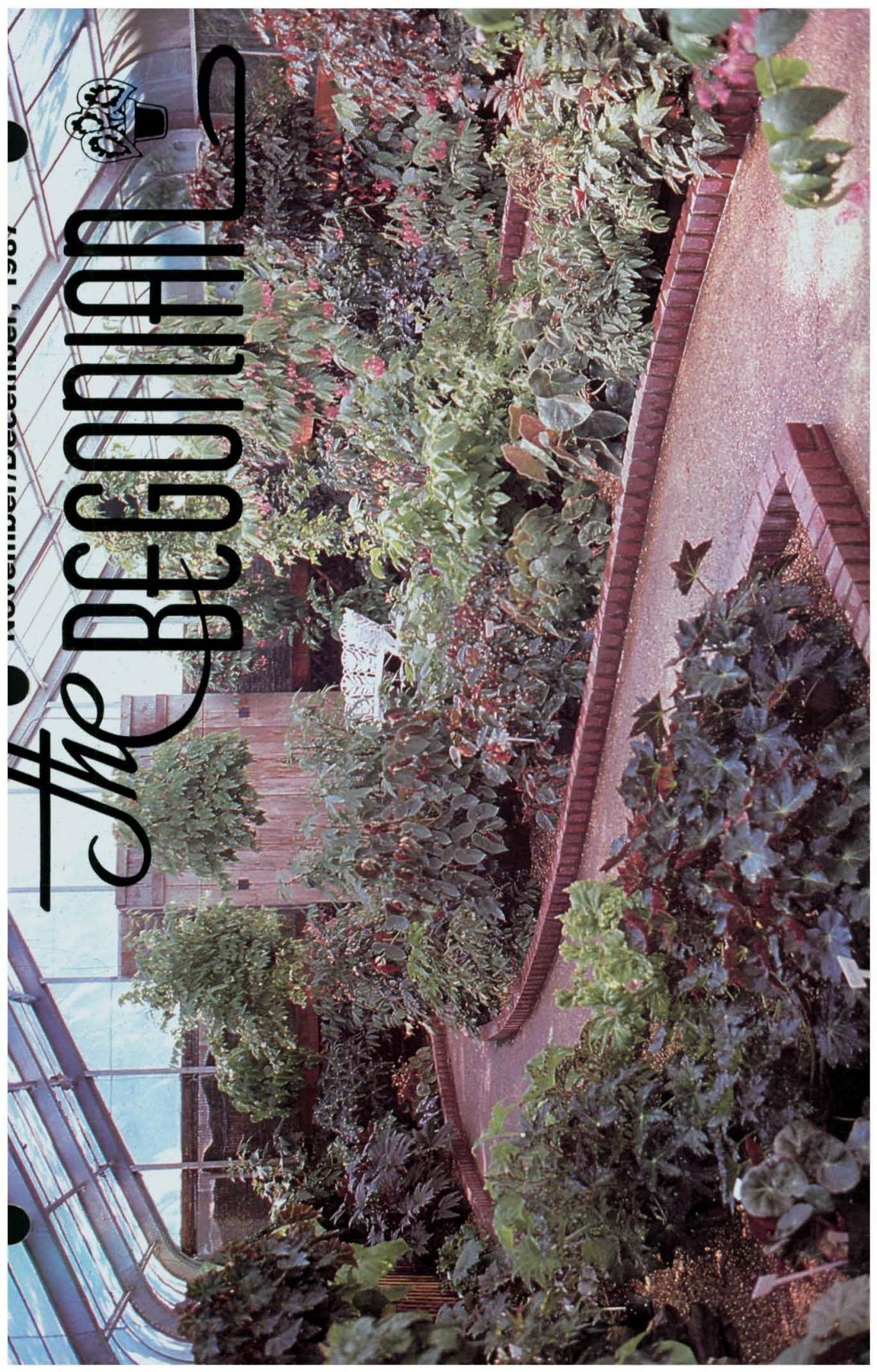


November/December, 1987

The BEGONIAS



The BEGONIAN

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Cover photo: Ft. Worth Botanic Gardens Begonia
Greenhouse, by Jana Johnson, Educational
Horticulturist

American Begonia Society

Founded January 1932 by Herbert P. Dyckman

Aims and Purposes

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.

To bring into friendly contact all who love and grow begonias.

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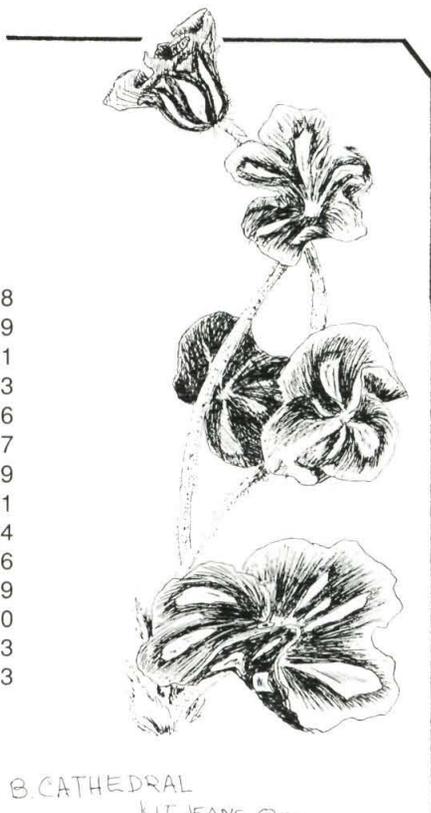
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The cover photo this month is a wide-angle lens shot taken in July, 1987, of the new Begonia Display Greenhouse at the Fort Worth Botanic Gardens, looking south. Rhizomatous begonias are in the bed on the left, shrub-like and thick-stemmed begonias in the center bed, and canes at the back. The photographer is Jana Johnson, Educational Horticulturist at the Gardens.

NOTICE: The prices in the Schultz Co. advertisement on the back cover are incorrect. Please see the corrected ad on page 163.

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**ATTENTION,
BRANCH OFFICERS!**

CORRECTION

Please send a list of your officers to ABS secretary Jeanette Gilbertson, 410 JoAnn Circle, Vista, CA 92084 by November 15 so that your branch will be listed correctly in the January-February branch directory. Thank you!

In the September-October Begonian, Mary Bucholtz' winning photograph in the Artistic division was incorrectly identified as being of *B. homassasa*. There's no such species. The picture was of *B. 'Homossasa,'* a cultivar by Francis Michelson of Orange City, FL.

BEGONIA MEMORABILIA

Rudolph Ziesenhenné is known fondly as "Mr. Begonia." He collects anything having to do with begonias. At the Begonia Homecoming convention in Long Beach he shared this philosophy:

"Purchases of begonias should not be given up simply because you can't grow the plants."

Among the begonias which don't have to be watered he has collected books and articles about begonias; horticultural drawings, paintings, watercolors, magazine and newspaper illustrations, and photographs; calendars, stationery, and wrapping paper; bronze castings, enameled metal; porcelain and majolica; ties; rugs; herbarium specimens; embroidery and cloth; cloisonné; jewelry; jigsaw puzzles; plates, spoons, vases; purses; fan cases; and more.

Some of his collection favorites were shown on slides. Particularly impressive was a piece of embroidery from China, which is about 500 years old and served originally as bed hanging for a scholar. A Chinese friend explained that he knew it was for a scholar because of the scholarly symbols: a book, wisteria, plum blossoms, and begonia.

Rudy began his begonia memorabilia collection with the early books about begonias: those by Bessie Buxton and Eva Kenworthy Gray. When Karl Albert Fotsch published *Die Begonien*, Rudy translated six extractions for the **Begonian**. Since then he has collected every written word he can find on begonias, and contributed 2,280 column inches to the **Begonian**.

His talk at convention was delightful not only for his slides, but for the extras: anecdotes about experiences with early growers and writers, stories of how he stumbled across some of his treasures, and cultural tips scattered throughout.

"Mr. Begonia" has won all three of the top ABS awards. At the convention banquet, he was honored again, this time for fifty years of service to ABS.



Convention chair Gil Estrada presents Rudy Ziesenhenné with the fifty-year service award.



Dorothy Borden is a twenty-year member of Long Beach Branch who raises all kinds of plants and travels to Asia every year to collect plants. She's an artist, poet, and needlework enthusiast. Dorothy spoke at the Long Beach Convention on Rex Begonias. This article is composed of excerpts taken from a tape of her remarks. Dorothy's address is 2214 Iroquois, Long Beach, CA 90815.



Rex Begonias

Or, "Everything your friendly nurseryman has never told you about rex begonias..."

When I joined the Begonia Society twenty years ago, I only knew about the little begonias you grow in the yard. I soon fell madly in love with all begonias, especially rex begonias, and I went out and got every rex begonia I could possibly find, I got every book on rex begonias I could possibly find, and then I went home and proceeded to kill every rex begonia I could possibly find.

I would go back to the nurseryman, and he would give me instructions again. Everybody, even the growers, always tell you, "Oh, they're very easy to raise. Just keep them damp. That's all you have to do, keep them damp."

To me, that meant keeping an eye on them twenty-four hours a day and being sure that soil was wet.

Well, if there is anything in this world I have found out, it's that rexes hate water!

