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The BEGONIAN



The BEGONIAN

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Publication of the American Begonia Society

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.

The Begonian is published bimonthly by the American Begonia Society, Inc. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the society, its officers or the editor. Contents, except where labeled otherwise, may be reprinted without limitation, provided credit is given to "*The Begonian*, magazine of the American Begonia Society."

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American Begonia Society—P.O. Box 1129, Encinitas, CA 92024-0990

Membership—Subscription, dues, circulation inquiries, and address changes: John Ingles, Jr., 157 Monument, Rio Dell, CA 95562-1617; (707) 764-5407.

Advertising Manager—James Hankerson, 3010 San Paula, Dallas, TX 75228

Cover Photos: yellow flowering begonias

Front - Mary Bucholtz grew and photographed *B. sutherlandii*, a tuberous species from South Africa

Back - From Tropical West Africa comes rhizomatous *B. prismatocarpa*, here photographed by Mary McClelland.

Both of our cover photographers this issue are members of the Photography Robin.



B. ficicola (another yellow-flowering begonia)
drawing by Doris Jenkins

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Articles

Hybridizing with a Purpose	5
Begonias Olé!	6
Take the Challenge!	7
B. U062: In the Garden?	9
Preventing Damping Off	10
Tips for Beginners	13
Begonia Spotlight	25
ABS Awards	27

Regular Features

In Memory	12
Coming Events	26
Conservation News	28
Seed Fund	30
Round Robin Notes	33
Around ABS	36
ABS Minutes	38

Short Notes

Bulletin Board	4
How Full is your Cookie Jar?	8
Irene Nuss Honored	16
About Pots	16
Show News	35

Happy 1990!

Coming this year:

**January 20: Long Beach Parent Chapter
58th birthday party**

**May 17-20: Begonias Olé! ABS National Convention
in San Antonio, Texas**

Bulletin Board

There's good news about

The U Numbers:

a complete update of the Unknown Begonias List will appear in late spring

and

The Color Fund

started by the Members at Large will be used to print colored photos of the U numbers (as long as the money holds out).

No, it's not too late to make a contribution. If you're excited about seeing the U numbers in color, send a check to Treasurer Eleanor Calkins, 910 Fern St. Escondido, CA 92027, and designate it for the Color Fund.

ABS Membership List is available for \$7 from Business Manager John Ingles, 157 Monument, Rio Dell, CA 95562-1617

Last Call for Garden Photos

Do you have a picture of your begonias summering happily outside in your garden? Send it along to: Tamsin Boardman, Box 249, Roanoke, TX 76262. Include a short note about growing conditions if possible. Our next issue will feature members' begonia gardens, be they window boxes, windowsills, or vast estates.

ATTENTION, BRANCH OFFICERS

The Branch Directory will appear in the March-April issue. Please keep your listing current! Send changes since the September-October listing to Tamsin Boardman, Box 249, Roanoke, TX 76262. Thanks!

New Begonia Book

The ABS Bookstore has a new book from Japan. Begonias, by Uemura, was published in 1987 and is in the Green and Flower Books Series. The text is in Japanese, but color pictures are identified in English. Cost is \$12.80 (California residents please add tax). Order from Bookstore Manager Bob Bailey, 5190 Mission Blvd., Sp. 90, Riverside, CA 92509.

Where are the Begonias?

Installment 3

After receiving the November-December **Begonian** and reading Mary Weinberg's article "A Second to the Motion," Frank Green of Massachusetts called to say that for more than a year he has been working on a listing of begonias grown throughout the country. Frank is interested in a catalog of all begonias, cultivars as well as species, in cultivation in the United States. You can get in on this ambitious undertaking by sending a list of the begonias you grow to Frank Green, Richardson Road, Fitchburg, MA 01420. Frank is also membership chair for Eastern Region, so while you're at it you might want to send a check for \$5 made out to the Region. In return, you'll receive the monthly newsletter and learn about all the exciting happenings along the east coast.

John Howell: Hybridizing with a Purpose

ABS' third Vice-President John Howell is a man with a mission. He wants to grow rexes. If that sounds easy, note that John and his wife Mary Carolyn live in San Antonio, Texas. It's hot there. Some people obsessed with the idea of growing a plant unsuited to their area would move to a more favorable climate, but John has chosen another route: he is going to create heat resistant rexes.

The climate in San Antonio is hot, hot, hot in the summer and warm most of the year. Swimming pools are popular there, and John used to have one in his back yard. The pool is still in the same place, but the yard is gone. Some years back John built a greenhouse over and around the pool, enclosing almost all of his former garden. This gave him a lot of space, although John, like every greenhouse owner, finds it's not quite enough.

In this bright, warm, and humid place, John grows thousands of begonias. Like many begonia lovers, he became intrigued with the idea of creating beautiful new forms of his favorite plant and started making crosses. Soon he had cane-like seedlings coming up all over, and, as they matured, he gave plants to just about everyone he knew. His most recent cane cross was between B. 'Juanita's Jewel' and B. 'Corliss Engle', and he is delighted to find that some of the seedlings are fragrant.

Now, however, John is concentrating on hybridizing with a purpose. His goal is to create new rexes, ones

that will be as breathtakingly beautiful as those grown in cooler climates but resistant to heat.

John likes to start with *B. rex* itself, and cross it with named cultivars. Among his first crosses was B. 'Super Curl' and B. 'Sabre Dance,' and he feels that it was one of his most successful. Two other favorites are Bs. 'Maxine Wilson' and 'Bearded'. Along the way, he has found that leaf size is more important than leaf thickness, with the smaller leaved varieties being more heat tolerant. Some of his seedlings are mature and blooming in just 9 months, and will bloom continuously for 6 months.

While working on heat resistance, John rediscovered the *semperflorens* begonias. Now he works with semps, too, concentrating on creating thicker leaves and bigger flowers. He notes that leaves grown in full sun will fold upwards "as if praying for shade," and unfold when shade is provided.

Each of John's rex seedlings is labeled ARC, which stand for "Alamo Rex Cultorum." His semps are labeled with an "A" and the color of the flower, as in "A pink." If you run across a plant in the sale next May with either label, you will know that it is bred to withstand sun and heat.

So far, John has not registered any of his crosses. He's waiting for the big one: a gorgeous rex that will survive full sun. When it comes, it will be worth all his work and be exciting news for begonia growers in hot climates.

iOLÉ! Begonias!

Join us in May for a celebration of begonias! Southwest Region is throwing a begonia party we hope you'll all enjoy in one of the most romantic and exciting cities in the country: San Antonio, Texas, where the sun is always shining and the flowers bloom all year. Really!

