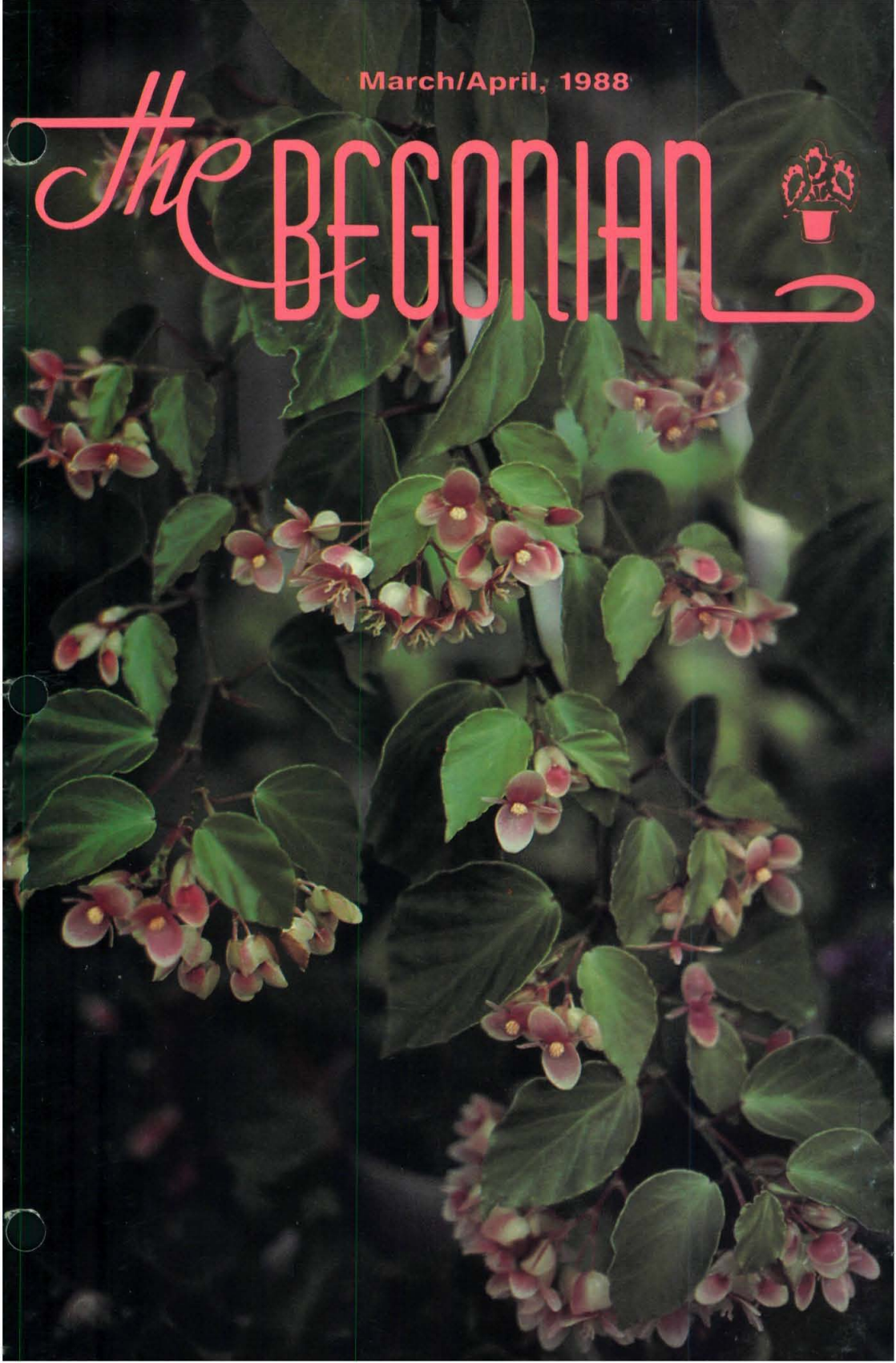


March/April, 1988

The BEGONIAN



The BEGONIAN

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Cover photo: B. 'Fragrant Beauty', by Don Miller,
Dallas, TX

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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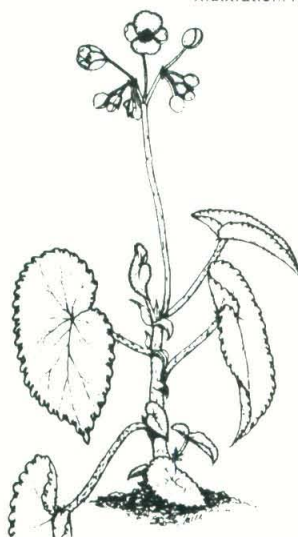
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We'd like a growing ABS, so we're holding a membership contest! Between April 1 and July 31, membership chair John Ingles, Jr. will keep track of all new members which you - or your Branch - sign up. The individual who recruits the most new members will win a \$25 gift certificate from Kartuz Greenhouses and a one-year 1st class membership in ABS. The Branch which is most active in signing new members during the four-month period will win a \$50 gift certificate from Kartuz Greenhouses. Both the individual and the Branch receive credit for each new member; when you recruit a new member between April 1 and July 31, make sure that you get credit! Write to John Ingles, Jr. at 923 E. Francis, Corona, CA 91719 and list: your name, your Branch, and the new member. Join us in promoting begonias - we're hoping to hear from **you!**

Illustration/Pat Maley



B. johnstonii

COVER PHOTO: Don Miller took this photograph of *B. 'Fragrant Beauty'* at Kartuz Greenhouses. *B. 'Fragrant Beauty'* is a 1976 cross of *B. solananthera* A.DC. (Brazil, 1859) and *B. procumbens* Vellozo (Brazil, 1831) done by A. Ashizawa, and, like both of its parents, is trailing-scandent. Flowers are light coral, profuse, and fragrant, spring-summer.

CONVENTION '88!

Come celebrate "Begonias in Boston," a golden anniversary party at the Boston Marriott, Burlington, Massachusetts, September 15-18! Along with the special exhibits, mini-tours, tour of Logee's Greenhouses, seminars, and special breakfasts, award luncheon, banquet, and presentation of special awards, we will have a competitive begonia show featuring a division of New England Hybrids. This will include Kartuz and Worley hybrids through 1980, as well as all Logee introductions. To help focus on Buxton Branch's 50th year, there will be a division of Plants in Cultivation 50 years or more. A partial list of possible plants will be furnished upon request: send a SASE to Wanda Macnair, 177 Hancock St. Cambridge, MA 02139.

Another very new division this year will be Traveling Begonias: plants in pots no larger than 4", which must have come at least 400 miles or by plane. Entries are to be judged horticulturally, with consideration given to their long journey.

This year we will be providing trophies for 25 divisions plus Best in Show, Sweepstakes, and Showing is Sharing. Trophies will cost \$50 to \$75; we would appreciate donations to the trophy fund. If you would like to sponsor a special division, get your bid in early by sending a check made payable to ABS Convention 88, and designated for trophies to: Mrs. Evelyn Cronin, Box 732, Cotuit, MA 02365.

With the use of cuttings from the Barkley Collection, donations of other cuttings and plants, and purchases of plants, we hope to make the convention's plant sale a big success for both buyers of plants and ABS'

coffers. We are looking for species, interesting cultivars, and many plants named after ABS members. Plants appropriate for terrariums are usually quite popular in this area, too. We will accept monetary donations at any time, and donations of cuttings when there isn't so much danger of temperatures in the teens. Checks for donations may be made out to ABS Convention 88 and designated to plant sales, and sent to Wanda Macnair. Cuttings may also be sent to Wanda. Plants grown for the sales tables and brought to the convention in September will be most appreciated, but please let us know your intent so that we may credit you in the program.

Buxton Branch has designated Frank M. Green, a member of the convention committee, as Travel Coordinator for the convention. This means a savings in air cost (from 5% off lowest published rates to 40% off coach fares) if reservations are made through him. Frank will also make car rental reservations and make any room or tour reservation desired if you want to see more of our beautiful New England while you are on the East Coast. Inquiries should be addressed to:

Frank M. Green
Richardson Road
Fitchburg, MA
01420
Tel: (617)537-7751

An answering service takes messages if no one is in when you call.

Please let Frank Green or Wanda Macnair know if you have questions or would like more tourist information.



A WESTERN MALAYSIAN WINDFALL

by Thelma O'Reilly

WILD BEGONIA SEED! That is how the plastic packet of seed was labeled. The slightly tattered manila envelope contained additional treasures - dried specimens of two begonia species, colored prints of wild begonias in habitat and garden grown bromeliads, and an informative letter from my new friend, Mohamed Ibrahim of West Malaysia.