Your friendly nurseryman doesn't know this, because he's read all the books that I used to read.

I thought I would learn to conquer these

little devils, no matter what it takes, because I loved them so much.

I tried everything. My ovens were full of sterilized soil; my garage was full of bottled water; I had shelves of insecticide and foods. I put all my rexes together.

I even had my husband build a greenhouse, because I thought anyone with a greenhouse could grow anything. That isn't the secret; they immediately all got mildew.

I finally decided that I'd gotten the wrong tip on watering. I decided to try something different. I put the rexes in three categories. Some went outside in a secluded spot under a bench, some went outside in a secluded spot under a tree, some went into my greenhouse. I told them none of them were going to get a drink, none of them, until they drooped. And believe me, I discovered that, no matter where you try to grow rexes, they will let you know when they need water. Water is their most dangerous enemy. It is what causes mildew. I never have mildew, or other diseases. I don't spray; I don't believe in systemics.

I buy what seems to be a good soil, with a lot of perlite in it, and mix about a third perlite to two-thirds soil. I mix it, pick it up, and squeeze it as hard as I can. When I let go and it jumps out of my hand, that's a great mix.

Then I put all my plants in my mix. Whenever I get a new plant, I repot it in my soil, immediately. I water once a week, lightly.

At meetings, pick up leaves. Take them home, and root them in a jar — any jar will do; a mayonnaise or pickle jar is fine. I put a layer of charcoal on the bottom, then a layer of perlite, then add some dirt, put the leaf in, and add water with an eye-dropper. The soil should be barely damp. Put the lid on. The leaf will have roots on it within a week. There is no begonia that I don't grow in jars.

At a dinner party, put a terrarium with a begonia in it on your table with candles. Your guests' conversation will get monotonous: they will all want to know how you grew that beautiful begonia.

I don't like systemics and sprays, but if you do have a problem with insects, put a piece of a mothball into the pot. The bugs will be gone by nightfall. I take a few mothballs and put them in the corners of my greenhouse. Mothballs are cheap and safe. I never have insect problems.

Don't pass up rexes because they look so delicate. Take them home and ignore them. Tell them you're going to ignore them! Don't check them everyday like an anxious mother. Unless it's limp, with its tongue hanging out, it's not dry!

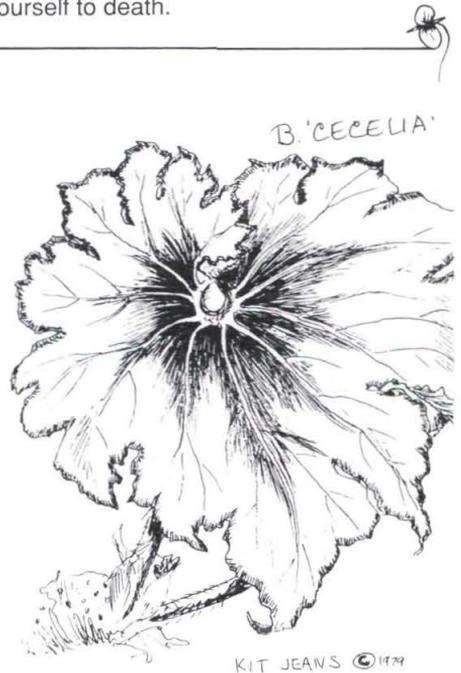
If you're really nervous, set the plant in a jar. And don't forget the charcoal. Don't ever put a plant in a closed container without charcoal.

You have never had the thrill of growing until you have had a leaf root, or a seed grow.

When my granddaughter started in begonias, she was fourteen. I had her pick cuttings rather than plants. I got her a shoe box and put in the charcoal and perlite and soil, and cut up the leaves. She looked at me in disdain. We sealed the box, and I told her to take it home and put it under a bench in her yard. "That's no fun at all," she said. "I'm going home and I don't have any plants." I told her she would have about twenty plants. About a week and a half later the phone rang. "I opened the box and it's full of plants!" That's the way I got her started.

Rexes will grow anywhere but in sun. They don't mind heat if they don't get sun. They don't mind cold if they don't get water.

Keep your rexes together, and that way you can keep them dry. Regardless of what anyone tells you, keep them on the dry side. Never spray the leaves; that's the kiss of death. You'll have great success, and they'll be easy to raise, and you won't be working yourself to death.



BEGONIAS: A CAPITOL IDEA!

First Eastern Region Convention

The Potomac Branch hosted the first Eastern Region convention at the Dulles Holiday Inn near Washington, D.C. September 18-20. And what hosts they were! Begonias greeted participants at every turn: the entry, lobby, and hospitality room were decorated with baskets of Begonias, with interesting leaves vying with blooms for colorful beauty.

Begonias decorated the tables at meals, and were found on a variety of items offered for sale: note pads, stationery, commemorative coffee mugs, commemorative plates, T-shirts, aprons, magnets, and more.



The show room was full of beautiful Begonias

More Begonias were seen, of course, at the show. Here the top winner was B. 'Red Planet,' which took Best of Show for Janet Welsh.



Best of Show: B. 'Red Planet'

The Sweepstakes trophy was hard to award; two people had the same number of blue ribbons, the same number of points, the same number of reds! Finally, the judges decided to honor both Janet Welsh and David Hott.



Janet Welsh



David Hott

The Showing is Sharing Award, given to the entrant who brings the most plants to the show, went to Joyce Caveny.

ABS Cultural Awards were presented to Janet Welsh, for *B. 'Red Planet'* (96.375 points), *B. rajah* (95.88), *B. 'Egyptian Knight'* (94), and *B. 'Margie Sikkelee'* (93.875); to David Hott, for *B. U003* (94.88); to Marilyn Koestler, for *B. bogneri* (94.77); to Ed Harrell, for *B. lindleyana* (94.55); to Marian Fox, for *B. 'Erythrophylla Helix'* (94.22); to Johanna Zinn, for *B. grandis* ssp. *evansiana* (94.22); and to Joyce Caveny, for *B. maculata* (94.11)



B. grandis ssp. *evansiana*

Program chair Carrie Karegeannes put together an outstanding array of seminars. We were able to look for Begonias in the wild, vicariously, with both Linda Goldsmith and Scott Hoover, who are not only adventurous in searching for Begonias but, fortunately, good photographers. Mary Bucholtz shared tips on propagating successfully. Jack Golding gave an exciting program on "New Directions in Research," Judy Becker of Lauray discussed companion plants, and convention chair Maxine Zinman treated us to a hilarious re-play of the famous Miami Branch slide program, "How Not to Grow a Begonia."

Millie and Ed Thompson showed a "Begonia Showcase" slide program after the banquet Saturday night. A routine was set up: Millie would project a particularly beauti-

ful begonia on the screen, the audience would exclaim with delight, and a plant sale worker would cry out, "It's in the plant sale!"

Needless to say, the plant sale was extremely busy. As soon as a begonia addict hauled off several boxes of new acquisitions, the sale staffers would put more irresistibles on the tables and the addict would have to return.

On Sunday there was a tour to the United States Botanic Garden in downtown Washington, close by the Capitol. The timing was unfortunate, for the main begonia greenhouse was undergoing renovation and most of the begonia collection was 16 miles away. Nevertheless, there were begonias in the entry greenhouse, and the park behind had multitudes of the "Cocktail" series of semperflorens in full bloom. An additional treat was touring the headquarters, located in a gracious old building once used for the director's home.

The plant sale continued Sunday afternoon, and many of the visitors from other parts of the country stayed on for sight-seeing in the nation's capitol. Members of Potomac Branch must be exhausted still! But surely they can be very proud of putting on a wonderful convention, the very first for Eastern Region.



Judy Becker, Program chair Carrie Karegeannes, Scott Hoover, Mary Bucholtz



BEGONIAS AT THE FORT WORTH BOTANIC GARDENS

by Tamsin Boardman

The Botanic Gardens in Fort Worth, Texas, were started in February, 1933, with the construction of a garden for wildflowers and plants of arid lands which soon became known as the cactus garden.

Probably the most interesting story about the initial phase of construction is that of Queen Tut. The original garden was built in an area called Rock Springs, where water from a natural spring seeped to the surface but soaked back into the porous soil. The designers wanted a pond there, but how could they keep the water on top of the soil?

Enter Queen Tut, an elephant borrowed from the Fort Worth zoo: she spent several days lolling around and compacting the soil nicely! The pool has held water to this day.

Since the days of Queen Tut, the gardens have grown to include a rose garden, Japanese garden, perennial garden (on the site of the old cactus garden), acres of natural woodlands with a brook wandering through, a fragrance garden designed for the blind with plant names in Braille, and two Treasure Tree gift shops, operated by members of the Ft. Worth Garden Center, a volunteer support group.

Along the way came the construction of an exhibition greenhouse, three production greenhouses, and in December, 1986, a large new conservatory complex opened

with meetings rooms, bridal facilities, hand-capped access, offices, and a 10,000 square foot glass conservatory with tropical plants bordering a waterfall, ponds and waterway beneath a forty-five foot ceiling.

Meandering through the foliage is an intentionally natural-looking footpath called "the tropical trail." Visitors may follow the "trail" with a printed guide, or arrange for a docent to take them on a tour. Just inside the door, at the foot of the waterfall, they'll find plants of *B. 'Pizzazz'* used as color accents.