Special activities planned include a pre-convention day tour of the Texas Hill Country (with stops at the LBJ Ranch, the old German town of Fredericksburg, and Luckenbach of country music fame), and a night on San Antonio's famed River Walk. You'll have a chance to visit gardens and greenhouses of local growers, and the San Antonio Botanic Garden with its new underground conservatory. We're hoping you'll get glimpses of the Texas spring wild flowers, too. And we won't forget the Alamo.

In fact, you might want to schedule your vacation around the convention. There's something for everyone in the area: Sea World and the Aquarena for underwater buffs, 17th century missions for history lovers, vineyards and wineries for the oenologist, and a host of other attractions ranging from the cultural (museums and the Texas Culture Center) to the Buckhorn Saloon at the Lone Star Brewery.

Begonia festivities will take place at the Holiday Inn nearest the airport (yes, there will be free transportation between airport and hotel). If you're travelling from afar, you might be interested in bringing a small begonia for the show. Buxton Branch started this

in 1988, and it's a great idea: there will be a "travelling begonias" division for begonias in 4" pots.

SWR members have been hard at work for months now. But this is a *national* convention, and we can use your help. Here's how to get in on the action early:

1. Send a handcrafted item for the Begonia Boutique (it's going to be really outstanding this year!) to Pam Lee, 1424 Holcomb Rd., Dallas, TX 75217 or Anita Ruthenberg, 1016 W. Arlington Ave., Fort Worth, TX 76110.
2. Send plants or cuttings for the sale to Marie Harrell, Rt. 3, Box 689, Elgin, TX 78621. Marie will also accept a check.
3. Sponsor a trophy! Send a check to Don Miller, 1005 Mt. Auburn, Dallas, TX 75223, earmarked "trophy fund." Division trophies will cost about \$30.

Just can't come? Participate anyway!

Here are some ways:

1. Send a photo of your best begonia, to be judged horticulturally.
2. Send an artistic photo or slide (begonia subjects only), or artwork or crafts depicting begonias.
3. Send an educational exhibit. This needn't be fancy - photos, or diagrams, or posters, nicely presented, will do.

Photos, arts & crafts, and educational exhibits to be entered in the show may be mailed to Mary Ellen McCormick, 252 Old Trail, San Antonio, TX 78247 *before April 30, 1990*. Be sure to put your name and address on the back of each piece, and include return postage.

Take the Challenge!

by Pam Lee

In May, 1988 at the Southwest Region Get-Together, I was challenged to recruit three new members for our Dallas Area Branch. I'm happy to report that I am directly responsible for two new members and one who is thinking about joining, and indirectly responsible for several more. I am the new membership chairman of our branch.

Most of the general population (anyone who's not a begonia nut) don't know a begonia from a banana. People have no general knowledge of the diverse variety of begonias until they actually come face to face with one, so let's spread begonias around and arouse the curiosity of these future begonia nuts!

In order to keep the American Begonia Society a growing, exciting organization, we need to have constant recruitment of members. Every club needs an enthusiastic membership chairman to focus energies and talents on this important project.

Some of the things we have done in the Dallas branch have been very successful.

Have a metal sign made, the kind used by realtors, and put it in front of your meeting place on the morning of the meeting day. One side of our sign has the branch name, the other side has "Meeting Tonight - 7:30." The cost is quite reasonable, under \$50; a plant sale could be held to raise the funds.

Dallas has two large newspapers, and they each have a garden section with a column for meetings and plant sales - listing is free. We also use the paper in Fort Worth (25 miles away) for the same advertising. If your newspaper does not have a garden section or club calendar, or if you live in a small town that puts out a local newspaper, perhaps the publisher or editor would be interested in a club calendar; talk to the editor, he may like the idea.

Get to know the people who own/operate the nurseries in your area. Even if they don't have a variety of begonias, you probably are still a good customer, because begonia lovers usually have pretty yards and purchase shrubs, fertilizers, etc. Sometimes nurseries have bulletin boards where meeting notices could be posted. Always include a telephone number for people interested in more information.

Donate a big, beautiful (easy to care for) begonia to your local library, along with an attractive, permanent (plastic or metal) sign giving the plant's name and your club's name. Be sure to leave club information, such as telephone numbers, meeting locations, etc., with library personnel. Libraries also may have bulletin boards where meeting notices can be posted.

Other places bulletin boards may be found include grocery stores, laundries, bookstores, post offices, restaurants.

Give your niece, nephew, granddaughter, neighbor child a begonia, even if the child is only 8 or 10 years old. *You would be surprised at the interest this can spark, interest that perhaps will last a lifetime.*

Take a begonia to work, especially something showy. People will be interested and want to know more.

Dallas schools have a great emphasis on career training in high school. Students are able to choose certain areas of interest for three years, during which time they spend three hours a day working and learning in the chosen field. Horticulture training is available at one of our specialized high schools. Why not call and offer to give a talk or demonstration on begonias to a young group like this. These young people are there because of their interest in plants and horticulture.

I realize that all of these ideas will not work for everyone, but out of these ideas and suggestions I challenge each and every club to try at least one or two to build your membership. There is nothing like new people to add excitement and enthusiasm to a sometimes "worn-out" club. If any of you have tried something that has brought in new members, please let me hear from you.

Pam Lee lives at 1424 Holcomb Road, Dallas, TX 75217, and Dallas Area Branch is bursting at the seams since she took on membership duties. Best of all, meetings are exciting, fun events.



How Full is Your Cookie Jar?

There's an old saying that goes like this:

"Life is like a cookie jar:
you get out of it
what you put into it."

Everyone knows someone who seems to have everything. Well, that person keeps a full cookie jar! It's a fact that we enjoy most those activities that we throw ourselves into, heart and soul - aren't the happiest people you know the most enthusiastic?

You've joined the American Begonia Society (and we're glad you did). What will you get out of your membership? You'll get what you put in.

Try filling your jar. We don't all like chocolate chip cookies - some prefer sugar, some oatmeal raisin, some cinnamon. Pick an area **you** are interested in: it might be growing from seed, meeting new friends through a Robin, writing an article or taking a photograph or doing an illustration for the **Begonian**, joining the Members at Large Committee or a branch or a region (or helping your branch attract new members), publicizing activities, growing for a show or sale, holding an office, providing refreshments. Attend a convention - now that's really fun! It's incredibly exciting to spend four days with other begonia nuts. Whatever talents and interests you have, we need!

Really join ABS. Fill your (symbolic, non-fattening, no cholesterol) cookie jar. You won't ever be bored again. -Tamsin Boardman



B. U062: *In the Garden?*

by Tom Keepin



Photo by Tom Keepin, taken after frost

In early May of this year I attended (that means *worked*) the Southwest Region Get-Together in Dallas, Texas. One of the plants I entered in the show was B. U062. I am proud to say that U062 won Best Species in the show.

