The Board approved the appointment of Gil Estrada and Doug Frost for the Audit Committee. Marvin Vipond was approved as the third member of the Nominating Committee.

The previous Minutes were corrected to reflect the approval of the appointment of Mabel Corwin and Diane Fries to the Editorial Board and not the publications committee and then were approved.

Correspondence was read. Since one letter requested a roster, discussion about the need for an up-to-date roster followed. Ralph Corwin made a motion to investigate the cost. Passed. Another motion was passed to have a committee headed by Bill Walton look into various ways to produce rosters and report to the Board. A letter from the President of North Long Beach Branch stated that it would be impossible for the Branch to host a regional show.

Gil Estrada reported \$1,401.61 balance on hand, receipts of \$321.94, disbursements of \$493.08, leaving a balance of \$1,230.47 as of Feb. 28th. He gave the treasurer a check for \$186.00 for the Cultivar Book Fund, which was from sales of the Curtis Prints and the English translation. Gil also reported on attending the Southwest Regional meeting.

Doug Frost, Director of the Speakers Bureau, requested that a notice be placed in the *Begonian* to send Doug information about speakers, since the list needs to be updated.

The Treasurer reported a balance on hand of \$1,209.28, receipts of \$2,261.74,

disbursements of \$2,423.42, leaving a balance of \$1,047.60. The final accounting report for the 1978 Show and Convention was received.

Business Manager, Bill Walton, moved that two past due accounts in the Advertising Manager's accounts be removed. Passed. Discussion about mailing the minutes to the secretaries and presidents of each Branch, making it possible to save money in bulk mailing, and have more individuals have copies of the minutes ended with a motion to try bulk mailing for one month. Passed. Printing of membership cards and welcome brochures were discussed. It was decided to wait for a while until after the vote was counted for the dues increase.

Kathy Brown reported processing 149 memberships this month. \$971.00 was deposited, and members in good standing this month total 3,341. Due to the change in meeting date, the report is one week short.

The Treasurer read the Advertising Manager's report. Income was \$100.50, prepaid accounts — \$693.09 less balance due \$574.50 leaving a credit balance of \$118.59. Walter Barnett made a motion that Pat Malley use her own judgment about advertisers policy based on their past good record. Passed.

Mabel Corwin had 11 Round Robins this month. More letters and flights are coming in, and she has been busy writing letters.

Diane Fries said she has been able to secure some Branch notices in the Los Angeles Times newspaper, and explained the procedure.

The Seed Fund received \$441.29 in sales, expenses of \$34.55, leaving a balance of \$406.74. The Catalog Fund and the Research Fund each received \$40.67.

Thelma O'Reilly, Nomenclature Co-director, stated that Carrie Karegeannes will have an article in the *Begonian* about the procedure for registration. Phyllis Bates and Jack Golding are on the committee, and Dr. L. B. Smith is an advisory member. Dr. Doorenbos was invited to serve, too, but hasn't responded yet. Registrations are coming in and being processed.

The Editorial Board has been contacting people about taking over the work of editing the *Begonian*.

Thelma O'Reilly said an article about the awards will be in May issue.

Discussion concerning the Regional Show with Darlene Fuentes as Chairwoman being appointed, and request that all Branches start plants. All proceeds are to go to the National treasury.

Judges Course Director, Marge Lee, had \$75.97 in sales, expenses of \$24.07, leaving a gain of \$51.90. Mary Dunnell of Seattle, Washington and Charles Rich-

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ardson of Vista, California advanced to Junior Judges.

Katherine Alberti, Begonian Sales, had \$131.75 in sales, postage of \$9.84, leaving a balance of \$121.91.

A motion under new business, was passed to open an account at American Savings and Loan for the Research Fund. Whenever Millie Thompson needs funds, they would be available. Two signatures, either Eleanor Calkins, Gil Estrada, Nate Randall, would be required for withdrawal.

A life membership for M. Carleton L'Hommedieu was presented by Santa Barbara, and accepted by the Board. Mr. & Mrs. Ziesenhenné are paying for first class postage in thanks for his work. A motion by Gil Estrada that \$50.00 from

the Book Store account be used to pay for a Life Membership for Lydia Austin was passed.

Gil Estrada reported that the umbrella coverage of the State of California has been granted. Muriel made a motion that a letter of thanks be sent to Santa Barbara and the Ziesenhennés. Passed.

A Thanks was given to the committee responsible for securing our new meeting place.

After the Branch reports, the meeting adjourned at 10:09.

Virginia J. Barnett, Secretary

The Board of Directors will meet Monday, April 16, 1979, 7:30 p.m., at the Fullerton S & L, 2310 Lincoln Ave., Anaheim.

## NEW BRANCHES

By Evelyn Cronin, Branch Relations Director

The Taconic Branch of Mahopac, New York, is off to a good start. With sixteen members, the branch has launched a begonia hospital, plant sales and taken a trip to the New York Botanical Garden to hear a lecture by the Thompsons. A large plant sale and a membership drive are in the offing. President is Diane E. Steiner; Diane Kent is treasurer; Kathleen Coughlin, recording secretary; and Dorothy D. Johnson, corresponding secretary. We welcome this small, but lively group to the ABS.

Through Paul Lowe's effort a new branch is in operation in Florida. Called the Begonia Society of the Palm Beaches, it started with thirty-five members and Paul is still recruiting and giving great impetus to the group. Plans include plant sales, a flower show and educational programs for new members. If you live in the area, I recommend that you drop in at a meeting and introduce yourself.