In early spring of 1987 I answered an inquiry from Mohamed about the acquisition of bromeliad literature, plants, and general information. In my answer I queried him about names of botanical gardens or persons who might be a source of begonia seed in exchange for seed or literature of other tropics.

November, 1987, brought a surprising and thrilling answer in the envelope described above. His letter says, "There is no horticulturist specializing in begonias but we do have orchid horticulturists in this country. You are very fortunate that most of the local species of begonias are still in their natural habitat. We have very little knowledge of its habits (flowering and seeding) but there are many varieties which I believe could be gathered from our interior. I enclose some photographs on the various species available in Penang."

There appear to be two species in the plastic packet, with two different colored flower forms of one of the species. Mohamed designates one species as having white

flowers and the same species collected at a different altitude as having white and purple flowers. (I have noted that collectors and authors in Asian countries often refer to shades of what we call pink or red as purple).

One of the herbarium specimens contained three large, apparently intact, seed pods. I carefully split the pods at the base and harvested an ample amount of seed. Description on the back of the photo of this begonia says "Very Rare." I assigned U number B. U230 to this species, which is Mohamed Ibrahim's collection number MZI-01.



B. U230 (MZI 01). Very rare. Collected in dense, humid, deeply shaded area. Alt. 750 ft. Flowers white.



MZI 02. Collected at alt. 1,700 ft.
Also grows on lowland. Flowers white.

The second herbarium specimen has small, delicate leaves and white flowers (white in dried state) on thread-like peduncles and pedicels. The leaf shape of this species closely matches the photos which describe the single species with two different flower colors. I have written to Mohamed asking if seed of this specimen was included in the seed packet.

The mixed wild begonia seed will be assigned U numbers after the seedlings are mature enough to determine their differences.

I decided this unexpected "windfall" should be shared, resulting in the development of a "Malaysian Project." Participants have received seed, copies of photos, available information, and guidelines. Progress will be reported in the **Begonian**.



MZI 03. Collected on wet rock surfaces.
Alt. 500 ft. Flowers white and purple.

The remaining seed was cleaned, tested for germination, and sent to Joan Campbell for Seed Fund distribution. As many members as possible should have a chance to share in this exciting opportunity to grow begonia seed that may never have been in cultivation in the United States.

The seed I planted germinated within nine days. Germination was 100%.

Members participating in the Malaysian Project are: Roberto Brin of Panama, Joan Campbell, Mabel Corwin, Doug and Goldie Frost, Martin Johnson, Don Miller, Thelma O'Reilly, and Rudy Ziesenhenne.

Members-at-Large Director Thelma O'Reilly is growing her Malaysian seedlings at 10942 Sunray Place, La Mesa, CA 92041.



HONOR ROLL

of contributors
to the Conservation Fund
for Scott Hoover's
Ecuador expedition

Margie Todd Griffith
Marie Harrell
Orange County Branch
Santa Clara Branch
Southwest Region, ABS

Conservation Co-chair Martin Johnson writes: "Scott returned from the first part of the trip and brought back cuttings which have been distributed to Mabel Corwin, Rudolf Ziesenhenne, and Howard Berg."

TIPS FOR BEGONIA BEGINNERS

by Dorothy Patrick

In giving programs on begonias to local Garden Clubs, and in selling them from my front yard in a very small home business many years ago, I heard repeatedly "I can grow many other things but I can't grow begonias."

Well, let me tell you my answer to that lament. No one could have been less qualified than I was to fall into the trap of begonia addiction! I had no outdoor gardening experience, no houseplant experience. I had never even heard the word "begonia." But I passed a small nursery one day and saw in their front window a big, full hanging basket of B. 'Jean Pernet' in full bloom, and I was hooked. The owners knew nothing about begonias, and would not sell the basket, but they sold me "bedding begonias" of several different varieties. Of course I know now that they were *semperflorens*, or, as many people still call them, wax leaf begonias. I bought a small hanging basket and a small bag of potting mix, potted up my new plants, and hung them on a limb of a young mimosa tree in my front yard. I periodically dropped by the nursery to see if they had propagated the 'Jean Pernet.' They hadn't, but the owner finally remembered that he had a listing in some nurseryman's publication of the national organizations of various plants, and he gave me the name and address of ABS.

I joined, and for several years the **Begonian** was my sole source of information. I didn't know another person who grew begonias, and felt too pressed for time to join the Branch in my area. What an error! For that Branch had Mae Blanton - the most prestigious name in begonias in my part of the country - for a member.

But I bumbled along, purchasing small rooted cuttings of anything, from anywhere, with a tag marked "Begonia." Money was a major factor in what I did - but by watching the

ads, I soon bought 4' fluorescent fixtures and improvised a plant stand in the house. Seeing the rich leaf colors develop under these lights was my complete undoing.

Facing the rebellion of my large family over the amount of space I was utilizing for begonias, I searched until I found someone who would build me a very small backyard greenhouse and let me make installment payments on it.

By then, the Thompson Begonia Guide was my right hand (and still is).

My front yard sales helped me pay for the greenhouse. A large family, a full-time job, and a sick husband left me very little time for my increasing number of begonias. All of this preamble leads me to quote for you a statement made by Dael Jones, a wonderful grower and until recently an active member of the Dallas Area Branch, ABS: "Begonias are survivors."

In my opinion, this is true. And there are only two major things that begonias have to fear from their owners: being overwatered and being overpotted.

Let's go through some of the basics that it helps a beginner to know, starting with "What potting soil should I use?"

If you talk to ten different growers you will get ten different answers. The main criteria for soil for begonias is that it be loose and drain well. My formula, which worked well for me for many years, is one part any inexpensive packaged houseplant potting mix, 1 part perlite, and 1 part pine bark mulch. You can use a 2 cup measuring cup of each ingredient if you only need a small amount. There are now on the market expensive mixes which contain enough drainage to make

them useable without additions; but I would still add perlite and pine bark mulch. When you find something that works for you in your conditions, stick to it!

I have always preferred plastic pots. This is a highly controversial subject. Many excellent growers will use nothing but clay pots. Clay pots require a more demanding watering schedule than I can commit to; but they do produce spectacular begonias. If you use clay pots, cover the bottom hole with a larger piece of a broken clay pot. Clay pots must also be thoroughly scrubbed to remove unsightly mineral deposits. It is my opinion that a beginner should use either all clay or all plastic pots.

Most begonias are shallow-rooted. This means they need shallow containers. This is especially true of the rhizomatous and sem-perflorens types.

Shallow containers are not easy to find. But I have improvised for years. When plants are small you can pop off the bottom of a plastic soft drink bottle. Those are perfect! You can purchase inexpensive squatty clear plastic throw-away drink cups, and, using a hot ice pick, make 3 or 4 enlarged holes in the bottom of them (these are also good for rooting cuttings and for small terrarium plants: just invert one cup to use as a lid and tape the two together). You can find several sizes of rigid plastic soup/cereal bowls, also inexpensive, in many grocery stores. They must have drainage holes, made either with the hot ice pick or, carefully, with an electric drill. Necessity is indeed the mother of invention!

When your plant is big enough for a 6" pot, and in the search for a shallow pot all else fails, you can try what I have done for many years: fill up the bottom third or so of a pot with pine bark chunks, add a layer of potting mix, and proceed to plant. These shallow pots are not necessary for the tall cane-like begonias.

Years ago, when I had grown a profusion of truly beautiful begonias of many varieties, it would embarrass me for people to carry on over them and almost always end up with: "You must have a green thumb!"

I developed a stock answer, which I still use. It was, "No, my thumb isn't green, but my fingernails are black from sticking my finger in the soil to see if it is dry."

No one can tell you to water your begonias once a week, once a day, once a month, etc. The plants' environment, potting mix, type of pot, size of pot (and on and on and on) determine how often you need to water. I still follow the same rules - let the soil dry out on the surface, and when you do water, water thoroughly, until water runs from the drainage holes of the pot. It is pretty well accepted that plants in clay pots need watering more often than those in plastic, that hanging baskets need watering more often than plants sitting on a shelf or the ground.

When I only had a few dozen begonias I made every effort not to get the foliage wet, but when I had several hundred I was not able to stick to that. Did it make a difference? I don't know. I didn't have mildew when I only had a few plants - but I suppose your chances for disease increase proportionally as your collection increases. If I were starting anew, though, I would try to keep the water off the foliage.

I would also recommend slow, gentle watering so you don't uproot your plant. And, of course, if your pot has a saucer under it, go back and empty the water from the saucer after you are finished.