In among the palms and plumeria are some lovely Begonias: *salicifolia*, *carolineifolia*, 'Sophie Cecile', 'Regency', 'Red Planet', 'Orococo', 'Ayah', 'Hula Skirts.' Begonias *thelmae* and *foliosa* cling to the rocks of the waterfall, and *B. thelmae* is used as a ground cover under the cycads (with humidity of 70-80% it doesn't need a terrarium).

The conservatory uses an automatic drip irrigation system, has a winter temperature range of 65-70 degrees and a summer range of 75-80 degrees, uses hot water heating, and has an automatic misting system to maintain humidity; the glass is shaded 70%. Plants grow in mounded beds. In charge of all this is Lela Woods, conservatory manager, assisted by Paul Koenig of the garden staff.

Unusual is their method of pest control: ladybugs, green lacewings, and garden spiders! The insect "pest patrol" is supplemented by the use of insecticidal soaps. (A short article on their pest patrol is included at the end of this article).

Fort Worth had a begonia collection long before the conservatory was built. For many years there was an active ABS chapter which met at the Gardens, put on shows, and built up the collection. Although the branch ceased to function, they left behind the nucleus of a fine collection.

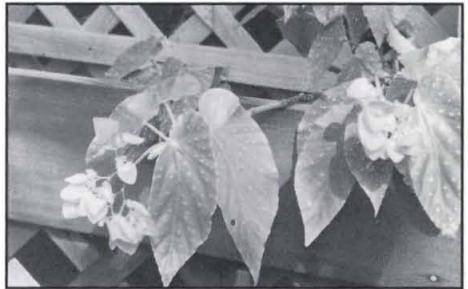
Members of Southwest Region began to work at the greenhouses in 1982. They found some very old but healthy plants, and some breathtakingly lovely "offspring" started from cuttings by a new greenhouse director fascinated with begonias, Kelton Parker. Together with the volunteers, the staff has built a lovely collection. Caring directly for the begonia collection is Linda Stodola, another knowledgeable begonia lover. Begonias thrive under Linda's care.

Stroll through the production greenhouses: one holds the collection of several hundred varieties, while another has semperflorens which are used as decorations for functions at the Gardens and throughout the city. Weather permitting, the greenhouse staff likes to use rex varieties as decorations, too. There's also a propagation/mist box, nearly 100 feet long, filled with cuttings, many of them from the begonia collection. Right now the mist box holds a large number of cuttings sent by Millie and Ed Thompson.

Wander past the production area towards the old Rock Springs building, used for many years as the Garden's headquarters, and you come to the Fragrance Garden. It's a shady spot, with raised beds of herbs -- and begonias -- and a fountain ringed with begonias. A short span of lawn in the center is edged with beds holding caladiums and begonias. The begonias here are semperflorens, Park's 'Pizzazz' grown from seed,

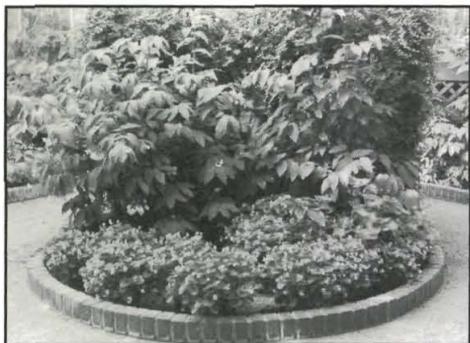
and this summer they're pink. Last year there was a mixture of white and red.

Turn and go through the Rock Springs building to find the door to the Exhibition Greenhouse, the first of the Botanic Gardens greenhouses and location of the newest visitor attraction. This past spring the exhibition greenhouse was completely redone. Clyde Wilkerson, an orchid collector, greenhouse volunteer, and wood carver, put in 164 hours of work refurbishing, covering the heating pipes with redwood lattice, and building shelves. Specimen plants from the Garden's collections of begonias and orchids were given an attractive new home. A display case at the entrance has information about the plants.



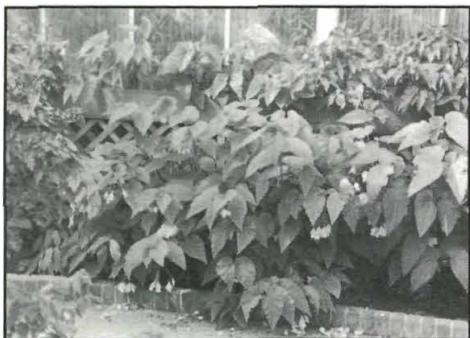
B. 'Orange Rubra' against the lattice

The begonias take up the larger, front part of the exhibition greenhouse, and are they happy! Their new home has plenty of space, plenty of light, a water wall, and steam heat. The plants are growing to a size not thought to be possible in our climate. Equally surprising is the amount of bloom (most of the rhizomatous varieties bloomed into June, and some into July and August) and how brightly colored the leaves have become. B. 'Dragon Flight,' for example, has older leaves of a muddy brown and new leaves of chartreuse marked with deep chocolate, and B. 'Los Angeles' is so much more brightly colored that it looks like another plant..



Circular bed at entry: Begonias 'Pink Shasta,' 'Christmas Candy,' Park's 'Pink Pizzazz'

There are over 100 varieties in the exhibition greenhouse, mostly rhizomatous, cane-like, and shrub-like types. Trailing-scandent, thick-stemmed, semperflorens, and Rex are represented, but there are no large tuberous varieties. All were either grown at the Gardens, or donated by Southwest Region members. All (well, almost all!) are labeled, and in the work area behind the greenhouse records are kept on each plant: parentage, date received or propagated, bloom color and timing, etc.



B. 'Helena' dominates the cane bed

Serpentine, brick-lined beds with winding walks of aggregate between them are covered with gravel, and the begonias are in pots set on the gravel. Potting soil used is Fafard #3, a very loose, porous mix. Fish emulsion and 20-20-20 are alternated, with

an occasional dose of high phosphate fertilizer. During the summer gravel and walks are watered down by greenhouse attendant Richard Hartmann, Jr. several times a day to help combat the heat. Here, as in the conservatory, organic pest control methods are preferred. Since the plants are in pots, an occasional plant with a problem can be removed for spraying with pesticide. So far that's meant that B.'Concord' takes a malathion break now and then (it does have a recurrent mealy bug problem).

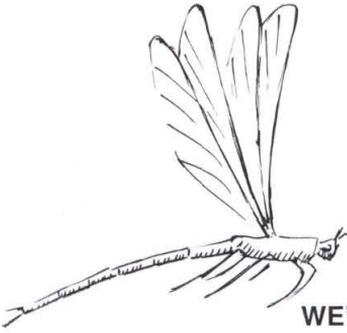


Canes on the left, shrubs and thick-stems on the right: facing north toward the orchids

Visitor comments have been interesting, ranging from a mother's admonishment to her three year old not to bounce around because he might get hurt (said as she pulled him off of two badly crushed plants) to a puzzled "Where are the begonias, and what are all these other plants?" from people who only know semps. Most often heard is "These are all begonias? I didn't know there were so many different kinds."

The Fort Worth Botanic Gardens are open daily from dawn to dusk, and the Conservatory and Display Greenhouse from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (in summer, they're open until 7). Stop by and visit!





WE'VE GONE BUGGY

by Lela Woods

The Garden's Conservatory is now using an Integrated Pest Management Program.

WHAT THIS MEANS:

We have brought in beneficial insects that prey on harmful insects and have restricted our insecticides to very non-toxic sprays such as insecticidal soaps.

YOU MAY NOTICE AS YOU WALK THROUGH:

Ladybugs or their larvae (that look like tiny alligators); delicate, pale Green Lacewings that flutter like a moth when disturbed, or webs of Garden spiders all happily feeding on the pests that harm our plants.

The cups attached to the leaves or stems contain beneficial insect larvae and/or eggs we had shipped in. This procedure allows the insects to spread over the infested plant at their own rate.

Certain plants (such as ficus and hibiscus) have less resistance to pest attacks and will have a heavier infestation of insects than neighboring plants.

YOU MAY NOT NOTICE, HOWEVER:

The Conservatory environment is cleaner since it has not been closed for broad spectrum pesticide spraying since December 1986.

We have introduced Ladybugs, Green Lacewings, Australian Ladybugs, Predatory Mites and Gnat-like insects to control such pests as aphids, scale, mealybugs, whitefly and several kinds of spider mites.

Several native beneficial insects have made our Conservatory their home in order to feed on the aphids. There are two types of tiny black and orange Ladybugs and one Damselfly Bug. Another small Gnat-like insect kills aphids by laying eggs inside them.

Our insect balance is not perfect yet, but we are still learning. If you would like to share more information about the progress of the biological control at the Conservatory, please leave your questions or experiences on a plant information form at the reception desk. Thank you for your patience as we learn together.

(reprinted from PETALS, the newsletter for Fort Worth Botanic Garden volunteers, June 1987).