After the show I carefully packed my plants and headed back to Houston with my fellow Begoniacs. On arriving home, I naturally began to unload my plants. Unfortunately (or fortunately, as you will soon see) the first plant I unloaded was B. U062.

My young Dalmatian, who hadn't seen me for five days, jumped up and knocked my prized begonia out of my hand, sending it crashing to the ground. Needless to say, the pot shattered and the plant was badly damaged - split in two! Somehow I couldn't get angry with my puppy, but I let her know in no uncertain terms that she had to be more careful. I gently set the injured U062 aside and went about unloading the rest of my plants.

After unpacking everything, I went to attend to my prize winner. I

picked it up and had an idea - why not plant half in the garden and half in a pot? I did exactly that, choosing an area in the garden in front of a small fountain. It was planted with an unusual liriopse (white with a green mid rib) and received full sun all day.

I am happy to report that B. U062 flourished, even going beyond my expectations. It reached a height of 18", kept its beautiful color, and was in constant bloom. In late October we experienced an early light frost, and U062 was not affected in the least. I'm planning to leave it in the garden and see if I get a return next spring. I have the other half in a pot in the greenhouse just for insurance in case of a severe winter. We just never know here in Houston.

So I say to you, *semperflorens* are not the only begonias that can do well in the garden. With regular watering and feeding, almost any begonia, regardless of its reputation, could grow and flourish to make any Begoniac very, very happy. B. U062 did!

Tom Keepin, president of Astro Branch, lives at 4513 Randwick Dr. Houston, TX 77092

Preventing "Damping off" in Begonia Seedlings

by Kevin Handreck

Most of us have had the unpleasant experience of seeing our precious begonia seedlings collapse in the seed tray - not through falling over, but because their tiny stems have rotted through at the base. This rotting, called damping off, is usually caused by pathogenic fungi that may have scientific names such as *Pythium*, *Phytophthora*, *Fusarium*, or *Rhizoctonia*.

One common reaction to damping off is to drench the seed mix with a fungicide. These chemicals can be effective, but eventually fungal populations develop resistance to them. There is a saner way of preventing damping off, and that is through the use of heat.

Sterilization or pasteurization

We now go on a small detour. Hospitals use surgical instruments, needles, and dressings that have been heated to temperatures of at least that of boiling water (100°C, or 212°F). All microorganisms are killed, so the instruments are said to be sterile. Most of the milk we drink has been heated to a rather lower temperature (62°C, or 143°F for 30 minutes; or 72°C, or 161°F for 15 seconds). These temperatures and times are necessary to kill the most harmful of the microorganisms that may cause disease in humans, but they also kill many of the organisms that are involved in spoilage of milk. It is important to note that not all of the microorganisms in the milk have been killed. Using enough heat to do that would seriously alter the taste of the milk. We say that the milk has been pasteurized.

Back to seed-raising mix.

All potting media are seething cauldrons of microorganisms. Some of them are decomposing the peat, bark, compost, and other organic materials present. Some - the plant pathogens - lie in wait for their main source of food: living plant tissues. Others live by feeding on other microorganisms, including plant pathogens. Healthy potting media contain large populations of these microorganisms that are predators of pathogens.

If we heat our seed-raising mix to 100°C (212°F) we kill all the microorganisms in it, both pathogens and their predators alike. That will prevent damping off - so long as we do not allow pathogens to reinfest the mix. But sterilization is not the best method of treating seed-raising mixes. Any pathogen spores falling onto sterile mix will be able to grow unchecked in the absence of predators. The ideal situation is that we eliminate the pathogens while leaving at least some predators to deal with any invasion by pathogens.

Research has shown that most plant pathogens are killed at lower temperatures than are needed to kill their predators. Maintaining the temperature of a potting medium at 60°C (140°F) for 30 minutes is sufficient to kill all damping off pathogens, without causing too much damage to predator populations. It does not have to be exactly 60°C (140°F); the temperature should be at least that, but less than 80°C (176°F). The mix is not sterile: it is said to have been pasteurized.

Best results are obtained if some old (recycled) mix is included in the mix to be treated. While the recycled mix may contain pathogens, it will usually also carry a large population of predators. The pathogens are killed by the heat, but even if some predators are killed, the remaining protective population will still be large. As little as 10% recycled mix is sufficient.

How to do it

There are three ways that begonia growers can pasteurize their seed raising mixes.

1. Put the mix into a shallow container capable of withstanding about 90°C (196°F). Baking dishes and plastic containers are ideal. Place the container in a conventional oven set to within the range 60 to 80°C (140 to 176°F). Heat for long enough to keep the mix within this temperature range for 30 minutes. Cool and use, or cover for future use.

2. Fill a suitable glass or plastic container with mix and place in a microwave oven. Heat at full power for such a time that the whole of the mix is heated to close to 80°C (176°F). I find that a four litre ice cream container of mix reaches this temperature in about seven minutes. Place the container of hot mix in a styrofoam box and leave for at least 30 minutes. If the temperature does not fall below 60°C (140°F) during this time, it will have been pasteurized.

3. This is for treating larger quantities of mix. It is called solarization as it is pasteurization by the sun. You need summer temperatures and a day or two of cloudless sunshine. Tip sufficient moist mix into clear plastic bags so that when the bag is flattened onto

a path, and its open end folded under as a seal, the mix height is not more than about 5 cm. (2 inches). Place the bags on a path or other open area that gets full sun for most of the day. At a maximum air temperature of about 30°C (86°F) the sun will raise the temperature of the mix within a few hours to about 60°C (140°F). One day is enough to pasteurize the mix. Lower air temperatures will not allow the mix to heat as much so several days of exposure are needed. Treatment should not be attempted when air temperatures are unlikely to reach 25°C (75°F) during the day.

Finally, after taking a little time to kill pathogens, it is sensible to minimize the risk of reinfestation.

*Keep the mix covered until you use it.

*Wash your hands before filling containers.

*Disinfect containers and tools with bleach.

*Work only on a clean surface.

Kevin Handreck is a researcher on plant nutrition and senior author of the horticultural textbook Growing Media for Ornamental Plants and Turf. His address is 2 Birdwood St., Netherby, South Australia, 5062, Australia.

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On November 18 ABS lost one of its most enthusiastic supporters. **Clarence Hall** served as President in 1944 and again in 1959-60.

Clarence and his wife Tish joined Theodosia Burr Shepherd Branch in Ventura in 1937. After moving to Sacramento in 1965 he served the Sacramento Branch in various capacities, including president.

Noted for his communication skills, Clarence served as installing officer at both ABS' Silver Anniversary 1957 and the Golden Anniversary in 1982.

Clarence shone as a teacher always willing to share his knowledge and experience. He always insisted that the basics be covered out of consideration for beginners. His teaching was entertaining, invigorating, and stimulating, with a hands-on style that encouraged timid pinchers and strengthened the resolve of root pruners.