Dorothy Patrick learned fast: only a few years after she discovered begonias, she entered the show at SWR's 1982 Get-Together and took Sweepstakes. Her address is P.O. Box 2515, South Padre Island, TX 78597. In the next issue she will discuss repotting, feeding, meeting light requirements, and where to find begonias.



BEGONIAS !

SAVE THE WHALES!

by Bill Voss

The Thompsons' Begonias: the Complete Reference Guide refers to some 2450 species and cultivars. As time passes, the number will continue to grow. I remember when, during a visit to Kartuz Greenhouses, I was shown a new variety that was being grown and tested. There were hundreds of this variety which was finally released and named 'Guy Savard.' Once it was available, it was always sold out and it took a year or more until I finally managed to locate it. Evi Loeb found it and notified me. New friends were made and the much sought after new begonia was acquired via a Saturday drive from Virginia to the Philadelphia area.

In this instance, the much sought after begonia was a new cultivar. Recently in the packet of Members At Large letters, there were several positive comments about 'Sylvan's Triumph.' It was at Logee's that I saw this begonia for the first time. It's a very lovely begonia. I was surprised that this "new" find was actually developed about 1940, and although I had been growing begonias for quite a few years, I had not come across it before.

In another instance, I came across the Mallets on a visit to Logee's. Of course, there was an instant attraction and the box of plants that left there bound for Virginia included several varieties of Mallets. I was impressed that some of the Mallets have been available since 1884. Again, they are attractive-looking begonias I had not seen in my years of collecting. Researching them further, I read that 'Arthur Mallet' was thought to have been lost, but was later found. Another article spoke of the loss of 'Faustine.' As I have not seen the actual begonia or a picture, I wonder what we have lost.

As the Thompsons were coming to an Eastern Region Judging Seminar I had signed up for, I wrote to Millie and asked if she had any of the Mallets that I was looking for to complete my collection. Among the plants Millie brought down for me was 'Melisse.' It was one of the most beautiful begonias I had seen! Again, where has it been all these years! Was it very popular and sought after in 1957? Why was it no longer in any of the collections I have seen?

Had it not been for the begonia people like the Thompsons, Logee's, and others that have helped these older varieties survive the challenges of the newly sought after ones, we might not have the pleasure of rediscovering these older varieties.

Where do we go from here? Is 'Faustine' out there somewhere? Where do we look or ask? Is there a begonia that you have heard about or seen and would like to have? Is preserving cultivar varieties a project that can be undertaken by the ABS on a national and/or chapter level? On a personal level, I make sure that cuttings I propagate are given to others that are interested in the variety. This includes not only hobbyists but greenhouses that keep stock plants and propagate as well as botanical gardens that are interested in begonia collections whether on a federal, state, county or other level. Additionally I have made a commitment to keep Mallets in order that they stay available. Perhaps there is a way we won't have to mark "extinct" on some more of the varieties in the Thompson Begonias.

The Eastern Region Begonia News published this article in October, 1987.

Bill Voss lives at 3805 Louise Ave., Chantilly, VA. 22021 with as many Mallets as he can find.

SOILS

ideas old and new

by Bob Hamm

Potting Soil, Potting Mix, what is the difference? The term "Potting Soil" has a long history that stretches back through the centuries to the days when every exploratory expedition carried a "Royal Botanist." He had the job of categorizing, collecting, and bringing back to the sponsoring country (meaning sponsoring royalty) interesting and potentially useful botanical specimens.

Imagine yourself living in a period when chemical fertilizers did not exist, nor did perlite, vermiculite, imported peat moss, and the whole spectrum of items we take for granted today in growing plants. Growing plants in containers was a case of taking garden soil, and adding organic elements needed to supply ALL NUTRIENT NEEDS of the plants in addition to the correct correlation of drainage and water retention. Over the centuries of growing in Europe, complex "recipes" for soil mixes developed to match the various needs of different plants with the available materials. This is where interesting materials and terms such as blood meal, hoof and horn meal, green sand, and leaf mold come from. People called things by the names given on the estate they were working on. Directions such as "take the moldering leaves from the Oak Woods" became Oak Leaf Mold because the material was moldered (decayed).

So "Potting Soils" were actually garden soil with various additions to provide correct drainage and nutrient content. Obviously,

the plants used up the nutrients in a pot of soil fairly quickly, and the many recommendations for frequent repottings, or for top dressing with "fresh soil" developed from this fact.

This state of affairs continued for centuries with additions of new materials being added slowly to the recipes as the world changed and new items became available and old items scarce. However, at the same time both research and trial and error were building a large body of knowledge of plant requirements and needs. Also, the world changed: gardening went from something for Royalty and the rich to the property of the new middle class. The items formerly dug from your own estate became items of commerce and were packaged, shipped, and sold. We went from home-produced compost to packaged Canadian Peat, and to a new world of products that did not exist before. Along with fertilizers to fit any plant need, growing materials such as vermiculite and perlite came on the market.

A state was reached where some people asked themselves the question, "If I am providing nutrients from fertilizers, can I make up a simple lower cost material for potting that will give good growth plus avoid soil-borne diseases and weigh less for shipping?" The result was research done at Cornell University that came up with the "Cornell Mix," a soilless mixture of basically peat moss, perlite and vermiculite that was to

start a revolution in plant growing. These recipes that did not contain soil became the so-called "soiless mixes," or potting mixes.

The very basic fact that emerged from the research is that is when you are providing nutrients from an outside source (fertilizer), then you can grow your plants in any medium that provides the correct combination of water retention versus air space. In other words, as long as the material drains correctly, and holds enough moisture, you can grow plants in it with the nutrients being provided from fertilizer.

This caused a revolution in commercial plant growing because it allowed for the development of potting mixes that used low cost, locally available materials which were basically sterile to begin with, weighed less than soil mixes, and allowed a grower to control the nutrients the plant received, and therefore the growth, more accurately. This is a major factor in why plants are produced at the relatively low cost of today. This revolution has caused problems also. The older mixes are still used, especially by hobbyists and small growers. Also many people have hybridized the two, adding organic nutrient sources to soiless mixes. This led to an even larger variety of "recipes" used by different growers, and confused the average person even more.

Part of the problem is one of outlook. The average hobbyist works on the principle of changing the mix to fit his habits of watering, feeding, and care. Cost is really a minor consideration. For the commercial grower, the cost, both of the mix and labor used, is a major factor in keeping his product competitive. So he has learned to adapt his growing methods to the soiless mixes. He feeds regularly, changes fertilizers for each crop, even changes watering habits to suit the mix he is using. Neither outlook is wrong! The hobbyist, and even some retailers, may complain about the mixes growers use because they need more constant watering, or more feeding. Yet, if growers did not use the best mix

for THEIR conditions, plant costs would be astronomical.

So when you get new plants, CHECK THE MIX! If you do not want to adapt your habits to the mix, then repot the plant into your mixture after removing as much of the old mix as possible. Remember, the grower is using the best mix for HIS conditions and requirements. Mixes vary from area to area, grower to grower. Since moving to the West Coast, I have found very few peat mixes; most contain ground bark instead, since it is much cheaper. This has required an adjustment on my part, as bark mixes use more fertilizer than my old mix. Yet, I have managed to grow just as many plants as before using bark mixes because I have adjusted MY growing habits to match the medium I am using. I still experiment with different recipes, but I know that as important as what is in the mix is how I care for the plants!

Nurseryman Bob Hamm's address is 10065 River Mist Way, Rancho Cordova CA 96570.



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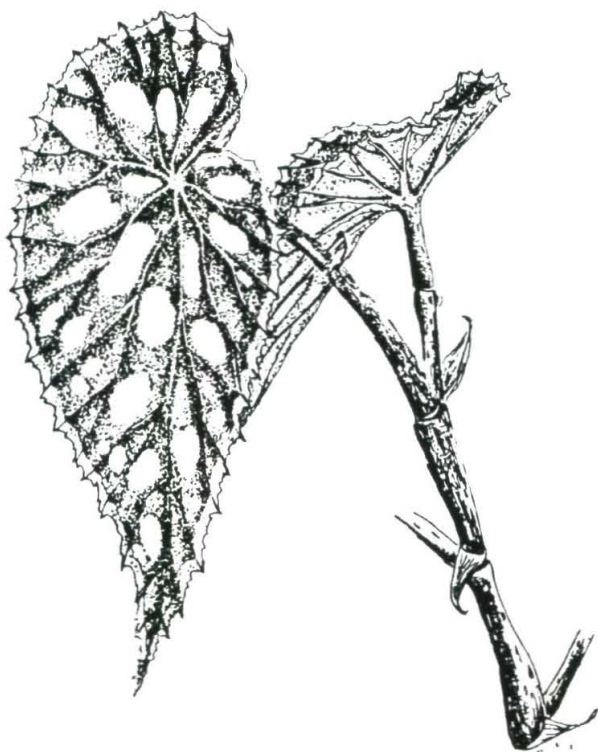
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SPOTLIGHT ON:

Begonia chlorosticta



by Mary Weinberg

B. chlorosticta, formerly known as *ex* Kew species, belongs to section *Petermannia*. It was first discovered on the Island of Borneo, in the Sarawak region; this is a part of the federation of Malaysia. It is thought that all plants now in cultivation came from one plant received at the Royal Botanic Garden, Kew. A cutting given to M. L. MacIntyre was self-pollinated, and seed given to Rudolf Ziesenhenné, Millie Thompson, and Dr. Jan Doorenbos.