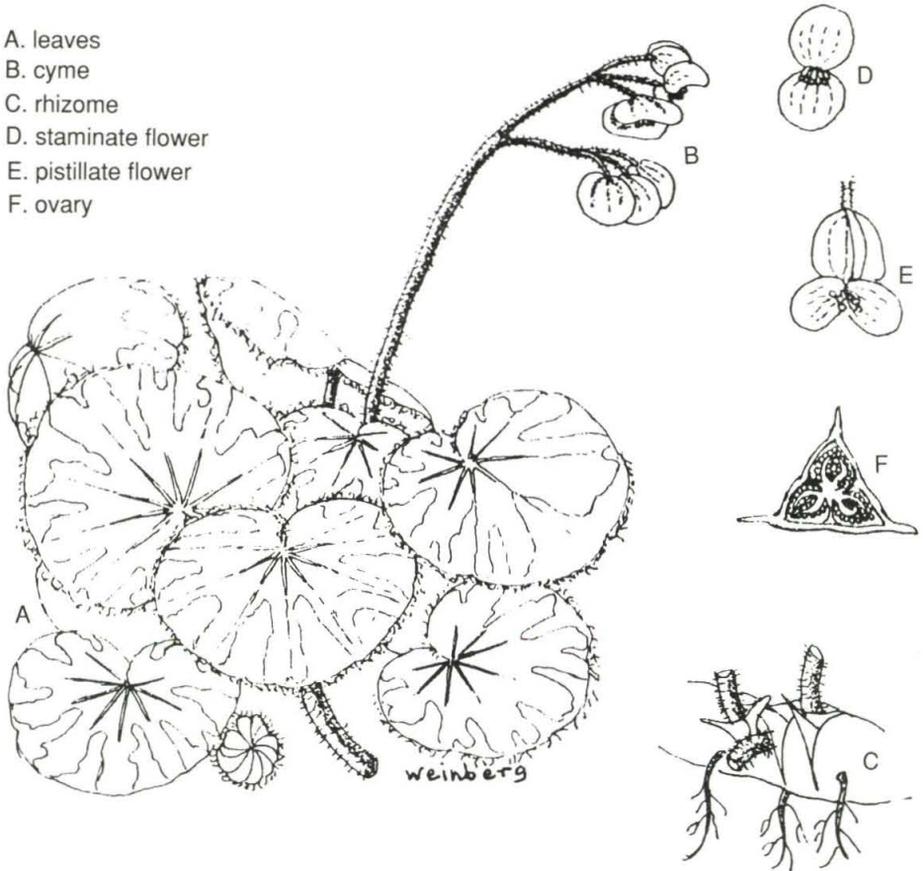
Lela Woods is Conservatory Manager for the Fort Worth Botanic Gardens, and a begonia enthusiast.



SPOTLIGHT ON:

B. hydrocotylifolia

- A. leaves
- B. cyme
- C. rhizome
- D. staminate flower
- E. pistillate flower
- F. ovary



by Mary Weinberg

B. hydrocotylifolia Otto ex Hooker was first discovered in Mexico in 1841 and described by Otto in Germany in 1949. It was sent to Kew Gardens by the Berlin Botanic Garden. It is in the section Giroudia and has 28 chromosomes.

B. hydrocotylifolia is a rhizomatous begonia. Its rhizome is short, thick, succulent, and creeping, throwing out fibrous radicles from beneath. Leaves are small, 3" x 2 1/2", almost orbicular-cordate, entire, coriaceous, edges slightly reflexed. Lobes simulate a peltate leaf. Leaves are dark

green in color with medium green shading, glabrous, and, when young, covered with red hairs; the underside is light red in color, lightly napped. Petioles range from 1 1/2" to 3" in length, and are fleshy, terete, brownish-green, hairy. Stipules are scarious, fringed, and soon become brown and give a scaly appearance to the rhizome. Peduncles are axillary, very tall, covered with hairs, bearing a compound raceme or panicle at the apex, pale red. Flowers are small, rose-pink with two rounded petals on both male and female, and the fruit oval, triquetrous, with three moderately broad, nearly equal wings. It

blooms profusely midwinter to early spring.

B. hydrocotylifolia is sometimes referred to as "pennywort" or "pond-lily" begonia because the leaves completely hide the rhizomes and growing medium. I have grown *B. hydrocotylifolia* as a terrarium plant for years because its growth habit is charming. Its petioles seldom get over 1 1/2" in length, and the rhizomes creep over the surface of the growing medium giving the bowl the appearance of a miniature lily pond.

B. hydrocotylifolia grown as a conventional pot begonia will attain its full height potential, somewhere under 6" tall, and leaves will get to 2 1/2" x 3" in size on an adult plant. It is a very easy begonia to grow but is considered a plant for the collector.

B. hydrocotylifolia has been used as a parent to many well-known cultivars. One of its most famous offspring is *B. 'Erythrophylla'*.

CULTURE:

LIGHT: It likes a little sun; early morning or late afternoon is good. If grown in a terrarium give it very bright light, but no sun.

TEMPERATURE: Can take temperatures in the 58-72 degree range very well. If kept too cool will go into dormancy.

HUMIDITY: Does not require a high humidity; 50-60 % is ideal, although it will do fine at a lower percentile.

GROWING MEDIUM: *B. hydrocotylifolia* is not a fussy begonia. Use a good draining mix containing some peat moss, and pot in a shallow container.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS OF MEXICO: Scott Hoover describes environmental conditions in Mexico in an article he wrote for the December, 1976 **Begonian**.

He described his search for begonias and the areas of the country in which he found begonias. He also discussed the way rhizomatous begonias grow in their natural habitat.

Artist/writer/Begonia grower Mary Weinberg lives at 1527 W. Highland Ave., Chicago, IL 60660.

Reprinted with the author's permission from the Chicago Begonian, May, 1986.



**MAL NEWSLETTER
#10 READY**

Members-at-large newsletter #10 is ready. For a copy, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to MAL director Thelma O'Reilly, 10942 Sunray Place, La Mesa, CA 92041.

WOODRIF HONORED

Leslie Woodriff is known to ABS members as an outstanding hybridizer of begonias. Many know that he also works with lilies.

Did you know that one of his lily hybrids, 'Black Beauty,' is the only lily ever to have achieved hall of fame status?

Now Dr. Robert Griesbach of Chicago has crossed two of Woodriff's lilies, 'Black Beauty' and 'White Henryi,' and named the new lily 'Leslie Woodriff.' The stock has been tissue-cultured by Borboleta Gardens. The description in their catalog reads: "Bright cherry red flowers edged in white with a green heart edged with yellow."

COLLECTING, DRYING, AND MOUNTING PLANT SPECIMENS FOR A HERBARIUM

by Marguerite Hankerson

Herbarium specimens are permanent records of a species (or population) as it occurred at a given time and place. The future value and use of any specimen is largely dependent on the care with which the collector selects, collects, and prepares his specimens. Properly dried and cared for, herbarium specimens will last indefinitely. The oldest in existence go back about 500 years.

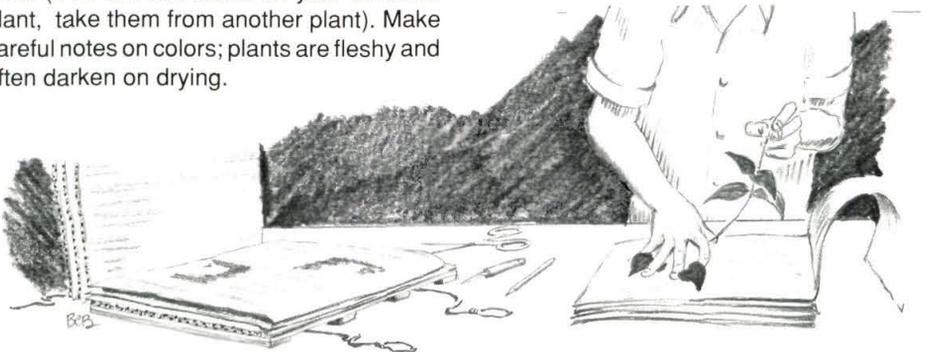
In order for a specimen to be of use to a herbarium, it must be (1) chosen with some care so that as many of the plant parts as possible are included, (2) dried in a way that enables one to mount it on a standard herbarium sheet (11 1/2" by 16 1/2"), (3) mounted on a standard herbarium sheet so it is a permanent addition to the collection, and (4) accompanied by a history of the specimen. All of these steps require appropriate materials. For the first step you'll need: newspapers, blotters, corrugated cardboard, pencil or waterproof pen, and a plastic bag to hold specimens and keep them fresh until they can be arranged for drying.

When selecting a specimen, look for an average, representative plant in flower and/or seed; take the whole plant, including the roots. For a *Begonia* specimen, include both staminate and pistillate flowers and ripe fruits (if all are not found on your selected plant, take them from another plant). Make careful notes on colors; plants are fleshy and often darken on drying.

Newsprint is used for a number of purposes: it is absorbent, one page folded in half is approximately the size of the standard herbarium sheets, and the margins provide space to write necessary data regarding date of collection (date, month, and year), precise geographical location, type of soil grown in (sandy, rocky, loam), as well as features that cannot be preserved - fragrance, and abundance.

Preparing the specimen properly is essential to its preservation. Lay it on a half of a single sheet of newsprint in as natural a position as possible. If the plants are very small, use several on one sheet. If stems are too long, lay them in a V, N, or W pattern; thick stems or fruits may be split to make them lie flatter. Show examples of upper and lower surfaces of the leaves. You may want to include extra examples of flowers and fruit.