"What goes around comes around" was a favorite motto. Anyone who admired a plant of his would be given a cutting or specimen. Generous, humorous, fun, he was a friend to all ages and a favorite among neighborhood children.

David Hartman, longtime member of East Bay Branch, died on September 1, 1989. He served as branch treasurer for ten years. In David's memory, the branch has made a donation to the ABS Conservation Department for the expedition to collect endangered begonia species. The branch has lost a true, loyal friend.

"It is with deep regret that the passing of long time member **John V. Jones** is recorded. John was an active member of the branch and participated in all of our activities. He will be missed by all. May he rest in peace." - The Potting Shed, newsletter of Edna Stewart Pittsburgh Branch

IN MEMORY

Fritz and Carl Kubisch of Westchester Branch died in the summer of 1989. "We must acknowledge the beauty and hard work shared with us all for many years. They will be out of sight but never out of memory." - Westchester Branch newsletter

Our deepest sympathy to Elizabeth and Hugh McLauchlan, who lost their daughter, Sandra, October 21, in West Palm Beach, Florida.

Leonard Nevarez, a past president of Monterey Bay Area Branch, died October 16, 1989. He and his wife Virginia were very active in promoting the first branch plant sales and fair exhibits, and Leonard designed the branch stationery. Our deepest and warmest sympathies go out to Virginia and their son and daughter. - Monterey Bay Area Branch newsletter.

Karl G. Wehren died recently in Colorado. Our deepest sympathies go to his wife Della and family. - The San Francisco Begonian

Marguerite Vernon, a past president of Mae Blanton Branch, died September 24, 1989. She was a National Flower Show Master Judge as well as a begonia judge, and known for her beautifully grown and groomed begonias. Marguerite chaired the committees which drew up the constitutions for Southwest Region and the Mae Blanton Branch, and could always be counted on as an unofficial parliamentarian. All of those who were lucky enough to know her were blessed in their association with this courageous, intelligent, kind, and generous woman, and will miss her very much.

TIPS FOR BEGONIA BEGINNERS

by Dorothy Patrick

We are already well into the short days of the year and winter has most of us in its grip to some degree, depending on where you live. I hope that you brought your potted plants into the house - specifically, your begonias. If you are a beginner with begonias, let me give you a few tips on wintering them over in the house.

I hope you checked the plants for outdoor critters and disposed of same, for they do not make welcome house guests.

It would be great if all newcomers to the world of begonias were already growing under fluorescent lights, for begonias really put on a show grown under light year round. But, assuming that is not the case, let's go on. If you have a choice, place your begonias on a table by a window which receives a few hours of sunlight each day and bright light the remainder of the day. They will probably already have dropped leaves since you brought them in. But that's all right, just messy. Begonias are survivors, and most of them will become acclimated to the available light. A south window which is not cut off from sunlight by trees, tall shrubs, the house next door, etc., is perfect for cane begonias (those whose tall stems resemble a smaller version of the stalks of bamboo) and *semperflorens* (also known as wax leaf, fibrous, or bedding begonias). The name *semperflorens*, incidentally, translates "always blooming," and that is what they will do if you have enough light for them.

Bright light, without direct sunlight, is adequate for most rhizomatous and rex begonias. You can recognize these groups by their beautifully patterned leaves of lovely colors and diverse shapes. They would profit from being set on a tray of moist pebbles. Aquarium gravel works fine for this. *Just don't let the bottom of begonia containers sit in water in the tray!*

It is important to rotate the containers of begonias regularly throughout the windowsill season, so that the plants will grow in a symmetrical manner. Never hesitate to snip off branches that give your begonias an out-of-balance look, and, of course, use the cutting to propagate a new plant; that's just good insurance, and costs so little!

How often you water depends on a lot of things. Most important are the light they receive, and the temperature and humidity of the room they are in. My advice is to let the surface of the soil dry out, and then water thoroughly - until the water runs from the holes in the bottom of the pot. If the pot is sitting in a saucer, be sure you empty the saucer after the pot finishes draining. Begonias do not tolerate "wet feet."

I do not fertilize my begonias except during active growth, and that usually eliminates winter feeding on window grown plants. Adapt this to your conditions. If your plants continue to show growth, continue to feed.

Some begonias go through a winter-time period of rest (dormancy). Rexes and tuberous begonias are the groups most affected, but other kinds of begonias also can go into some degree of dormancy or semi-dormancy. If your plant seems not to be growing at all, or even sheds all of its leaves, don't give up on it, for it may be resting. Water sparingly - only enough to moisten the soil, to keep any living roots alive. Watch for signs of the plant leafing out, or growth resuming, as spring draws near. Give the plant a chance to revive before you toss it out.

If you do not have ideal window areas for begonias during the winter, consider this time a holding period. True, your plants will not be fine decorations for your living room. But maybe you have a spare bedroom where you can place them, remembering always the beauty they will give you when they can again go outdoors. And if someone sees you watering what looks like a throw-away and asks you why, just tell them "Ssshhh - it's sleeping."

Are you aware of the advantages of ABS Membership?

The **Begonian** publishes a Directory of Branches in the March-April and September-October issues. Check out the branch locations. Maybe there is one in your area. Joining a branch is the greatest help you can obtain. By attending the monthly meetings you will not only learn better growing techniques and enjoy good fellowship, but you will have an opportunity to enlarge your collection of begonias.

If there is no branch in your area (or even if there is!), you can join a Region. You'll receive a newsletter which contains information on many aspects of begonia culture, as well as

news of when and where there will be begonia sales and shows. There's a Region for East Coast growers (Eastern Region membership chair is Frank Green, Richardson Road, Fitchburg, MA 01420; dues, \$5), one for Southwest growers (SWR membership chair is Marie Harrell, Rt. 3, Box 689, Elgin, TX 78621; dues are \$7 individual, \$10 family). A Northwest Region is organizing (contact Bob Hamm, 10065 River Mist Way, Sacramento, CA 95670). You don't have to live in the regional area to join a Region.

Periodically you'll find a list of ABS Services towards the back of the **Begonian**. If you haven't used these services, let me tell you a bit about some of them that are especially useful for beginners:

1. There is a Members-At-Large Committee which is for members who do not belong to a branch. Send a stamped, self-addressed, legal-size envelope to Thelma O'Reilly, 10942 Sunray Place, La Mesa, CA 92041, and she'll send you a MAL newsletter.

2. Do you have a question, or problems, with the begonias you're growing? Write to Mae Blanton, ABS Horticultural Correspondent and a very knowledgeable grower; she'll answer your letter and assist you. Her address is 118 Wildoak, Lake Dallas, TX 75065.