Our literature gives two different dates for the first collection of this plant. Dr. Doorenbos states in the **Begonian**, Vol. 43,

Sept., 1976, pp. 246-9, that it was first collected in 1965. The *Curtis Botanic Magazine*, Vol. 183, Part 4 says that it was first collected in 1967.

B. chlorosticta is a shrub-like begonia with distinctive foliage. Leaves are alternate on the stem, obliquely ovate to ovate-oblong, unequilateral, acuminate deeply and laterally cordate. Leaves are olive green to medium green in color with bold, mostly intervein, sub-circular light green patches and with a mid-to-light green marginal band on the edges; main veins are impressed and are light green or flushed red near the base.

Stems are rather succulent, slightly swollen at the lower nodes with scattered light green lenticels, brownish-red, often darker at nodes. Flowers are white, males having two tepals and females having five tepals.

The species Robin has been discussing methods for growing *B. chlorosticta*. No one seems to be clear as to its origin and background, and as there have been several very good articles written in the past, I decided it might be a good idea to bring one of them to your attention.

According to Bob Haussler's article in the September, 1980, **Begonian**, *B. chlorosticta* comes from an area where "rivers of the region (only a few degrees from the Equator) are swollen by monsoon rains which average 120 inches per year." He goes on to say, "In these warm, humid conditions *B. ex Kew* species can be found growing in areas of lush jungle, shaded by an overlying canopy of trees." Now here is the important part: "Temperatures rarely, if ever, fall below 70 degrees F. Chances are that if you can provide a similar natural environment with moist humusy soil, high humidity, 70 degrees minimum temperatures, and some filtered sun and shade, this species will thrive for you."

I have been growing *B. chlorosticta* in a standard terrarium growing medium of cut-up long grained sphagnum moss, 5 parts to 1 part perlite. Bob Haussler also recommends this for terrarium growing. I have felt for a long time that my plant is not doing as well as it could, as it has never bloomed, and although it has reached the top of its 14" terrarium, it does not look vigorous.

With the above information as a guide, I am going to repot *B. chlorosticta* in a rich humusy mix in the terrarium, and try to find just the right location to place it where it will get warmth and bright to shaded light, and wait for results.

CULTURAL REVIEW:

Temperature: Above 70 degrees

Humidity: At least 80%

Light: Filtered sun and shade

Growing Medium: Rich humusy and loose, unless you want to try the sphagnum-perlite mixture.

Environment: Terrariums are necessary unless you have a very humid greenhouse.

Here is Bob Haussler's recipe for a humusy soil, for those of you who do not have the September, 1980, issue of the **Begonian**:

1 cubic foot oak leaf mold
1 cubic foot commercial potting soil
3 gallons coarse perlite
3 gallons coarse vermiculite
3 gallons sphagnum peat
1 cup hoof and horn meal
1 cup bone meal
1/2 cup superphosphate
1/2 cup agricultural lime

Good luck!

Reprinted with the author's permission from the Chicago Begonian.

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



POTS!

by Judy Calvert

Nothing can cause more dispute than the qualities or drawbacks of clay and plastic containers for plants. Today, as far as good growing is concerned, there is little difference as long as your growing medium has been formulated for optimum results. There should be no problem in growing in either type of pot when the friability of your potting soil has been modified to increase the movement of water and air.

To help you make your choice, here are some of the advantages and disadvantages of the two types of pots.

Clay pots are difficult to clean. Try basic scrubbing with a stiff brush and soap and water. Then sterilize by soaking in a solution of 1/2 cup of chlorine bleach in 6 quarts of water, or, after scrubbing, bake in the oven at 200 degrees for 2 hours.

Begonia member Eva Scott once submitted the following formula: to a 10-quart pail of warm water, add about 1/2 cup of Lysol liquid cleaner and 1/2 cup of vinegar, and all the pots you can stuff in - make sure the pots are covered with the solution. Soak overnight; wash off - all dirt and deposits come off easily. Soak again in clear water. If the pots are extra dirty, use a bit more Lysol and vinegar. It doesn't have to be a precise measurement. Your pots should look like new - well, almost!

There is another cleaning solution that I read about. To a two-gallon pail of warm water, add one cup of vinegar and one cup of chlorine bleach. Lightly crusted pots are easily cleaned with steel wool after 3 hours of soaking, and heavily crusted pots after 12 hours. Change the solution for each batch, and rinse the pots thoroughly.

Plastic pots are much easier cleaned with just soap and water or bleach solution and steel wool.

Clay pots cost about two to three times more than plastic, and when planted are quite heavy.

This is a good spot to mention the theory that clay pots "breathe." This has never been scientifically proved. Research by the late Dr. Linus Jones of Amherst, Massachusetts, proved conclusively that air cannot possibly enter the soil through the pot because the pores are all filled up with the water coming out of them. The advantage that a clay pot has is that moisture evaporates through the sides, and on hot days this helps to keep the roots cool. This also assists in avoiding overwatering, and is especially useful with those plants which do not like wet feet.

On the other hand, plastic pots do not require watering as often, which helps to cut down on time spent on a very tedious chore. Clay pots are watered 3 to 3 1/2 times more often than plastic ones.

Esthetically the clay pot is superior to plastic until its appearance is marred by the accumulation of salts and fungi. If you wish the pot to stay beautiful, then seal the inside with waterproof epoxy paint or cement. This of course will counteract the evaporation of moisture through the pot sides.

Judy Calvert is editor of the Buxtonian, newsletter of the Buxton Branch, where this article first appeared (Vol. 16, No. 5).





Coming soon is a new semperflorens that you might want to try in your garden - or persuade your parks department to try in flower beds.

Back last spring, Kelton Parker, greenhouse director for the Fort Worth Botanic Gardens, planted a few seeds of a begonia which had not been grown there before. 'Wings' was the name on the seed packets from Park's Seeds.

The first results were disappointing. Germination was sparse, and somewhat slower than expected.

The plants which did come up, though, quickly made it clear that they were uncommon: their leaves were enormous, and the extra large flowers appeared early. With careful pinching, the leaves grew close together and thick, making an unusually compact plant.

Flowers are larger than expected on a semp, and a good thing that is, too; the flowers have trouble pushing through all those big leaves to the light - a smaller flower wouldn't be seen. The blooms are light pink tinted somewhat irregularly with darker pink, with yellow stigmas. 'Wings' blooms continu-

ously, as a proper semp should, and always with those big flowers. As one fan remarked, "Those look like begonias on hormones."

If you've always loved semps, but wished their flowers were bigger and showier, 'Wings' may be for you. Seeds are available so far only to commercial growers; a nursery center might be able to order for you. Germination might be improved if you try Beryl Orchard's idea of sending a self-addressed padded envelope with your seed order (see the **Begonian**, Nov.-Dec. 1987, p. 163); or try ordering more seed than you think you'll need - if you do get good germination, share with friends.

Frequent pinching is essential to keep 'Wings' from getting leggy. Those big leaves will shoot straight up if allowed.

Feeding should be frequent, too.

So far my only experience with 'Wings' is in the greenhouse. There it shows good heat tolerance and seems to love light. It will be interesting to try these super semps in the garden.

Tamsin Boardman is a greenhouse volunteer at the Fort Worth Botanic Gardens, and lives in Southlake, TX.



Clayton M. Kelly Seed Fund

March-April, 1988
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. U231 is a variety of *B. foliosa*. Seeds were collected along a stream in Merida, Venezuela, in 1985 by Lynda Goldsmith (see the picture in the **Begonian** of September-October, 1986, p. 121). With its familiar small, dainty, delicate, fern-like leaves, this is a shrubby, upright, very swift grower and will go to 3 or 4 ft. if you let it. Typical small, white flowers are produced in the summer. Easy to grow from seeds or from cuttings.

While other potted plants have to adjust to going out of doors in the spring and summer, *B. mollicaulis* is a wonderful "tough weed," adapting easily with its carefree

spreading habit. It is shrub-like, growing to 2 ft. if you let it, with wide, soft-hairy leaves and profuse white, hairy blossoms. It is supposedly of African origin, although some authorities suspect a South American origin. This begonia is so easy to grow no "black thumb" grower can hinder it.