Fold the newsprint over the specimen and place it between two blotters. Put the blotters between two pieces of corrugated cardboard. Blotters and corrugates should be the standard size for herbariums. Continue to add to the layers of corrugate, blotter, and newspaper containing your specimens until all of the specimens have been prepared, finishing with blotter and corrugate. The specimens are then ready for the press.



Heavy books are adequate for pressing one or two specimens in the home, but hardly appropriate for field trips. In the latter case, a press can be purchased or made.

Once in the press, the specimens need to be kept in a warm, dry atmosphere so the process of drying will be as expeditious as possible. Blotters must be changed daily, and this gives one the approximate number

of blotters that are required. After about ten days the specimens will be as dry as they are going to get, and they can then be mounted.

days, the glue is sufficiently dry for the final step: affixing the specimen to the sheet with rubber cement at major points. The herbarium label, which has already had the pertinent information entered on it, is affixed to the lower right hand corner of the short (11 1/2") edge. When the rubber cement is dry, after a day or so, the specimen is ready to be delivered to the herbarium and placed in its permanent collection.



of blotters that are required. After about ten days the specimens will be as dry as they are going to get, and they can then be mounted.

For mounting, these materials are needed: a large sheet of glass or other non-porous material; Elmer's glue and water; rubber cement; herbarium mounting sheets; herbarium labels (information from the marginal notes should be transferred to these labels prior to mounting). Herbarium labels can be purchased with a guarantee of 400-500 years.

Make a thin solution of Elmer's glue and water, spread it on the sheet of glass, and draw the entire specimen through it so that the specimen is evenly coated with the glue solution. Arrange the specimen on the permanent sheet and set aside to let the glue dry. When mounting more than one specimen, use small blocks of wood or other material to prevent the sheets from sticking together when stacked. After one or more

If you would be interested in mounting herbarium specimens, check with local colleges, universities, botanical gardens, and nature centers: there's probably a herbarium in your area.

An excellent resource is "Collection and Care of Botanical Specimens," by D.B.O. Savile (March, 1962; reprinted with addenda, 1973), which is Publication 1113 of the Plant Research Institute, Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, Canada. The pamphlet is published by the Research Branch, Canada Dept. of Agriculture.

*Marguerite Hankerson, vice president of Dallas Area Branch and a member of the **Begonian** staff, serves as a volunteer at the Southern Methodist University Herbarium. She lives at 3010 San Paula, Dallas, TX 75228.*



Clayton M. Kelly Seed Fund

Joan Campbell, Seed Fund Director

The Seed Fund is a service for members only. It is a privilege of your membership.

All packets of species seeds are \$1 each. Hybrid seed packets are 50 cents. A pamphlet on growing begonias from seed is 25 cents.

Orders must be accompanied by check or money order in U.S. funds made payable to Clayton M. Kelly Seed Fund. For seeds alone, add 45 cents for postage on orders from the U.S., Mexico, and Canada (60 cents on orders of more than 12 packets). Overseas postage is \$1.20.

With care, I can get two sets of planter dishes with free instructions in one mailer. For this alone, send 62 cents. For dishes and seeds, send 75 cents postage or 92 cents if more than 12 packets are ordered.

Send check or money order to:

Joan Campbell
814 NE Honey House
Corvallis, MT 59828
USA

Notes on the seeds listed:

B. U103 is a tuberous Bolivian species. Grow it as a basket begonia or let it ramble. It has red stems and peduncles with glossy, lobed leaves, and blooms early and easily with 1 1/2" white flowers which turn pink in strong light. Outdoors it takes heat and direct light very well, although cool nights may be a factor here.

B. grandis ssp. *evansiana*, a tuberous species from China, is the hardiest of all our species begonias. It will survive to 10 degrees F. and to even colder temperatures if well mulched and protected. The heart-shaped leaves reach 9" and flowers are produced from August until frost. I have seeds of both pink and white flowered varieties; specify which you'd like. Some growers think the white flowered form is a reaction to the soil or something else in the environment, rather than a truly different color.

B. UO67 is a Nicaraguan species popular for its good looks and ease of culture. This is a rhizomatous begonia. The glossy leaves have a rippled margin edged in red, and shallow pointed lobes. Flowers are pink. This may be synonymous with *B. pruinata*.

B. ludwigii is an Ecuadorian species in cultivation since 1937 and known and grown in this society as *B. rigida* and *B. ecuadorensis*. This species is easily identified by its striking white tipped, deeply lobed leaves. It is classified as thick-stemmed and the seedlings are spotted with white. Large clusters of white flowers are produced on white stems in late winter.

B. multinervia, the familiar thick-stemmed species from Costa Rica, has glossy leaves with depressed venation and a noticeable cusp or hooked point on the tip, and small white flowers in large inflorescences. A picture is worth a thousand words, so please

see the cover of the **Begonian** for May-June, 1982.

B. UO14 is a trailing-scandent species from Argentina with small dark green, glossy elliptical leaves and flowers of intense ORANGE.

B. UO95, a shrub-like species from Peru, has scarlet-red blossoms and large semp-like leaves. The plant reportedly does best in full light, is non-branching, and pinching it back may be fatal. This is the first time this has been offered. Please see the articles in the **Begonian** of November-December, 1986, and January-February, 1987, for absorbing accounts of the search for this plant's identity.

B. sanguinea, a shrub-like species from Brazil, has been in cultivation for more than 160 years (although not offered here since 1982). It has glazed, pottery-like leaves, the undersides of which are blood-red and give this plant its name. It produces white flowers in late winter.

B. partita, a semi-tuberous species from South Africa, is noted for its tiny, three-parted dark green leaves. The plant is small and well branched, produces white flowers in summer, and does not go fully dormant in winter. See drawing, next column.

B. dregei is another semi-tuberous species from South Africa and a natural companion for *B. partita*, above. This plant is noted for its small maple-shaped leaves and white blossoms sometimes tinged with pink. The young leaves are spotted, and it, too, does not go fully dormant.

B. UO31 is a cane-like species from Brazil. This is the form with spotted leaves, red on the reverse, as opposed to the plain-leaved variety offered as M-J 7 in the May-June, 1987, **Begonian**. The plant produces white flowers and the culture is easy. The young seedlings have an attractive sinus curl. This may well be the same as J-F 14 offered in the **Begonian** in 1984.



Drawing/Copyright © 1981 by Pat Maley

B. brevibracteata Kupicha is a tuberous species from Africa. It is endemic to the collection area and thus very rare. The leaves are entire, from 3" to 6" in size, with white flowers borne on cymes 3" to 4" long. In nature it grows from 1' to 3' tall, and is found in shaded rock clefts and on rocks by water, at 2400' and higher elevations. It may be closely related to the semi-tuberous species and/or to *B. sutherlandii*, and thus we may find we have here another begonia horticulturally classified as semi-tuberous.

Also offered this month are Tuberhybrida seeds from a world famous commercial source, in mixed colors. Specify whether you want pendula or upright.

In January I will offer commercial semper-florens seeds of *B. 'Avalanche'* and a 'Calla' semperflorens. I will also have seeds of the 'Frillies,' open-pollinated (as is much commercial seed).

If your seedlings of *B. rizalensis* (offered at the 1986 convention) are rhizomatous with peltate leaves, they may well be another species of the Phillipine begonias, as *B. rizalensis* is not a rhizomatous begonia. Joy Porter is doing the detective work on this one.

If you can't find a terrarium when you need one, try extending a clear plastic "collar" above the rim of the pot, such as those sold by florists with small potted ferns. This works well for me with plants which need a little more humidity than is normally found in the home.

Do you have poor luck with seeds from commercial growers? Beryl Orchard, Massachusetts, has learned to send a small, padded envelope with her order and request that seeds be mailed to her in that. No commercial grower has refused her yet and she feels her germination has vastly improved.

Some comments on the listing from March-April:

"The offering of *B. olbia* is probably the true species. The young seedlings will be spotted."

"*B. UO29* syn. *B. 'Mystique'* has been around since the early mid-60's, would I be thrilled to see that begonia learn its rightful name! On my plant the leaves are accordion-pleated when young and never completely flatten. The margin is red-brown with deep-red reverse, red stems and ovaries. The tepals of both male and female have saw-tooth tips and the females have three tepals."



Clayton M. Kelly Seed Fund

Species Seed
(\$1 per packet)

- N-D 1 *B. U103*
- N-D 2 *B. grandis* spp. *evansiana*
- N-D 3 *B. UO67*
- N-D 4 *B. ludwigii*
- N-D 5 *B. multinervia*
- N-D 6 *B. UO14*
- N-D 7 *B. UO95*
- N-D 8 *B. sanguinea*
- N-D 9 *B. partita*
- N-D 10 *B. dregei*
- N-D 11 *B. UO31*
- N-D 13 *B. brevibracteata*

Hybrid Seed
(50 cents per packet)

- N-D 12 Tuberhybrida
(specify pendula or upright)

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BEGONIA QUESTION BOX

Mabel Corwin, ABS Horticultural Correspondent

Question: What causes browning at the apex, where the leaf joins the stem? Is the plant salvageable? TEXAS

Answer: Rot is probably the cause of the browning at the apex, especially if the tissue is soft. This can be caused by bacteria or fungi. Rot usually occurs when there is high humidity.