3. Write to Margaret Coats, Round Robin Director, 11203 Cedar Elm, San Antonio, TX 78230 and ask for a list of Round Robins which have openings. What fun to receive a packet of letters from the other members of the Robin you have chosen to join! Members share their growing experiences, their growing tips, and ask questions. ABS has Robins flying in many parts of the

world. You might be interested to know that Mae Blanton, who is mentioned above as ABS' Horticultural Correspondent, says the Round Robins were her best resource in getting started in begonias!

4. The Seed Fund offers a wide variety of begonia seeds, very inexpensively, giving you an opportunity to enlarge your collection. Director Diana Gould, 7700 Deanton Court, Citrus Heights, CA 95610, offers also a pamphlet on growing from seed (for only 25 cents) and planter dishes. It's a challenge, but a joyous one, to grow begonias from seed.

5. In my opinion, though, the greatest service ABS offers to its members is through its bookstore (see listing, September-October 1989, p. 195). The Bookstore carries some hardback books on begonias, well worth the price. But the greatest treasure is back issues of the **Begonian**. For \$6 you can order a full year's worth of past issues dating through 1981; after that, a year's worth is \$7. Pick a year at random - if you order and read each issue cover to cover, I promise you that your knowledge of begonias and their culture will increase vastly. I am prejudiced, maybe. But that is how I learned everything I knew in the first 5 years of my love affair with begonias. And each new issue, with cover pictures that took my breath away, fed my growing addiction to this fascinating family of plants. Bookstore Manager is Bob Bailey, 5190 Mission Blvd., Sp. #90, Riverside, CA 92509. Try it, you'll like it.

Begonia lover Dorothy Patrick's address is P.O. Box 2515, South Padre Island, TX 78597.



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:

Martha Curry
P.O. Box 1232
Weatherford, TX 76086

BEGONIA CUTTINGS AND PLANTS

Send \$1 for expanded 1989 list. Kay's Greenhouses, 207 W. Southcross, San Antonio, TX 78221.

BEGONIAS (a specialty), plus Gesneriads, Peperomias, Succulents, Perennials and more. Informative Quarterly Newsletter! New plants each issue! \$3 (1 yr.) (Canada \$4, Overseas \$6) to: Robert B. Hamm, 10065 River Mist Way, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670.

BEGONIAS: THE COMPLETE REF-

ERENCE 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. Foreign orders \$5 additional for shipping via Surface Mail.

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.

"BEGONIAS GALORE" Cuttings and Plants. Please send \$1 for list. P.O. Box 5073, Gainesville, FL 32602.

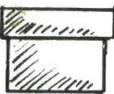
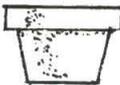
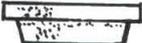


Irene Nuss Honored

At their November meeting, members of Westchester Branch surprised Irene Nuss with an anniversary party to celebrate her 30 years as an ABS member. Irene, creator of some lovely hybrids including the one that bears her name, was presented with flowers, balloons, cake, and a large wrapped package that contained a 16" terrarium bowl.

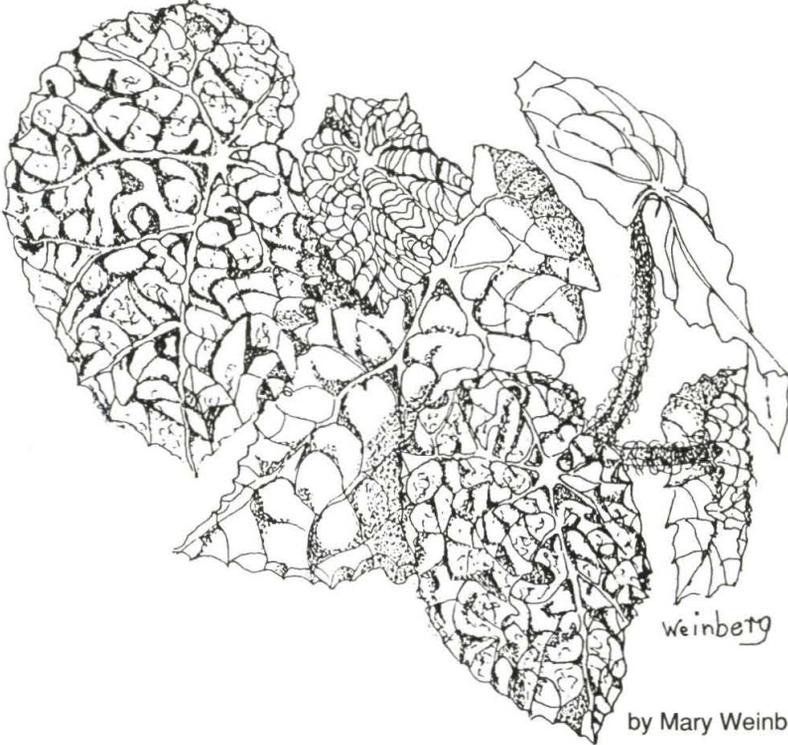
About Pots

from the Whittier Branch newsletter, August, 1988
 editor: Houston Knight

- the top rim of a pot is for water  fill with mix only up to this line, then water up to the top
- some pots have deep rims  some plants need deep rims for more water
- some pots have shallow rims  some plants need less water
- some pots are square  some plants need more mix & can be crowded together
- some pots are round  some plants need less mix & must have space and air circulation
- some pots are deep  some plants need deep mix for deep roots
- some pots are shallow  some plants have roots only at the surface of the mix

SPOTLIGHT ON:

B. gehrtii



by Mary Weinberg

B. gehrtii was discovered in Brazil, and described by Irmscher in 1959. It is in Section Pritzelia.

B. gehrtii is a rhizomatous begonia with distinctive foliage. Leaves are large, ovate, crispy, shiny, rugose, and medium green in color with sparse tan wool over the upper surface. The leaves have an elongated basal lobe which overlaps to form a small opening at the leaf base. Veins are pale green in color. The underside of the leaves are pale green with sparse tan wool on the veins. Petioles are cylindrical and tomentose. Flowers are white. Bloom occurs in winter.

B. gehrtii grows best with cool temperatures. It is best grown in the house or in a shady location within the greenhouse during the summer months, as leaf burn and wilt caused by breezes and overly warm temperatures will leave your plant with many damaged leaves in a very short time. I have been most successful at growing *B. gehrtii* in the basement during the summer, as this area is at least 10 degrees cooler than the rest of the house.

There are two plants that look very much like *B. gehrtii*: *B. paulensis* A. DC. and *B. moysesii* Brade. Both plants have the same leaf color and

texture as *B. gehrtii*, but there are distinct differences. *B. paulensis*' leaf is peltate, with a more rounded shape. *B. moysesii* has the elongated basal lobe of *gehrtii*, but their petioles differ: *moysesii* has a four-sided petiole and no hairs.