Our first Tennessee branch has been formed, the Cheekwood

Branch. Kit Jeans, a grower and lover of begonias, corresponded and phoned regarding forming a group. At this time the group is still small but under her capable direction, I know it will grow. Kit as president will be assisted by Carol Ann Bonner as secretary and Denise Melvin as treasurer. The group meets at the Tennessee Botanical Gardens and report that not only are the facilities conducive to the pursuit of their hobby, but the programs have been excellent.

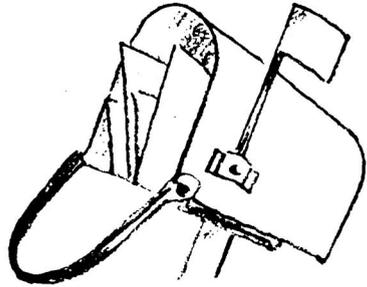
Peg Spaete of 27221 S. E. Sun Ray Drive, Boring, OR 97009, is organizing a new branch. Contact her and offer your support by joining this new branch.

It is the Branch Relations Director's earnest desire to help form a branch in every state in the union. If your area does not have a branch write to me for information about forming one. Please note my new address.

Evelyn Cronin  
84 Abbey Lane  
Cotuit, MA 02635

# BEGONIA QUESTION BOX

Write to: Elda Haring  
Box 236, Flat Rock, NC 28731  
You will receive a prompt personal reply.



*Question:* My fish tank rooting box is full of well-rooted cuttings. Must I pot them up now or may I wait for spring? *Answer:* Your cuttings may be allowed to stay in the prop box for many weeks. As spring comes early in Mississippi (what would be comparable to late winter where I live), that would be a better time to pot them. If leaves appear a little yellow from lack of nitrogen give them once-a-month feedings of a very dilute water soluble fertilizer, or, if your potting mix is full of nutrients, placing a thin layer of it over the propagation mix will feed them until you are ready to pot them up.

*Question:* *B. imperialis* under lights in my plant room sometimes develops brownish edges in winter when the temperatures are 58° at night and 65° during the day. Is this a lack of humidity? *Answer:* *B. imperialis* will often show brown edges in winter when it is resting, even in my greenhouse where the humidity is very high. Just trim the edges of the leaves and don't worry about it. When growth begins in spring it will soon overcome the problem. Be sure not to over-water during the winter months. Many of the *imperialis-pustulata* types look somewhat "ratty" during winter depending on conditions in plant room or greenhouse.

*Question:* My *B. 'Lucerna'* is 4 feet tall. It has no lower leaves. Will it put out new leaves on the bare trunk or should I cut it back and start over? Three new shoots are coming up but it has never bloomed. It gets the best winter light in a sun room. *Answer:* Cutting back the tall stem to about ten inches from the soil level will force new leaves at the bare nodes and extra stems from the soil level. When the plant starts new growth in late winter, pinch off the pointed new leaf on each stem. Water and fertilize regularly through the summer months and give it at least several hours of sun. Where you live it should bloom in late summer and through the months of autumn.

*Question:* What makes leaves of some of my begonias curl back? *Answer:* There are several reasons for this condition. Some varieties are susceptible to chilly temperatures and show their resentment this way. When the weather warms they will resume their normal shape. If they are getting too much heat from the sun or are too close to the heat of the ballasts under fluorescent lights, leaves will curl especially if the soil in the pots is too dry at the rootball. Leaf curl also results from aphids (plant lice) clustering under the leaves. If this should be the reason

wash the leaves carefully with suds of a mild detergent and rinse with clear water. Repeat the process once or twice a week over a period of three or four weeks to be sure no new insects have hatched out.

*Question:* I have planted rex seeds in several kinds of sterile media but they do not grow. I mist and sometimes water from the bottom but they get 1/4 inch tall and dry up. I use a sterile medium and well water with dilute fertilizer. What am I doing wrong? I uncover them as they emerge. Should I keep them in a covered terrarium? *Answer:* You do not tell me under what conditions of temperature and light you are growing from seed. The medium should be thoroughly moist before sowing the seed. After sowing, the seed pan should be placed in a container with water coming up to about 3/4 the depth of the pan and when moisture appears on top of medium, the pan should be drained and placed in a propagation box or covered with a plastic bag. As you live in a climate which is very hot and humid in summer be sure the pan is never placed in the sun. Bottom heat is not necessary. If growing in the cooler winter months in a chilly room the use of a heating cable would be helpful. Never mist from the top — you cannot be sure the medium is well moistened this way, and small droplets remaining on tiny seedlings can cause rot. Check seed pan every day to be sure top is always moist and continue to water from the bottom using tepid water. Do not fertilize until seedlings are showing the second set of leaves.

*Question:* Lately I have noticed buds beginning to form on all my rhizomatous begonias in my greenhouse but I cannot get male and female flowers ready at the same time. I have read that it is possible to store pollen. How do I go about this? *Answer:* Many members remove the male flowers when the pollen is free, place them in small labelled plastic medicine bottles, put them in plastic cartons covered with tight lids, and store in the refrigerator. I understand pollen stored this way will keep for many months.

## CULTURAL CERTIFICATES

If your ABS Branch plans to hold a Begonia Flower Show which will be judged by ABS accredited judges, you may request ABS Cultural Certificates. Please check the *Begonian*, May 1978, page 137, for rules governing Culture Certificates. Send your requests for ABS Cultural Certificates to:

Mrs. T. M. O'Reilly  
Awards Chairman  
10942 Sunray Place  
La Mesa, CA 92041

## Commercial Introductions Subject to New Rule

The ABS Board of Directors recently approved the ruling that all entries in New Introduction by a Commercial Nursery Division in the National Shows must *not* have been released for sale prior to entry. Testing is allowed. This rule will be enforced for the first time in 1980. If there is any question, the exhibitor should consult the Judging Chairman, Margaret Lee.

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