B. kellermannii is an old favorite in many collections. A native of Guatemala, it is shrub-like with cupped, peltate, green leaves frosted with white felt. The plant expends so much energy blooming pale pink flowers in the spring that its leaves lose much of the white felt. After a short rest, the distinctive white returns.

B. maculata (which has been known as *B. maculata* var. *wightii* hort. and is synonymous with B. U078) is another old-timer which has not been offered in recent years. I do not know the country of origin, but this begonia has been in cultivation since 1893. It is a cane with spotted leaves and upright growth habit. It blooms profusely, green-white blossoms on short, pink stems.

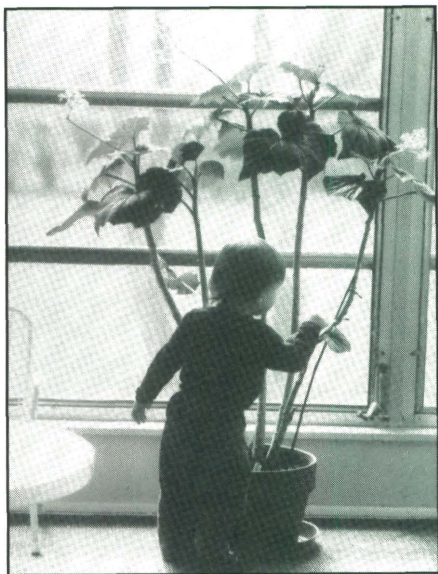
B. maculata



B. maculata:
flower

B. hydrocotylifolia is a charming miniature rhizomatous begonia from Mexico with small, round, thick, waxy green-brown leaves. It needs a shallow pot with careful watering in winter, when it bears pink blooms on six inch stems. Makes a good terrarium subject, but can be grown on a windowsill, too. (See the **Begonian**, Nov.-Dec. 1987, p. 157, for an article on this begonia).

B. reniformis, a thick-stemmed species from Brazil, may sound like something new; however, its synonyms are the familiar *B. vitifolia* and *B. vitifolia* var. *grandis*. To confuse matters, *B. dichotoma* hort. is a synonym of *B. vitifolia*. What's in a name? Grow it for the large leaves and tall sprays of long-lasting white flowers.



King Langenberg took this photo of his daughter Amy with *B. reniformis* last spring. Both Amy and the plant have grown since.

B. dipetala is a thick-stemmed species from India which can grow as tall at 18", but pinching will control the height. It has sparsely hairy, ovate, green leaves, spotted when young, and lovely, large two-petalled pink flowers in late winter. In the 1940s it was

widely, but erroneously, grown as a hybrid, *B. 'Mrs. W.S. Kimball.'*

B. echinosepala is always an eye-catching shrub with its small, narrow, serrated, ribbon-like leaves. It is a Brazilian shrub and is perfect for baskets. Its medium-size white flowers, with white hairs on reverse of tepals, reportedly are fragrant. The culture is easy.

B. U218 is a shrub-like begonia from Brazil which was imported many years ago by Sylvia Leatherman and is still frequently grown in Southern California collections. The leaves are red on top, green beneath, slightly pubescent, and the plant produces tall sprays of large clustered blossoms. It is easy to grow.

B. U227 is an unknown tuberous species collected in the wild, probably from Mexico. It was introduced at the recent convention as "possibly *B. gracilis* var. *gracilis*" and the donor describes it as "a different form of *B. gracilis* var. *martiana*."

B. U230 is a species collected in Western Malaysia and imported by Thelma O'Reilly. (See article, p.45, for information on this and the following listing).

Mixed wild begonia seeds from Western Malaysia, probably three or four species in this mix. Put these down as soon as you can.

I'm sorry the seeds of the double-blossom semperflorens did not arrive as promised for the January-February issue. If they turn up, I'll include them in a supplemental listing available from me about March 1. Send stamped, self-addressed envelope or ask for a copy with your order. I have bulbs and other items promised which should be started about this date.

For the last listing my semperflorens donor sent separately *B. 'Filly'* seeds and *B. 'Filly Dilly'* seeds, segregated by color. Although the seeds were open pollinated, this is an opportunity to grow both together and

is an opportunity to grow both together and make a rough determination whether or not 'Frimly'; and 'Frimly Dilly' are one and the same.

The seedlings of *B. macduffiana* are spotted, as are many begonia seedlings. Juvenile leaf marking, as well as leaf color and shape, can be very different from the adult form of a begonia.

Clarification: the seeds offered at the 1986 convention as *B. ritalensis* are actually those of *B. tayabensis*, a rhizomatous begonia with peltate leaves.

Any members desiring to exchange begonia cuttings with a botanic garden in France, please send me SASE and I will forward the information to you.



CLAYTON M. KELLY SEED FUND

Species Seed

(\$1 per packet)

M-A 1 B. U231

M-A 2 *B. mollicaulis*

M-A 3 *B. kellermannii*

M-A 4 *B. maculata*

M-A 5 *B. hydrocotylifolia*

M-A 6 *B. reniformis*

M-A 7 *B. dipetala*

M-A 8 *B. echinosepala*

M-A 9 B. U218

M-A 10 B. U227

M-A 11 B. U230

M-A12 B. Mixed Malaysian Seeds

BRANCH DIRECTORY ADDITIONS

Seattle:

Robert Major, pres.
4825 Terrace Dr. N.E.
Seattle, WA 98105

Westchester :

Irene Nuss, pres.
8329 Regis Way
Los Angeles, CA 90045

Long Beach Parent Chapter:

Ruth Hurd, pres.
2924 Sawyer
Long Beach, CA 90805

Edna Stewart Pittsburgh:

Melissa Jones, pres.
5220 Beeler St.
Pittsburgh, PA 15217

An added note on B. U227

Thelma O'Reilly noticed that as her B. U227 approached its dormancy period minute bulbils had formed on its leaves. These bulbils put out tiny leaves, which resembled a minuscule plant. Thelma removed some of the leaves which had the bulbils and tiny leaves, and laid them on New Zealand moss, pressing them very slightly into the moss. The bulbils and leaflets developed into new plants, which had grown to 1½ "-2" in height by the end of January.

IN MEMORY

Scientist, teacher, musician, poet, horticulturist, humorist: Percy Ehrlich, a beloved former president of the Bessie Buxton Branch, died in November. He was very generous with his time and other contributions, and will be sorely missed.

Fred Ritzau, who was so very generous with his time, his plants and his very special terrariums, died December 7, 1987, leaving a big void in our lives. Fred will always be remembered as one of our favorite speakers. We will miss his humor and his sage advice.

- from The Buxtonian, newsletter of the Buxton Branch.

Edna Lowery, a founding member of both San Miguel and Alfred D. Robinson Branches, was buried January 15 in San Diego. Illness had forced her to be inactive in recent years, but members remember her early contributions.

Friends are saddened to learn that Dorothy and Myron Moen died last year. Both were active members of Theodosia Burr Shepherd Branch until they moved away in 1978; Dorothy served the Branch as president. Dorothy passed away in February and Myron in August.

Robert E. Weidner, owner of Weidners' Begonia Garden in Leucadia, California, died January 11. In addition to his dedication to finding and promoting unusual plants, he was committed to the promotion of the nursery business and training of future nurserymen. A memorial scholarship is being established to promote practical experience in horticulture.

Shortly after our December meeting, members of the Monterey Bay Area Branch and all peninsula flower growers lost one of our finest nurserymen and tuberous begonia hybridizers. Noel Hanssens of Carmel Valley Begonia Gardens passed away on December 7...He generously shared his vast knowledge of tuberous begonia growing with us and we will never forget his guided tours of the nursery, his beautiful plants, or the many cut tuberous begonia blooms he donated for our use in displays at fairs and the 1982 ABS Convention. We will all miss him very much.
- from the newsletter of the Monterey Bay Area Branch.

Drawing/Pat Maley



B. 'Carolyn Collman'

ROUND ROBIN NOTES

Margaret Coats, Round Robin Director

Like so many other growers, the members of the Southeast Robin were complaining about the hot and humid summer they had just gone through, and were looking forward to fall. Mary Ellen Taback (VA) longs for someone to come up with a perlite substitute that does not float to the top of the pot. She has trouble with perlite flying around in a breeze and landing on a stem, causing her to think she has cotton scale and giving her a fright. Risa Young (FL) had sunburn on some of her begonias during a recent move and had to do some pruning. She found mid-August is not a very good time to prune, as the new growth did not do well at all. When cooler weather arrived, she did some more pruning and had excellent new growth. Said she also learned that summer is not a good time to step up pot size on a plant. Two Florida members of this Robin - Risa Young and Bob Moore - are real celebrities now. They did a half hour TV show on begonias for a local program called "Mr. Greenthumb."