There is another likeness between *B. gehrtii* and *B. paulensis*. Both plants have leaves that will root as cuttings, but never form a plantlet from the leaf.

CULTURE

Light: Good light is essential, but do not place this begonia in the sun. In a greenhouse, give it a shady location. Under light garden conditions it can take a much brighter situation.

Temperature: Comfort range for *B. gehrtii* is 65-75 degrees F., but it takes temperatures in the lower 60's very well.

Humidity: Ideal humidity is 50-60%.

Water: Give water when the soil feels slightly dry to the touch. If allowed to dry beyond this point leaves will look pale and limp. Note: a good time to transplant *B. gehrtii* is when the soil is slightly dry, as leaves will be more flexible; *gehrtii*'s leaves are normally quite crisp and tend to crack when handled.

Growing Medium: Use a mix that will retain some moisture, but still have good drainage.

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



COMING EVENTS

January 20: Long Beach Parent Chapter 58th birthday! All ABS members are invited for a gala occasion with the Ziesenhennes as honorary hosts. For details contact Ruth Hurd, 2942 Sawyer St., Long Beach, CA 90805.

February 24-25: ABS Judging School, sponsored by Palm Beaches Branch & Eastern Region. Contact Charles Jaros, 2621 NW 23rd Ct., Miami, FL 33142 for more information.

April 7-8: Miami Branch show and sale at Fairchild Tropical Gardens.

May 5-8: International Symposium, "The Biology and Conservation of Epiphytes," at Selby Gardens. Contact Nalini M. Nadkarni, Director of Research, Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, 811 South Palm Ave., Sarasota FL 34236, USA.

May 17-20: ABS National Convention, Begonias Olé!, San Antonio, Texas, hosted by Southwest Region. Chair is Melba Schultz, 603 Chauncey, San Antonio, TX 78216. Packets will be mailed in February.

BEGONIAS

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1990 American Begonia Society Awards

Each year the American Begonia Society may make awards to members of the Society who have made contributions, beyond what is expected of a member, to the advancement of the society's Aims and Purposes, and to the most outstanding Begonia hybrid.

The recipients are determined by the members of the American Begonia Society Awards Committee, to whom members submit nominations of persons or plants considered worthy of such outstanding awards.

Eva Kenworthy Gray Award

The Eva Kenworthy Gray Award may be presented to a person for one of two reasons:

1. For contributing something of a spiritual value toward cementing goodwill and harmony among the members.
2. For contributing original material toward helping our rank and file members to further their study of begonias. The 1989 winner is Tamsin Boardman.

Herbert P. Dyckman Award for Service

The Herbert P. Dyckman Award for Service is presented to a member who has rendered long-term or very outstanding service above and beyond the normal duties of a member or officer of the American Begonia Society.

The 1989 recipient is John Ingles, Jr.

Alfred D. Robinson Medal

The Alfred D. Robinson medal is awarded to an outstanding Begonia hybrid according to the following rules which govern the award:

1. All Begonia plant nominees must

have been registered with the American Begonia society Nomenclature Director prior to nomination.

2. The originator of the Begonia nominee must be a member of the American Begonia Society.

3. The Begonia nominee must have been released to the public for at least five years but not more than fifteen years prior to its nomination.

Begonia 'Connee Boswell' produced by Martin Johnson was awarded the medal for 1989.

Only members of the American Begonia Society will be considered as recipients of the three awards, and the recipients must be nominated by an American Begonia Society member. Your nominations, stating the qualifications which you believe entitle the person to the award, shall be sent to the chairman of the American Begonia Society Awards Committee. A particular award may be given only once to a member in any one of the three categories. The past recipients of the awards are listed on pages 107 and 108 in the May-June 1989 **Begonian**.

Nominations must be received by March 20, 1990. Send them to Rudolf Ziesenhenne, Awards Chairman, 1130 N. Milpas St., Santa Barbara, CA 93103.



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CONSERVATION NEWS

While rainforests burn worldwide, conservation has been considered far too often as "nature vrs. man." Plants and animals - some of which might prove to be of immense value to man - are seen as insignificant nuisances standing in the path of development.

But nature and man are not mutually exclusive; co-existence is not only possible, but can improve the quality of life on our planet. New trends in conservation consider using the forests in non-destructive ways, and here our guest columnist Jacques Jangoux presents some thoughts and a suggestion on ABS' role in conserving forests.

Mr. Jangoux lives in Brazil, home to many of our loveliest begonia species including virtually all of the canes.

Chico Mendes (in case you missed the articles last year in **Time**, or the PBS program) was a Brazilian rubber tapper, an uneducated but articulate man who organized his fellow workers and others who lived and worked non-destructively in the forests to prevent outsiders from stealing, logging, burning their homes. He was murdered for his successes.

Reflections on Nature Reserves

by Jacques Jangoux

1. Chico Mendes' extractive reserves.

One of the most promising concepts about conservation, one that implies a harmonious relationship between man and his environment, came from a man who grew up in the forest, lived from it without destroying it, and died precisely because of his ideas and because he was putting them into practice: Chico Mendes of Brazil. He knew by personal experience that harvesting the products of the forest (rubber, Brazil nuts, medicinal plants, etc.) in a non-predatory, sustainable way, man can live off the forest without having to destroy it. Thus was born the concept of the extractive reserves. People who were more interested in quick profits from the destruction of the forest (in this case cattle ranching) thought that by killing the man they would kill his ideas. They made him a legend.

2. Social impact of nature reserves.

An important point often has been neglected in the past: conservation and nature reserves must promote, not alienate, the people who live in the region being protected. An equilibrium has to be reached between conservation and man's economic needs. A substitute must be found for the economic resources lost to the nature reserve. If native people used to hunt in the area, they must be provided with a substitute form of proteins (or be allowed limited hunting, controlled so as not to deplete the animal populations). If jobs are taken away (such as jobs in the logging industry), substitute jobs must be created; these might be in the tourism industry, or as National Park Rangers, or field biologists (the latter, of course, presupposes an underlying educational infrastructure); simultaneously, new markets should be researched for local forest products

harvestable in a sustainable way. Local populations cannot be condemned to migration to urban slums in the name of conservation.

3. Nature reserves and begonias.

Now a suggestion about conservation and begonias. Many tropical areas rich in begonias and other groups of ornamental plants are threatened by logging, ranching, or other forms of "development." Could not plant societies, and, more specifically the American Begonia Society, help protect these areas? Or, at least, one of them? I suggest that a fund could be created to support such an area. An area already indicated as a nature reserve by a local conservation organization could be evaluated as to the importance of its begonia population and chosen to receive the help of the ABS. Such proposed reserves could be located through conservation

organizations in countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, India, Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, etc. After areas rich in begonias and needing protection have been identified, members of the ABS could vote to choose the one that will receive our support. The ABS and other plant societies (such as, for example, ferns or gesneriads which often have ecological requirements similar to those of begonias) could unite to support an area of common interest.