First, you should remove all of the infected parts. Clean up any dead leaves or debris on the plant and the soil. Increase air circulation, if possible. Sometimes it is necessary to space the plants farther apart.

Spray with a fungicide, such as Funginex. This should take care of the problem. Some growers like to use Benomyl as a soil drench. They feel this is a preventative to fungus type problems. Follow manufacturer's directions in using these products.

Be careful not to overwater the plants. Water early in the day so the foliage has a chance to dry. Too much high nitrogen fertilizer causes soft growth that is more susceptible to disease.

Question: What would cause the leaves to brown around the edges in a terrarium? My problem is with *B. ficicola*. It is in a terrarium in the greenhouse. Only the large leaves are affected. New growth seems healthy. TEXAS

Answer: Lack of humidity is usually the cause of browning around the edges of the leaves. However, that shouldn't be a problem in your case. I have never experienced this in any of my terrariums. I think probably it is just a case of taking off the old leaves and letting the new growth take over.

Check the back of the affected leaves to be sure there are no insects. Using spray inside a closed container usually damages the plant. Some growers recommend tucking a clove of garlic into the moss in the terrarium to eliminate pests.

Question: I buy rex begonias and I am having trouble growing them. The leaf turns brown at the edge and dries up. I keep the plants inside. I have a plant guide that tells me if they are dry, moist, or wet. Should I put them outside in the summer? MASSACHUSETTS

Answer: The most common cause of leaves of rexes drying up is lack of humidity. The air in many homes is very dry and most begonias, especially rexes, do not tolerate this condition. Also, your light might be too bright if you have them near a window. Rexes grow best with less light than canes require, and more humidity.

Some indoor growers have been successful with rexes by growing them in terrariums or fish tanks. This gives them the extra humidity that they require.

If you have a cool, shady area outside your begonias would probably do well there during the summer. They like good air circulation, but not strong winds.

Question: How can we encourage the taller Superba canes to retain their lower leaves?
TEXAS

Answer: Most growers don't fertilize their canes enough. All canes are heavy feeders. The lower leaves turn yellow and drop off because the plant wants the nutrients for the new leaves and tip growth. The large growing canes need more frequent potting up to larger pot size than most begonias.

Some growers like to use a heavier mix for their canes. A constant feed fertilizer, such as Osmocote, is a good idea.

A sudden change in temperature sometimes will cause leaf drop on the cane begonias.

Question: What makes a good cutting? I hear growers talk about "tip" cuttings and "stem" cuttings, but as a new grower I'm not sure how to go about making a cutting.
CALIFORNIA

Answer: A stem cutting is a fast, easy way to propagate cane-like and shrub-like begonias. You should take cuttings from healthy, disease-free plants. You need to have one or two nodes planted in the medium and one or two nodes on the stem above the planting medium. The length of the cutting will depend upon how close the nodes are together. Usually, a short cutting is preferable.

You need to have at least one growth bud on the stem to make a bushy plant. A stem that has bloomed at every node does not make a good cutting. On most begonias new growth does not form at a node that has had a bloom. There are some exceptions, such as the Mallet types.

On semperflorens type begonias it is necessary to take basal cuttings. This is the new growth that comes from the soil at the base of the plant. You will see new growth buds on these stems. Since semperflorens are everblooming, the older stems that have bloomed do not make satisfactory cuttings. They will root, but will not "break" and make full plants.

Question Box is a service for ABS members. Send horticultural questions about begonias to:

Mabel Corwin
1119 Vista Way
Vista, CA 92084.

You'll receive a prompt answer. Questions of general interest will appear in the **Begonian**.



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is the International Registration Authority for *Hedera*; provides sources for new & unusual ivies; publishes *Ivy Journal* three times a year with reports on research, hardiness testing, life-sized photos of ivies. Memberships: General \$15; Institutional \$25; Commercial \$50. Information: The American Ivy Society, P.O. Box 520, West Carrollton, OH 45449-0520.

ROUND ROBIN NOTES

Margaret Coats, Round Robin Director

A few "words of wisdom" from Daniel Haseltine (IL) to his friends in **Midwest Growers I**: just because plants are begonias doesn't mean they have to be especially beautiful plants. Some of the homelier ones are often a challenge to grow and are interesting because they are different. It is just like some orchids: the plants themselves are not too attractive, but there is a challenge in getting them to come into flower without first killing the plant. When you do get them to flower, you have added to your knowledge and have a feeling of accomplishment.

Although it was in a **cane Robin**, Glennis Crouch (TX) had to brag on her beautiful bedding semps. In fact, she was so impressed with the way last year's plants came up from the roots (after being mulched before cold weather) that she went out and bought 150 more semps. Several people have reported that their semps usually come back year after year unless an unusually hard winter hits.

In the **propagation Robin**, Virginia Hamann (LA) has tested a new root stimulator made by Fertiloam which contains vitamin B6. She had just received some violet leaves, so she planted half using plain water and the other half with the Fertiloam product, using 1 drop to a two-quart watering can. She found the leaves with the Fertiloam rooted much faster.

In discussing rules of repotting begonias in the **Miniature Begonias Robin**, Rita Sendic (NJ) suggests that small begonias being potted up to a larger size pot should be given the same soil mix, as they don't like a change of soil, especially in very warm weather.

Mary Bucholtz (FL) says that if she removes a plant from a pot and sees the roots have formed a complete ball with no loose soil, she repots. If, however, there is some soil which falls away from the root ball, she feels there is further room for those roots and returns the plant to the same pot for continued growth. When repotting is necessary she only moves a plant up one pot size. In grooming rhizomatous begonias, Mary does not find it objectionable if rhizomes grow over the pot rim as long as the plant is symmetrical. However, if there is only one rhizome growing over, then it should be cut back in an attempt to achieve a more rounded plant. She feels that pinching is a good way to keep those rhizomes under control. It also promotes back growth from the rhizome. She admits it is difficult to pinch when a plant is growing so well, but if it is done early, before you see the new leaf, it isn't as difficult.

Pauline Chambers (FL) wrote her friend: in the **semperflorens Robin** that one of the highlights of the past winter was the beauty of bronze-leaved semps with red and deep rose blooms planted along with three different types of Dusty Miller plants. She finds the combination absolutely gorgeous. Pauline waters her pots and baskets from the bottom by setting them in deep plastic trays of water until the top of the potting soil is well dampened. She says semps do not like wet feet and will survive extreme drying out, which would kill other types of begonias. One thing that spells death is to feed them when they are dry, she said. Always pre-dampen soil before using any kind of plant food, and then set pots into fertilizer water and let them "drink" up all they will take, and then let them drain well before replacing saucers. She

alternates by thoroughly soaking her plants in clean water to flush out salts, etc., between feedings. In the same Robin, Charlene Franklin (TX) claims she always has better luck by using egg shells in the bottom of her pots. She made a comparison of pots with egg shells and without, and found the seedlings with the egg shells had a much better root system. She read that egg shells steeped in water would give extra calcium.

Jeanette Gilbertson (CA) enjoys watching her baby rexes grow and change. She thinks some have prettier coloration as babies than as mature plants. She agrees with Mary McClelland (NE) in a **Rex** Robin that low humidity is one cause of brown leaf edges. Salt in the water is another, she says. In the same Robin, Mabel Corwin says she is culling rexes from two and three years ago (don't you wish you lived in Vista?). She says they were all beautiful, but just not different or distinctive enough to name and release.

In one of the **cane** Robins, Barbara Nunes (VA) writes about a lecture on fluorescent lights she attended. The lecturer recommended using ordinary cool white tubes instead of the expensive types. He also recommended changing tubes every six months, as they begin to dim after that, and dating the bulbs to keep a check on when they were put in.

An excellent tip from Marvin Kahr (IA) in the #3 **General Culture** flight — bottle caps from your soda or beer bottles are handy to use in the bottom of flower pots to keep soil from sifting out. May Kendall (CA) says she also uses soda caps in trays to set pots on; they keep the pot bottoms out of water.

The **African species** Robin brought out some interesting discussions. Ruth Wills (OK) comments on the difference between her *B. raynalianum* and one her friend has. Ruth's is growing in sphagnum, perlite, and charcoal; her friend grows hers in potting mix in a terrarium under lights, and the leaves have turned to pink and/or white. Ruth is

anxious to find an answer as to why.

Continuing in the **African species** Robin, Mary Weinberg (IL) claims to have set some kind of a record with *B. bogneri*, as it has been blooming for 6 months and still has a bud or two. She hasn't opened its terrarium for at least a year, the sphagnum is growing up the sides, and lots of moisture clings to the sides of the glass. It sits on an end table four feet from a north window and she turns on a lamp for a few hours in the evening, but the rest of the time it sits in natural light. It has never gone dormant for her.

In a discussion about the various *B. 'Cathedral'* plants, Betty Tillotson (CA) says that according to Mike Kartuz, *B. 'Cathedral'* and *B. 'Cathedral Windows'* are the same plant, and *B. 'Fiji Islands'* is the result of planting *B. 'Cathedral'* leaves. Betty says she finds *B. 'Fiji Islands'* is a very weird plant, and difficult. Mary Ellen Taback (VA), in the same **General Culture** Robin, said she was going to put down a leaf of *B. 'Cathedral Windows'* and see what she gets.