Virginia Hamann (IA) had so much luck with growing a B. 'Lucerna' in the ground that she said she had a feeling that part of her yard will be dug up for a begonia garden next summer. She feels begonias are tougher than they are given credit for being, and seem to like even direct sun when in open beds.

Joyce Smith (VA) has a thriving stand of *B. chlorosticta* growing in an 18" terrarium. She thinks the name *chlorosticta*, which means "green-spotted," is such an inadequate and ugly word to describe such a beautiful plant. When her terrarium plants get too tall for the bowl, she breaks off the tips and sticks them down into the moss to root. She has tried putting leaves of *B. chlorosticta*

down into the moss with no luck. They seem to rot easily if they touch a damp surface. Joyce also mentions a blind woman she knows who loves begonias because of their variety of textures - soft, furry leaves, slick, ridged, pebbled, grass-like, rough, and the list goes on and on.

A member of the same Robin, odd/rare/unusual, Albert Weatherhead (England) says he now realizes begonias grow to large sizes, but not all will look good unless they have more attention, such as pinching or cutting back. He is taking cuttings of some he has not done too well with, and plans to encourage them to grow as he wants them to.

Dan Haseltine (IL) sums up our beloved begonias nicely when he states that there is surely something for everyone in the family of *begoniaceae*. If one type of plant doesn't please us, there are many more to try or some that will fit into our growing area.

Much to the amazement of other Robin members, Arline Peck (RI) claims B. 'Gene Daniels' grows like a weed for her. She said it bloomed all last winter for her, but she had to cut it back as it got taller than she is! Everyone else wants to know her growing secrets with this one.

Thelma O'Reilly (CA) in the unidentified species Robin states that those of you who labeled your B. U003 as *B. glasiiovii* must now go back to the original U003. The identification was given her by Elmer Lorenz (CA) when Burle Marx visited southern California a few years ago. Since Thelma was out of state, she asked Elmer to show his beautiful 2-foot-across specimen of B. U003 to Burle

Marx. *B. glasiiovii* was the name he gave to Elmer, but after forwarding this name to Dr. Smith and Carrie Karegeannes, all of their efforts in our herbariums and those in Europe failed to show evidence of that name ever being applied legitimately to a begonia species. Therefore, until the Smithsonian finds such proof, we must continue to refer to this species as B. U003. Thelma also shares the information that B. U010, B. 4047, B. 'Platysun,' and Kartuz #10 from Puerto Rico are all the same begonia, and should be labeled B. RZ 4047.

The subject of mildew was covered by Albert Weatherhead (Eng) in a recent general culture Robin. He feels sure that mildew is caused by conditions being too dry with insufficient air, and that soft growth caused by feeding too much nitrogen is a happy hunting ground for mildew. Bob Hamm (CA) comments that most people underfeed plants. He says most commercial growers feed every 7 to 10 days or once a week, or on a constant feed program. It is a question of the plants needing a little fertilizer constantly - they store very little and use it up, or it leaches out, rapidly. The average plant only stores three or four days of fertilizer.

Joan Hill (Eng) has just seen first-hand how different potting mediums can make such a difference in the coloring of plants. There was a plant labeled B. 'Cleopatra' on the show table at one of their local shows that was almost entirely pink. As she was asking for a leaf from the grower, she also inquired about the potting medium, and was told it was garden loam. Joan rooted the leaf, grew the plant on, and it was exactly like the one she has grown for years in her peat-based mix. She told her rhizomatous friends she was going to try one plant in the garden soil, but intends to keep that plant in isolation to guard against unwanted pests or diseases.

So many growers are expressing sadness at the closing of the Thompson Begonia Museum. Bill Voss (VA) expresses it best in the odd/rare/unusual Robin. He writes, "Of

greater concern is the news of the closing of the Thompson Begonia Museum, as well as Millie stepping down from ERABS. Through the years this has been a source of instant information and a place to find the odd and rare varieties we've looked all over for, as well as a place to find some that we were unaware of. I believe that this loss will impact negatively the begonia community. While the plants and cuttings went to botanical gardens, and that should make them available to a wider range of the public for viewing, I am afraid that commitment to these varieties may be lessened down the line, leading to the loss of many varieties. There need to be updates to reflect the new varieties of begonias, as well as other vital information in commercial cataloged/condensed form in addition to ABS printed matter. There are no immediate single answers, but it would be nice if all of us brought up the subject in our begonia circles."

Rod and Joyce Hamilton (IL) add this bit of information to the tuberous Robin. They say their plants produce their root systems, good or bad, early in the spring and do not necessarily produce much more root growth over the summer. Those with good roots make a better plants, produce larger flowers, require less staking and tying, and produce a better tuber in the fall. Others with poor roots live off the tuber and there is next to nothing when the tuber is removed in the fall.

Beryl Orchard (MA) came up with an excellent idea: planting her tuberous begonias in semi-shade along with B. 'Glamour' semps. The semps grew to 2 1/2 ft. and shaded the tuberous, along with keeping their roots cool. She feels sure the plants like the competition, therefore, she puts one against the other.

On a trip to Cleveland, Risa Young (FL) visited Elaine Ayers, and on Elaine's recommendation, Risa has started using trace elements on her begonias. She has given them two foliar feedings and has already noticed a difference. The leaves have much

deeper coloring and an overall heathier look. She said the rex and variegated rhizomatous have much deeper and brighter markings. Since she is so pleased with the results of using the trace elements, she plans to try another of Elaine's recommendations - that of watering once a month with a mixture of 1 tablespoon epsom salts to a gallon of water. Mary Bucholtz (FL) plans to try the above, since she has heard several people have had good results.

I know everyone will rejoice to learn that Mickey Meyer (Aus) is now able to go for walks and enjoy shopping again. She says she has had tremendous success with her new knees and advises anyone who has non-working joints to not hesitate to have them replaced. She is doing so well she is ready once again to participate in the Robins, and I know those who were in Robins with her eagerly await her friendly and helpful letters.

Houston Knight (CA) laments that he has heard people give the advice to keep only the "Early Bird" seedlings and to toss the late and small plants. He would like for people to understand that all plant material should be kept, for one of the "cripples" just might turn out to be the parent of the most magnificent plant ever grown. He feels Burbank was simply wrong to select plant material purely from the eye's view. And I'll close with Houston's thought for the day: "Preserve All Nature Gives Us."

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, with topics ranging from all varieties of begonias and aspects of begonia culture through photography, ferns and gesneriads.



BEGONIAN MINI-ADS

Mini-ads are a service to our members. The charge is \$1 per line per insertion with a minimum of \$4. Payment must accompany order. Make checks payable to ABS and mail to:

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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: THE THOMPSONS, P.O. Drawer PP, Southampton, NY 11968.

BEGONIAS: 1984 UPDATE \$6.75. Prices include shipping. Master Card and Visa available.

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

THE BEGONIA HOUSE Mail order: hundreds of begonia species and cultivars - also episcia varieties. Send \$1 for list to Jeanette McCombs, 2228 W. Southgate, Wichita, KS 67217.

COMING EVENTS

March 4-6: Alamo Branch will participate in show and sale at the San Antonio Botanic Gardens.

March 5-13: New York Flower Show, with Knickerbocker Branch exhibit. Pier 90 on West 50th St, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

March 5-13: Patrick Vacca is chair for the Buxton Branch exhibit in the New England Spring Flower Show at the Bayside Expo Center, Boston, which will show how tropical begonias can be adapted to growing indoors in a den-plant room in the Northeast. Tickets: \$7.

April 1-3: Australian Begonia Convention, Adelaide.

April 8-10: Rubidoux Branch will participate in the Riverside, CA, Spring Garden Show.

April 9-10: Miami Branch Show at Fairchild Tropical Gardens.

April 9-10: Alamo Branch will have a sale booth at the San Antonio Botanic Gardens spring sale.

April 9-10: Greater Atlanta Branch will hold its Second Annual Begonia Exhibit and plant sale at Atlanta Botanical Gardens.

April 9-10: Barkley Branch Show and Sale, Will Rogers Garden Center, Oklahoma City.

April 29, 30, and May 1: Miami Branch will participate in the Metropolitan Miami Flower Show at the Charles Deering Estate.

May 13-15: SWR Get-Together, Howard Johnson Motel, Austin, Texas.

September 15-18: ABS Convention 88!, Burlington, MA.