*ABS member Jacques Jangoux is a free-lance photographer with a background in botany who specializes in rainforests. See the **Begonian**, Jan.-Feb. 1988 for his article on begonias in the area around Rio de Janeiro. Mr. Jangoux lives at Rua dos Timbiras 1375, Apto. 1001, Batista Campos, 66.000 Belém, Pará, Brazil.*



HONOR ROLL **of Contributors** **to the Conservation Fund** **for Scott Hoover's** **Malaysian Expedition**

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CLAYTON M. KELLY SEED FUND

January-February 1990

Diana H. Gould, Seed Fund Director

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

All packets of species seed are \$1 each, and all packets of hybrid seed are 50c each; a pamphlet on growing from seed is 25c.

All orders must be accompanied by check or money order payable ONLY in U.S. funds, and made payable to the CLAYTON M. KELLY SEED FUND.

Cost of mailing in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico are: 1-12 packets of seeds, 55c; 13-24 packets, 70c; 25-36 packets, \$1.15; 37-48 packets, \$1.45.

Foreign mailing costs are: 1-12 packets of seeds, \$1.30; 13-24 packets, \$2.10; 24-36 packets, \$3.10; 37-48 packets, \$4.10.

Two sets of planter dishes with free instructions in one mailer cost 77c. If ordered with seed and sent in one mailer, the cost of 2 sets of planter dishes and 1-12 packets of seed is 90c; 2 sets of planter dishes and 13-24 packets cost \$1.07; 2 sets of planter dishes and 25-36 packets cost \$1.42; 2 sets of planter dishes and 37-48 packets cost \$1.75.

CALIFORNIA RESIDENTS PLEASE ADD 6 1/2% SALES TAX TO ALL ORDERS.

Please send your order and payment to:

Ms. Diana H. Gould
7700 Deanton Court
Citrus Heights, CA 95610
U.S.A.

Germination times for this issue's selections range from 6 to 54 days, so please be patient. Unless otherwise noted, these selections have not been offered during the last three years.

The Seed Fund would like to thank **Jackie Davis, Lynda Goldsmith, Jan Goodwin, Doug Jensen, Evie McDuff, Barbara Walker, Antoinette Welch**, and our anonymous donors for their most generous donations to this issue's selections. THANK YOU!

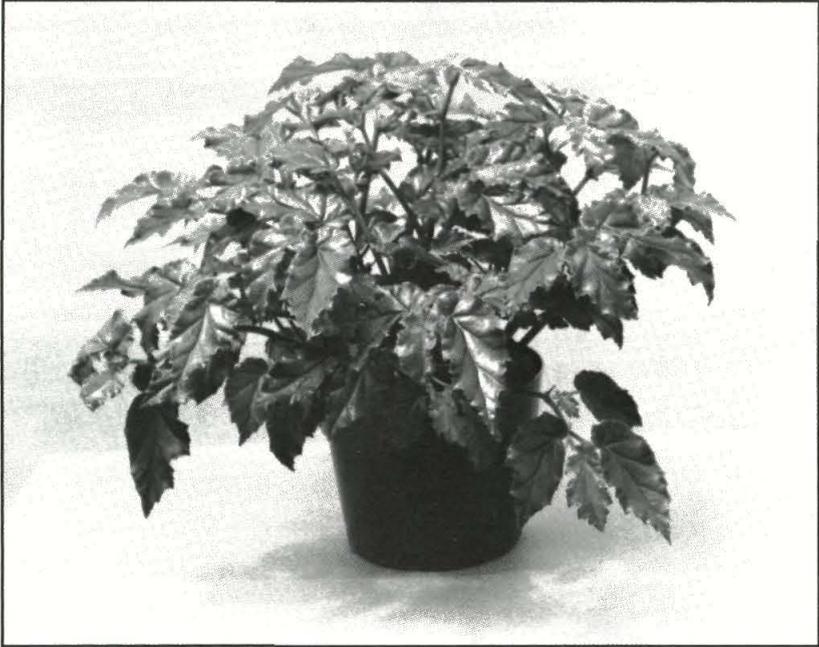
Notes on the seeds offered:

This month's shrub selections include *B. acutifolia* (Caribbean Islands) with small bare leaves and profuse white-tinted flowers; *B. cumingii*, with small bare leaves, and profuse orange flowers summer-winter; *B. haltonis* (Colombia; SO 88), which also has small bare leaves, and moderate white flowers from late winter through early spring; *B. meridensis* (Venezuela), a tall (6') woody shrub with dark green leathery leaves and pink flowers; *B. peruviana* (Peru), with narrow hairy leaves and white flowers with pink hairs; *B. scharffii* (Brazil), with wide hairy leaves and moderate, very light pink flowers with pink hairs; *B. U162* (Venezuela) with white flowers; and *B. U049* (Brazil), an angel-wing type with dark green velvety leaves sometimes bronzed on top, with a red/purple velvety texture on its underside, leaf size approximately 2" x 8", and white flowers, which may grow up to 3 ft. high under ideal conditions.

The two rhizomatous selections are *B. masoniana* (China; MJ 87), with its large green distinctive-surfaced leaves bearing its "Iron Cross" and white flowers, and *B. U117* from the El Valle area of Panama, with hirsute 8" x 5" leaves.

Our pair of thick-stemmed selections are *B. rigida* (Brazil), with large hairy leaves and moderate white flowers tinted with pink, and *B. ulmifolia* (Venezuela), with medium-sized hairy leaves and profuse white flowers.

I am sorry that I have no data to offer you on *B. U158* other than its



origin in the Cascades area of Panama.

Now I wish to thank all the growers of the semperflorens type for their year-long patience by offering 35 semp selections for this issue. *B. cucullata* (Brazil; JF 87), a blue-green semp with moderate white flowers; *B. hirtella* (Brazil), small, bushy annual with profuse white flowers; *B. schmidtiana* (Brazil; JF 88), compact and small green leaves with profuse pale pink flowers; *B. subvillosa* (Brazil; JF 87), with hairy leaves and profuse pink flowers likes high light; and *B. subvillosa* var. *leptotricha* (Paraguay), with profuse white flowers.