Thelma O'Reilly (CA) shares some very valuable information in one of the **Unidentified species** Robins. *B. UOO2* is a hybrid of *B. UOO3* and *B. thelmae*. She first saw seedlings resulting from this cross following the 1979 convention in New York, when she travelled to Logee's and then to Kartuz Greenhouses before he moved to California. Brian Logee showed her a collection of identical seedlings from a cross he made, and all were identical to *B. UOO2*. He mentioned Patrick Worley had made the same cross, with the same results. Later at Kartuz', she saw several flats of this cross, all identical to Brian's cross and *B. UOO2*. Recently Mabel Corwin (CA) made the same cross with the same results. Like its parent, *B. thelmae*, it is difficult and becomes naked at the end of the growing season.

Mary Ellen Taback (VA) comments on the growing of *B. UOO2*. She finds it very sensitive to humidity, temperature, wet roots, etc.,

and finds it difficult to grow. Also in this Robin, Martin Johnson (CA) states he is not receiving a large quantity of seed of any one species from the Phillipines, as collecting conditions are difficult. It seems the collectors, in some cases, require an armed escort. *There are times when bribes are required for safe passage.* Also, some treks are made under spartan conditions such as walking or hiking for six days and sleeping in the open.

In saying goodbye to her friends of many years in the **Windowsill** Robin, Joan Campbell (MT) says she finds handling the seed fund is taking much time and she has to give up some of her Robins. She recommends some plants she finds fascinating: *B. kenworthyae*, divided gray-green leaves and new red leaves, blooms pink-tinged when grown in good light; *B. friburgensis*, round striped leaves; *B. U150*, with dark divided leaves and light green centers, much resembling *B. heracleifolia* 'Sunderbruchii' and also an eye-catcher; *B. incarnata*, blooms hot pink when grown outside; *B. petasitifolia*, with green, thick, succulent, lacquered round leaves and stems as red as nail polish. Joan tests the seeds that come to the seed fund, so we know these plants must be beauties to get her nod.

The **Southwest Growers** Robin was loaded with grower tips this round. One of the members had bad luck on her last seed try, so Mary Ellen Taback (VA) had some words of encouragement and wisdom. She says algae and molds are not killed just by pouring boiling water through the mix; it takes high temperatures for considerable time to kill the spores. She points out many people sterilize the soil with their microwave ovens.

To keep his taller plants from blowing away, Bob Moore (FL) sinks the pots into the ground slightly, and stakes the plant in the pot. He uses redwood chips at the bottom of the soil medium and has very little trouble with insects, as they do not like the redwood. Also, the roots of the plant will not come out of the bottoms of the pots. Bob also believes

that with all soiless mixes it is necessary to use a fertilizer of some kind to get good results with plants. He says that because fertilizers do not all contain the micro elements necessary for good plant growth, it is in the best interest of the plant to switch the brand of food now and then.

Mary Ellen Taback (VA) explained to her **Mini** Robin friends how she prepared her begonias before leaving on vacation. Among the things she mentioned was a new product — a portable tent of clear plastic, with a floor and an umbrella-type frame which stands 40 inches high; the base is a circle about 36 inches across. It can hold many plants, and good sized ones. It worked fine for her, as all the plants she placed in it did very well. She believes she is becoming a specialist on how to get plants to survive with no one around to tend them while you are away.

Phillip Roe (IL), a member of one of the **cane** Robins, saw some wire hanging baskets lined with burlap instead of the usual sphagnum, and said they looked very natural; he plans to try them as soon as he runs out of sphagnum. With the scare of contaminated sphagnum and the disease *spirotrichosis*, this sounds as though it may be an excellent alternative.

In answer to the question from members of the #53 **rhizomatous** Robin of how to grow and get blooms from *B. 'Buttercup'*, Margie Smith (TX) explains that pinching back to make a nice thick plant might also mean pinching off the blooms. She thins out the plant by just pinching off leaves, as the blooms are on the runners. She explains that a nice round plant is usually too thick to let the blooms come through. She also explains that *B. 'Buttercup'* needs good light even if the foliage gets a little pale for a while, and it likes to be fairly rootbound.

I have received a request from a Robin member who is disabled and would like to correspond with other disabled begonia growers. It does not matter whether or no

you belong to a Robin; if you would like to correspond with her, please write me and I will put the two of you in touch.

If you would like to exchange begonia notes via one of the Robin flights, write to:

Margaret Coats
11203 Cedar Elm
San Antonio, TX 78230

and tell her what your interests are. There are over 60 flights circulating.



IN MEMORY

The Jacksonville Branch lost its founding President, Ann Helton, in September, 1987. She was a life member of ABS.

Many of our members owe their success as hobby growers to Ann. Through her gentle teaching, constant encouragement and generosity with cuttings, we learned.

Ann's knowledge was not limited only to begonias, but she was active in the Garden Club and several plant societies before retirement. For many years she headed the horticultural division of the County Fair.

The Branch felt Ann Helton could be memorialized best by a contribution to the Conservation Fund, earmarked for Scott Hoover's upcoming Ecuadorian exploration. In this way all members of ABS will be touched by Ann's memory.

Isamu Misono was born in Chiba prefect, Japan in 1910. He served as Director of the Japan Begonia Society, and President of the Chiba Branch of JBS. Other positions include president of the Tropical Plant Lover's Society of Chiba and president of the School of Gardening Institute. He was a teacher at Chiba High School, and owner of Misono Begonia Gardens.

Mr. Misono is best known in this country for his book, Begonias, written in 1974 and translated in 1978 by Dr. Marguerite DeCola. The English version was published by ABS.

An active hybridizer, Mr. Misono produced and named over 68 cultivars. While he worked primarily with rhizomatous and rex varieties, he also created several thick-stemmed begonias.

In his book, he listed the "seven charms of begonias:"
Beauty, Many Species, Rapid Growth and Easy Propagation, the Real Test of Culture (...it is more pleasant to grow and culture begonias than any other plant...), Plants for Everyone's Enjoyment, the Dream of New Hybrids, and Ladies and Begonias.

The following poem is one he used on his "Happy New Year" cards:

"Admiration for Begonias"

Though I know the "language of flowers" is
"Unreturned love,"

I love the Begonias' "Broken symmetry" and
beauty of bold designs.

I seem to...

See "fire of activity" in stems, leaves,
and flowers,

Hear the sound of "blood pulsating" thru'
veins of leaves

Feel the untiring "aching" effort of
vigorous cell division

I don't care if the..."love is forever unre-
turned,"

I.....Love Begonias!



AROUND ABS

Notes from our Newsletters

Many branches held shows this fall, and their programs reflected a concern with showing. Buxton Branch called in an expert, Betty Johnson, a life judge for the National Council of Garden Clubs and winner of many shows, for coaching in September. Knickerbocker Branch, meanwhile, had Buxton Branch's immediate past president, Wanda Macnair, as their guest expert on growing for show. "Begonia Shape-Up" was Wanda's topic.

In Florida, Pinellas County Branch treasurer Dennis Kuecken shared his tips on growing begonias from cuttings. Dennis uses mostly tip cuttings, and cuts at a 45 degree angle to allow more rooting surface and greater prevention of fungus and rotting. He starts the cuttings with a commercial product called "Grow Tone" (3-9-6) and a 3% chlorine mixture at the rate of one teaspoon per four inch pot. When his cuttings are rooted, he uses Fafard #3 potting soil with Osmocote for a top dressing. Insecticides and other chemicals are used only sparingly: Thuricide for chewing insects, Orthene for sucking insects, Daconil 2787 for fungus.

Across the country in California, the East Bay Branch program was for the birds. That's not an insult: their speaker was the California Garden Clubs State Bird Chairman, Juanita Hineman, whose home is a hospital for ill or injured birds which are eventually released to the wild. Mrs. Hineman brought a feathered friend to the meeting.

One program which must have been fascinating was given at the October meeting of the San Francisco Branch. Genetic engineer Trevor Suslow, who worked on the development of a product that prevents freezing weather from killing strawberry plants, spoke on what is in store for growers of the future. Can you imagine leaving your begonias out in the snow with no ill effects? Sounds like science-fiction, but maybe someday that will be a possibility!

Do mysteries and detective stories intrigue you? Thelma O'Reilly spoke to Palomar Branch on "Baffling Begonias," detailing some of the research involved in identifying begonia species collected around the world. (An excerpt from the Palomar Planter on another mystery, involving one - or is it two? - hybrids is included at the end of this article. Stay tuned for the solution).

"Tune in" is what members of Sacramento Branch did on Saturday, Sept. 12, when two of their members, Sandy and Virgil Goodman, were on a local radio garden show as guest experts on begonias. The Goodmans were also featured in a newspaper article, as was Joan Coulat, with her begonias. What great publicity for our favorite plant!

Speaking of publicity: Dorothy Patrick of Dallas Area Branch did a video program on growing begonias for a national cable television company. Did your area get it?

The Buxtonian, newsletter of the Buxton Branch, had several useful tips. The

first is on using phosphorus:

"Because phosphorus is so sensitive to soils that are too acid or too alkaline, it quickly locks up in insoluble form. For instance, by raising the pH of an acid soil from 5.5 to 6.4 the availability of phosphorus increases ten-fold. In another example, reducing a pH of 8.3 to 6.9 made five times as much phosphorus available to plants. One fact to remember is that phosphorus is highly insoluble and does not move in soil. It is best incorporated by mixing in your growing medium."