Sacramento Branch, ABS, will hold their annual Show and Sale September 9-11. Contact Show Chair Bob Hamm, 10065 River Mist Way, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670, (916) 366-7835 for more information.

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AROUND ABS

Notes from our Newsletters

This column was "bumped" for lack of space in the January-February issue, so we'll play catch-up this time.

Food seems to have been the focus of attention over the holidays! Almost every branch had a special Christmas dinner or lunch, with mouth-watering menus and gift or plant exchanges. Rubidoux members exchanged white elephants, East Bay and Miami played bingo, many branches sang carols and Sacramento had choir music. In the spirit of Christmas giving, San Francisco members donated toys, games, and books to be given by the Fire Dept. to needy children, and East Bay Branch gathered food products for needy families. Monterey Branch collected pots for Vocational Horticulture programs at Soledad correctional facility - how worthwhile, and yet how easy! We all have excess pots. Hospitals, nursing homes, schools, nature centers, etc. might be delighted to have them.

Orange County Branch was 47 years old on January 14, and the San Francisco Branch was 49 in February - congratulations! How old is your branch, and do you celebrate your birthday? Buxton Branch reports "convention fever" as they gear up for their fiftieth birthday celebration, Convention 88! San Miguel is writing a branch history.

Martin Boyd of East Bay Branch has been elected "Man of the Year" at the Oakland-East Bay Garden Center. Two other East Bay members, Helen Myers and Leonora Strohmaier, have won the "Woman of the Year" award in previous years.

The San Francisco Begonian tells of "vice, vice, vice:" their v-p Paul Riviere has been elected v-p of Flower Show, Inc., and v-p of the Fuchsia Society. Their newsletter editor comments: "that's an awful lot of vice! Don't get the groups mixed up."

Last year Pinellas County Branch entered an educational exhibit showing the different begonia types and begonia history in the Suncoast Botanical Gardens sale and educational exhibit Nov. 7 and 8. Monterey Bay Area was part of the New Monterey Neighborhood Center Open House, with members Don Englund, Ray and Martha Peterson, and Leslie Hatfield arranging a two-table begonia exhibit which was featured on the Sunday television news. Miami Branch took part in the Simpson Garden Center Christmas Bazaar with a plant, bake, and white elephant sale. East Bay members Julia Huwe, Martin Boyd, and Lloyd Olson did a culture demonstration at the Fall Flower Show at East Bay Garden Center, and Gladys Ellerbusch answered questions at the display table. Mae Blanton Branch sold begonias, breads, and crafts at the Denton, TX, Christmas Gala.

At the Buxton Branch Show October 17, the Beatrice Haddrell Memorial Cup for Best of Show was won by B. 'Scruffy Jeans,' exhibited by Normand Dufresne, who also won the "Showing is Sharing" and Sweepstakes awards.

The Greater Atlanta Branch participated in the Atlanta Flower Show: a Prelude to Spring, which was held February 10-14 at the Atlanta Apparel Mart. The show featured landscaped areas and exhibits by nurseries, florists, and botanical organizations.

Just been elected program chair? Our newsletters reflect a wide range of topics and interests in programs - maybe you can pick up some ideas here. Besides programs on culture and history of begonias, and programs on individual begonias, branch members have had talks on hybridizing; on grooming for show, and point scoring; on soils, fertilizers, soil polymers; on companion plants, shade plants, ferns, bromeliads. Popular are tours to nearby botanical gardens, parks, greenhouses, and members' homes. Often members have talents other than growing begonias which they are willing to share with branch members: Carol Spediacci gave a program for East Bay Branch on china painting and making Christmas decorations, Westchester's Bob Harris spoke on Oriental Flower Arrangements, Katharyn Schwerdtfeger demonstrated artistic arrangements with begonias for Pinellas County.

Always there's a need among new members for more basic information on growing begonias. Orange County has instituted monthly Culture Workshops, in which members get together and exchange cuttings, re-pot, pinch and prune, etc. It's a grand way to share knowledge, and increase your begonia collection, too.

Diana Gould of Sacramento Branch has suggested that the branch make a catalog of begonias grown by members, with the idea of having a begonia source for each other and for ABS members around the country. The Sacramento Board hopes it is an idea that will catch on nationally.

Edna Stewart Pittsburgh Branch will be cooperating with the Phipps Conservatory in putting on a 1988 summer display of begonias.

Tips of the Month:

To avoid the problem of fungus gnats when growing seedlings, surround the seedling container with a zip-lock type container. Result: no fungus gnats to mar the excellent germination. Also the extra humidity saves constant attention to watering. Rubidoux Gazette, Zeph Ballmer, ed.

When propagating from a leaf cutting, cut the leaf into several pieces making sure each contains at least one large vein. The pieces can be inserted into a mixture of half perlite and half vermiculite or your favorite rooting material with the vein end down in the form of a wedge or, to produce more plants, in the form of a cone. Place medium around it.

Make your own potting soil by developing a mulch pile of grass cuttings, leaves, vegetables normally disposed of when cooking, and any type smaller vegetation. Sterilize composted material before using. George Jundrusiak, in the Pinellas County The Shadehouse.

Remember that diluted chemicals will not keep in your sprayer, so mix only the amount needed. After spraying, clean your equipment thoroughly with soap and water. Never use insecticides or fungicides in a sprayer that has been used for weedkillers because residues may damage plants. It's best to have a separate sprayer labeled for weedkillers only. The Miabegonia, Charles Jaros, ed.

On growing from seed: The ultra fine seed should be sown on the surface of a pre-moistened, firmed, sterile media. Mist the seed after sowing and place the container in a plastic bag along the edge of a fluorescent light or in a light spot out of direct sun. Depending on variety, germination takes 10 to 60 days or more. Transplant when the first

true leaf is formed. The tiny plants will not have developed extensive root systems and will suffer less transplant set back at this stage.

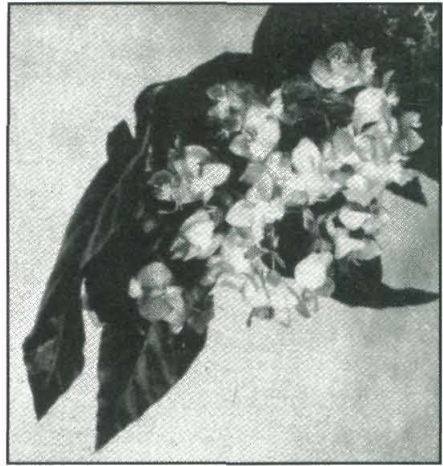
Winter is a good time to clean and sharpen tools, clean pots, restock the supply cupboard and do all those other necessary chores. Attention to these matters now will avoid a rush next spring. The Potting Shed.
Edna Stewart Pittsburgh Branch.

From the Sacramento Branch Begonia Leaf, here's a condensed report on a talk Pat Maley gave for their November meeting:

"Pat grows her specimen plants in a mix that is much looser than a lot of us regularly use here in the valley heat. She uses equal parts small bark (1/4" and smaller), medium bark, leaf mold, redwood compost, and perlite. If you attempt this mix, remember its tendency to dry out quickly. As it is a soil-less mix, best growth is obtained by fertilizing with 1/4 strength mix at almost every watering. She also uses Osmocote, a slow release fertilizer. This loose mix encourages root growth...Among the many plants she talked about was B. 'Ebony,' a hybrid of the As-mussens of Corpus Christi, Texas. They grow all their plants out in the yard. Even though Corpus Christi is sub-tropical, it can freeze. That is part of their culling process. Surviving a winter there helps ensure a cold-tolerant plant..."

While Pat got good results in California from a slow-release fertilizer combined with constant feed, Fred Loerke told the Tampa Bay Branch in Florida last November that when he tried Osmocote as a top dressing with additional diluted fertilizer as a constant feed, he lost many plants. He thinks he provided too much fertilizer.

Perhaps the difference in results come about because of temperature: Lois Donahue, in the B-line, newsletter of the Alfred D. Robinson Branch, reports that Osmocote should not be used in hot weather.



B. 'Lenore Olivier,' from the **Begonian**, Oct. 1961, p. 197. Bernice Brilmayer gives the pronunciation of the name as "oll-i-veer."

From the October, 1987 Palomar Planter:

B. 'Lenore Olivier'

by Tony Newnham

I first saw B. 'Lenore Olivier' as a hanging basket at Kartuz Greenhouses. Michael had several specimens; all were absolutely stunning. I cannot recall seeing any begonia with more blossoms. Each basket hanging from the cross members in Michael's greenhouse was a waterfall of color.

B. 'Lenore Olivier' was created in 1961 by Belva Kusler. Its parents are the species *B. dichroa*, serving as the female (seed) parent and the hybrid B. 'Elaine' serving as the male (pollen) parent.

It appears B. 'Lenore Olivier' inherited much of its charm, color and low growth habit from *B. dichroa*. As with its species parent, B. 'Lenore Olivier' is classified as a cane-like, low-growing, profuse, fragrant, everblooming cultivar. Its blossoms have been described as dark salmon-pink. I believe

they're more orange than this description suggests. (The species parent, which I have never seen, is described as having brilliant orange blossoms.)

Being a low-growing cane-like begonia "Lenore Olivier" is ideally suited to being grown in a hanging basket. The type of basket recommended for this area of the U.S. is plastic. Plastic baskets will not dry out as rapidly as moss-lined wire baskets.

Three or four rooted tip cuttings placed in an 8" basket will make a very nice showing within half a dozen months. The plant will need to have its growing tips pinched out during the first few months to ensure compact growth. Failure to perform this pinching out ceremony will result in a straggly plant few would want to look upon.

B. 'Lenore Olivier' will grow beautifully in a bright sunny spot - not in direct sunlight during the hottest part of the day, but perhaps an easterly exposure that receives the first half dozen hours of sunlight each day. You might also try a westerly exposure that receives the last six hours of sunlight each day. Failing that, how about a bright northern exposure?

Try B. 'Lenore Olivier.' It's a sure winner.



MAL NEWSLETTER #11

Members-at-Large Newsletter #11 will be ready for mailing about the middle of March. Members-at-Large (members who do not belong to a Branch) may receive the newsletter by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to MAL Director Thelma O'Reilly, 10942 Sunray Place, La Mesa, CA 92041.

MAL COLOR FUND

The Members-at-Large fund for more color in the **Begonian** had reached \$497.25 by mid-January. Thank you to our new contributors Marie Harrell (TX), Alice Ordway (WA), Carol & George Bremer (CA), Margaret Coats (TX), Whittier Branch (CA), Evey McDuff (Canada), Rubidoux Branch (CA), Mabel & Ralph Corwin (CA), and Pauline Chambers (FL).

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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, hardness 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.

AUSTRALIAN CONVENTION

April 1-3, 1988

The First Australian Begonia Convention will begin the evening of Friday, April 1 with registration and informal chat. On April 2 and 3, there will be morning seminars and afternoon tours, and a dinner Sunday evening.

Tours will be of the gardens of five Adelaide members and the tuberous begonia nursery of another member.

Seminar speakers are Thekla Reichstein, Sr. Technical Officer, Adelaide Botanic Gardens: *Begonia Species*; Kevin Handreck, Soil Scientist: *Potting Mixes and Fertilizers for Begonias*; Merv Sharrad, hybridiser: *Hybridising*; Lyla Kilpatrick, president, Western Australia Begonia Society: *Australian Hybrids*; Eric Caterall, Secretary, National Begonia Society of Britain: *Tuberous Begonias*; Ross Bolwell, nurseryman: *Rex Begonias*.

Early April in Adelaide is mild and usually dry - much like southern California in October. An added attraction for international members is the Tuberous Begonia Festival held in April in Ballarat, Victoria, about 400 miles from Adelaide.

Currency exchange rates are about \$1.35 Australian for each US dollar. The registration fee of \$90 (Australian) covers lunches, dinner, and buses for the tours. Checks should be made out to the Australian Begonia Society and sent to P.O. Box 386, Woodville, South Australia 5011, Australia. Registration forms have been sent to the secretaries of all ABS branches.

HERBARIUM SPECIMENS

Interested in making your own herbarium specimens? Barney Lipscomb of the Botanical Research Institute of Texas, Inc. recommends Collecting and Preserving Plants for Science and Pleasure, by Ruth McFarlane (1985). The 184 page book is published by Arco Publishing, Inc., 215 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10003, and sells for \$8.95.

FUND-RAISER

If your group is holding a fund-raiser or sale, the Schultz Company makes a special half-price offer to schools, universities, botanical gardens, and other non-profit organizations. The fertilizer must be used for re-sale or demonstration, and cannot be resold to dealers; there is a minimum order of \$130. Delivery is free. For more information phone their toll-free number 1-800-325-3045, or write to:

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MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING

January 3, 1988

The January 3, 1988 meeting of the Board of the American Begonia Society, held at Quail Botanic Garden, Encinitas, CA, was called to order at 11:15 A.M. Aims and Purposes were read by Michael Ludwig. Minutes of the Nov. 15 meeting were approved as sent out.

Treasurer's report showed a balance as of Dec. 31, 1987, of \$16,387.73 in checking and \$34,473.44 in savings, for a combined total of \$50,861.17.

Correspondence was read. Bob Ammerman has resigned as Judging Director. The Board accepts his resignation with regret. The committee which is currently revising the judging course will take over the duties of the judging director. When the revision is done, a new director will be appointed. A letter from Ed and Millie Thompson was read. They had offered to return the \$500 donation to their museum from ABS. It was felt the \$500 was a donation, and should remain so. Secretary will write the Thompsons a letter advising them it is not necessary to return the money.

Reports:

Branch Relations. No formal report was received, but there have been inquiries from Kansas City, Tennessee, and upper New Jersey about starting Branches.

Business Manager reported the mailing operation of the **Begonian** will be moved from San Diego to Dallas, Texas to save time and U.P.S. charges. The ABS post office box and address for returned issues will remain in California.

Membership stands at 1357 dues paying members, 112 institutions, and 80 Life Members. A letter was sent out Nov. 10 to those members who had not renewed. Of 380 letters sent, 49 have rejoined so far. Branches will be sent a zip code listing of current and lapsed members. Please check it over and advise of address changes, etc. A letter will go out this month concerning the membership contest.

Seed Fund reports receipts of \$165.37 for the months of October and November. A check was sent for this amount.

Conservation. Scott Hoover has completed the first part of his collecting trip, and has sent plants via Martin Johnson to Mabel Corwin, who has potted them up, put cuttings down, and recorded

them. In January, Dr. Tracy McLellan will make a trip to Africa to collect begonias and further her research on "dregei" varieties. Dr. McLellan gave a seminar on her work at the 1986 convention, and has been very generous sharing species seed with the seed fund. Board approved a \$500 donation for her trip. It will be sent later.

Members-at-Large director is recovering from knee surgery, but reports the Color Fund has received \$90 more in donations, and now stands at \$497.25. Newsletter #10 has been sent out.

Nomenclature reports 5 new cultivar registrations published, for a total of 919. Twelve new applications have been received, including one from Australia and one from Ireland's Botanic Gardens.

Research Librarian has been going through the books remaining in the ABS library. She requested and Board approved: some material may be given to the Historian; non-begonia books may be given to the library at Fullerton Arboretum; she may find a qualified person to help evaluate the begonia books; she may institute a search for begonia books and obtain them.

Public Relations: A letter was received from Jim Wilson, who does "Victory Garden South" for PBS. He is interested in writing a book on specialty gardens and gardeners. There were articles in Horticulture and Indoor Gardening in January about rex and fragrant begonias.

Research director is compiling a list of cultivars by parents' names. One may look up a plant and see how it has been used in hybridizing and what its progeny are.

Round Robin director Margaret Coats was commended for the excellent job she has been doing keeping the robins moving and reporting on them. Business Manager reported the 1987 convention should net approx. \$2500. 1988 convention plans are well along. It may start on a Wednesday.

The next Board meeting will be Sunday, March 6, 11 A.M. at the Corona Steak House, Corona, CA. Meeting adjourned at 1:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeannette L. Gilbertson
Secretary

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

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

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

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

Begonia Book, Gray \$4.

Begonias, Arakawa \$25

Begonias in Color, Murotani \$15

Growing Begonias, Catterall \$18

Les Begonias, Chevalier \$5 soft cover

Buxton Check List \$20

Guidelines for Conventions & Shows,

O'Reilly \$2.50 (5 or more, \$2 each)

Catalog of Reg. Cultivars \$4

Roses, Taylor \$14.95

Your Indoor Garden, Seddon \$12.95

NY Times Book of Houseplants, Faust \$10.95

Binders \$5.25

Prints, \$5 set of 6, \$1 single

ABS emblem pin \$6

Plastic sign, \$1

See Nov-Dec, 1987 issue for descriptions.

Back Issues of **Begonian**: \$1 for individual copy more than a year old, \$6 full year through 1981; 1982 and on are \$1.50 @ or \$7 year. Issues less than a year old \$2 @.

Send check or money order to:

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MOVING?

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 issues 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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(714) 371-8042

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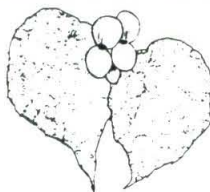
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