The second is taken from an excellent longer article on taking house plants in, by an author identified only as F.M.R.: "Avoid wearing yellow or bright orange clothing when moving plants inside. Flying insects, especially white flies, are attracted to these colors and feel that they are being invited inside."

Also from the Buxtonian is a short article about some common pests: fungus gnats.

"Have you ever seen tiny black or dark gray flies rapidly crawling around the lip of your pot plants or swarming in the air just above the plants? Then you've got fungus gnats. Actually they are more of an annoyance to the gardener than the plant unless you have a heavy infestation.

Fungus gnats are about 1/8 " long and are attracted to moist, decaying organic matter like peat moss. The flies themselves don't cause the damage to a plant, but their 1/4" larvae or whitish maggots that live in the soil and feed on the organic matter and roots of the plants do. If there are enough of them, they can severely injure the plants.

For control of the larvae, avoid overwatering the plants. Some growers have successfully used a teaspoon of chlorine bleach to a quart of water and drenched the soil. Diazinon also makes a good drench for the growing medium. Follow directions carefully.

If the flies are annoying to you, use an aerosol spray of resmethrin or any other household fly spray."

Here, as promised, is:

THE MYSTERY OF TWO LADIES: IS LADY CLARE REALLY MRS. FRED T. SCRIPPS?

by Tony Newnham

There is such a close resemblance between these two cultivars one wonders in fact they're Siamese twins. Did they fly forth from the seed pod joined at the navel, or perhaps the peduncle? Maybe the pedant Fact is they were born eighteen years apart but the last two numerals of the birth date are the same...

Mrs. Fred T. Scripps

Born 1935

Hybridized by: Mrs. Fred T. Scripps

Lady Clare

Born 1953

Hybridized by: Winoma Jensen

What makes them so close in appearance? Could it be their parentage? It seems they were the product of identical matings...
B. scharffiana x B. luxurians.

Is there any real difference between these two plants? What is the difference between them? How does one tell them apart?

There is a difference; at least the descriptions in BEGONIAS: the Complete Reference Guide indicate a difference:

Mrs. Fred T. Scripps

Shrub-like, hairy leaved,
wide-leaved, pink blossom,
blooms winter-spring,
sparse bloomer.

Lady Clare

Shrub-like, hairy-leaved,
wide-leaved, white blossoms
with hairs, blooms sporadically,
sparse bloomer.

The difference is there all right, and it's significant. It appears, however, the plant must be in bloom for one to say with a modicum of certainty which of the two ladies it is.

Being of the "shrub-like" group both ladies are easy to grow and care for. However, according to BEGONIAS: the Complete Reference Guide one is more easy to grow than the other...Mrs. Fred T. Scripps is identified as being a good variety for the "beginning grower" and Lady Clare is recommended for the "advanced grower."

Outdoors in the summer, hairy-leaved begonias want a lot of light, but in most instances only early morning and late afternoon sun. They're well suited to growing in the home in winter months because they don't need abnormally high humidity and will grow well in strong light, but don't need direct sunlight. In our part of the country a bright window facing north would be ideal.

Since Victorian days, shrub-like hairy-leaved begonias have been favorites for indoor decoration and window-ledge growing because of their easy culture. They can be grown very successfully under lights if there's sufficient space. As their demand for light is not too great they can be placed toward the end of the fluorescent tubes, leaving the center area available for more light-demanding varieties.

In keeping with the season, Westchester Branch sent an orange newsletter, decorated with flying witch, jack-o-lantern, cat and bat. Happy Halloween!





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BEGONIAS: THE COMPLETE REFERENCE GUIDE by Mildred L. and Edward J. Thompson. 884 pages, 850 illustrations (165 in color). Culture, classification and history. \$20.00 to ABS members.

To order autographed copies write: THOMPSONS, P.O. Drawer P Southampton, N.Y. 11968. **BEGONIA 1984 UPDATE** \$6.75. Prices include shipping. Master Card and Visa available.

SOUTHWEST REGION, ABS: Annual Together, show, sale; monthly newsletter. Membership \$7, family \$10. Send to Mar Harrell, Rt. 3, Box 689, Elgin, TX. 78621.

ABS SERVICES

These services are available to all ABS members. For names and addresses of department heads, see inside back cover. Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope when you write.

At-Large Members

Members who do not belong to branches are represented at board meetings by the Members-at-large director. MAL committee works on projects by mail.

Bookstore

Offers books about Begonias and back issues of the *Begonian*.

Judging Dept.

Mail order course for members who wish to become accredited judges. The course is currently being revised.

Nomenclature Dept.

Monitors newly published findings on *Begonia* names. Handles official international registrations of new *Begonia* cultivars and publishes these registrations. Gathers information about and assigns numbers to unidentified species.

Question Box

Offers prompt assistance with horticultural questions. Those of general interest will appear in the *Begonian*.

Round Robins

Members exchange information about begonias and their culture through packets of letters which circulate among a small group of growers. There are dozens of these packets, called flights, on many specialized subjects. Contact the director for information.

Seed Fund

The Clayton M. Kelly Seed Fund offers seeds of begonia species and cultivars by mail. New acquisitions are discussed in the *Begonian*. Donations of seeds are encouraged.

Slide Library

Offers slide programs about begonias. List of programs available from slide librarian. Donations of individual slides and programs requested.

Speakers Bureau

The director maintains a list of speakers on begonias and related subjects.

ABS BOOKSTORE

BOOK LIST:

The Begonia Book: Eva Kenworthy Gray, 1931.

Facsimile reprint, 1986. 50 pages, some pictures, \$4.

Begonias: Hikoichi Arakawa, 1980

A Japanese text with 431 color prints, identified in English. No translation of text. \$25.

Begonias in Color: Yugi Murotani

A Japanese text with 225 color photos identified in English. English translation by Hikoichi Arakawa included. \$15.

Growing Begonias: Eric Caterall, 1984

132 pages, 16 color plates, 14 b/w photos, 22 line drawings. \$18 hard cover.

Les Begonias: Charles Chevalier, 1938. Translated by Alva Graham, 1975.

165 pages; photos, some in color. \$5 soft cover.

Buxton Check List: Bessie Buxton, 1957.

A reprint of the original compilation of begonia names from the literature, botanical and horticultural, here and abroad. 1957 original, plus three supplements up through 1967. \$20 spiral-bound.

Guidelines for National Conventions and Annual Shows: Thelma O'Reilly, 1982.

Approved by the Board of Directors, 1982. A must for branches that put on their own shows, and for chairpersons of a national convention. \$2.50 (order of 5 or more, \$2 each).

Catalog of Registered Cultivars

Published by ABS. Lists the first 100 registered cultivars of the genus *Begonia* with each cultivar's background, its parents, originator, references in the *Begonian*, tested data, and complete description. 47 pages, with index. \$4.

New listings:

Roses: Norman Taylor.

Based on Taylor's Encyclopedia of Gardening. A complete guide to gardening with roses. 495 pages, fully illustrated, 461 color photos. \$14.95.

Your Indoor Garden: George Seddon.

More than 350 indoor plants, each with an identifying illustration, grouped according to light and minimum temperature requirements, a good "care guide." 200 pages, 80 color photos. \$12.95.

The New York Times Book of Houseplants: Joan Lee Faust. The Garden Editor of the New York Times offers her excellent advice and suggestions for growing over 100 popular plants, each with a water color illustration. There is also a section on bottle gardens, terrariums, topiaries, forcing bulbs. 274 pages. \$10.95.

RELATED ITEMS:

Notebook Binders: hold up to 12 issues of the **Begonian**. Black only, excellent quality. \$5.25.

Pamphlets:

"Begonias from Seed:" 4 pages. 35 cents each, or 25 cents with book order (22 cents each postage), 50 or more 10 cents each.

"Culture of Begonias:" 12 pages. 75 cents each, with book order 50 cents each (56 cents postage), 20 or more 25 cents each

Curtis Botanical Magazine Reprints: A set of antique color prints of begonias from the Curtis Botanical Magazine of the 1800's. 6" x 9" prints suitable for framing. Set of 6, \$5. Single prints, \$1 each.

ABS emblem pin: LIMITED AMOUNT. \$6.

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Individual copies of the *Begonian* more than a year old are available for \$1. A full year is \$6 through 1981. 1982 and on are \$1.50 each or \$7 a year. Issues less than a year old are \$2 each.

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Send check or money order to Bob Bailey ABS Bookstore, 5190 Mission Blvd., Sp #90, Riverside, Ca, 92509. Add 75 cents per book for postage and handling (unless otherwise noted). California residents add 6% sales tax.

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Please remember to notify the Membership Chairman of your change of address. The Post Office does not forward third class mail: ABS is billed for notification of the new address (if one is available), but the issue are destroyed. You miss your **Begonian** ABS must pay for the issue, the postage, and the notification that you have moved; and no one is happy. If you forget to let the Membership Chair know you've moved, you'll have to purchase your missed magazines from the Book Store.

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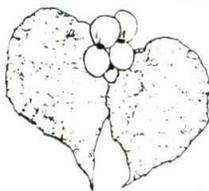
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