B. acutifolia, grown and photographed by Doug Jensen

For all of the lovers of hybrids, we present 33 selections. Because of this large number and similarity of names, please understand why they MUST be ordered by number only:

1. *B. 'Splotches'* x *B. solananthera* x *B. solananthera* 'Rosea'
2. pink Calla semp, selfed
3. mixed rhizomatous cultivars
4. *B. 'Charm'*, open pollinated
5. *B. 'Prelude'* (semp. cult.)
6. *B. 'Filly-Dilly'*, mixed red & pink
7. *B. 'Frillies'* mixed
8. *B. 'Filly'*, red, open pollinated
9. semp, dark leaves, dark pink 12" flowers
10. *B. 'Filly Dilly'*
11. semp, white flowers
12. semp.
13. semp, red stemmed
14. bronze leaf semp, rose flowers
15. *B. 'Flamboyant Red'*
16. *B. 'Frillies'* cross
17. semp cultivar
18. mixed semps #2
19. semp cultivar #3, large leaves, pale pink flowers
20. *B. 'Pink Rubra'* selfed
21. *B. 'Rio'* x *B. paleata* x self (distinctive foliage, easy)
22. semp F1 ALFA
23. Park's *B.* special Bedding Red
24. Park's *B. 'Othello'*, semp, bronze leaves



B. U049 grown and photographed by Doug Jensen of Cedartown, Georgia. Doug has donated a large plant of B. U049 to the Atlanta Botanical Garden

- 25. Park's B. special Bedding Pink
- 26. Park's *B. davisii* hybrid B. 'Firefly' (Tuberous)
- 27. Ball's B. 'Frimly Red'
- 28. Ball's B. 'White Avalanche'
- 29. Ball's B. 'Frimly Pink'
- 30. Ball's B. 'Pink Avalanche'
- 31. Benary's B. 'Lotto (red)
- 32. Benary's B. 'Hi-Fi Brillantrosa' (pink)
- 32. Benary's B. 'Olympia Weifs' (white)

I am sorry to report that I will not be able to test any more hybrid seed that comes in untested. The record-keeping time on seed testing along with the mailing and packaging expenses must be reduced. Hereafter hybrid seed will be offered at 'Buyer's Risk.'

Please use the current 1989 Convention Listing as the available Seed Fund inventory until the 1990 Convention Listing becomes available. The 1989 listing is available upon request with your seed order, OR by sending a stamped, self-addressed legal size envelope to receive it.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ONE AND ALL, AND A JOYOUS AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR! Congratulations to all of us for starting 1989 with 24 selections, and starting 1990 with 51 selections! We have all worked very hard to accomplish this goal, but, in all fairness, I'm beginning to think we overshot! Thank you all, so very much, for all of your warm wishes and your tremendous support.

CLAYTON M.
KELLY
SEED FUND

species seed
\$1 per packet

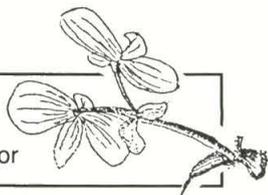
- B. acutifolia*
- B. cucullata*
- B. cumingii*
- B. hirtella*
- B. holtonis*
- B. masoniana*
- B. meridensis*
- B. peruviana*
- B. rigida*
- B. scharffii*
- B. schmidtiana*
- B. subvillosa*
- B. subvillosa* var. *leptotricha*
- B. ulmifolia*
- B. U049
- B. U117
- B. U158
- B. U162

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number*

ROUND ROBIN NOTES

Margaret Coats, Round Robin Director



Once again the Robins must say goodbye to a long and valued member. We have just learned of the death of Pauline Graham, Pinole, California, on April 25, 1989. We shall miss her and her newsy letters.

Rhodora Buss (IA) suggests to her cane Robin that they check the name tags on their plants often to make sure they are still legible. She feels that correctly labeling begonias is a vital aspect of our "Save the Begonias" program. Another excellent suggestion from Rhodora is that everyone save their copies of the **Begonian** and review them periodically to refresh their memory on things they may have forgotten.

Okay, all you tuberous growers who are plagued with mildew and rot, here's the solution! Ken Mackey (Aus) read this tip in the Australian Begonia Society Journal. Dip each cutting in a weak bleach solution for ten seconds, then wash in clean, pure rainwater, then soak at least 15 minutes in rainwater to which has been added Phosphorus at 1/4 strength. This method can be followed regardless of the species or type of cutting. Ken says he is using one dessert spoonful of bleach to one liter of water and finds it to be about right. He suggests increasing the strength of bleach or the length of dunking time if you still get rot after using this method.

Beryl Orchard (NC), also a member of the tuberous Robin, states she has had much success by planting in clay pots and standing them in a couple of inches of peat. She keeps the peat always damp with 1/4

strength Peters 20-20-20 fertilizer. She explains that the plants take up just what they want through the clay. Even when her tuberous plants get larger, the above method works for her. She also uses this method sometimes for hanging baskets, placing the clay pot inside the plastic basket and filling the blank space around the pot with peat moss, keeping it constantly damp with a weak fertilizer solution.

A question about seed planting arose in the terrariums Robin and the following excerpt from Sheila Matthews' (IL) letter might be beneficial to everyone. Sheila wrote, "The secret of good, continuous growth to maturity remains a secret for many reasons. The time of planting, which affects the state of maturity when the first transplant is made, is critical for me, as are the temperature and other environmental factors at this time. For instance, the Malaysian seed was easy - I got three kinds - but they were mature at the wrong time for me to put them out in beds. Wherever else we kept them they got severe mildew, so the horticulturist finally pitched them in disgust. Luckily, I still have some seed, so will try again to time it better. I particularly liked the hairy one with red veins and pink flowers."

Among the species discussed in the terrarium Robin was *B. olsoniae*. Frances Hoffman (NY) said she grew it from the Seed Fund many years ago, but lost her specimen plant several years later. *Then* she was advised to always keep extra plants growing! (That's a good idea for all begonia enthusiasts.) Charlotte Kuhnle (OR) advises growing *B. pinetorum* (syn-

onymous with *B. dayi*, *B. hidalgensis*) outdoors. Hers do well in a semi-shaded spot on her deck. She also grows a plant of *B. palmata* in her greenhouse, but says it is not as lush as the one she grows under lights in a terrarium. When a leaf drops onto the perlite in the tank, new leaves grow at the sinus of the old leaf; she pots these up and gets another plant. Charlotte also finds the coloration is more intense when plants are grown under lights.

In case everyone isn't aware of the difficulty of growing *B. U014*, even the experts have trouble with this one. Mabel Corwin (CA) says it is difficult whether grown out in the open or in a greenhouse. She keeps growing it from seed every year, as she has found it to be short lived. Bet this information makes a lot of growers happy!

While this tip did not come from a Robin, I felt it was so worthwhile I wanted to share it with you (somewhere in the back of this feeble brain, it seems I heard or read it before, but quickly forgot it): if you are one who roots in water, try sticking a piece of coleus in with your begonia cutting. Coleus puts out some sort of hormone that stimulates other plants to root. The credit for this tip goes to Kit Mounger (FL).

Two members of the Growing under Lights Robin were lamenting over the apparent loss of their *B. handelii*. Mary Bucholtz (FL) told both not to be in too big a hurry to throw the pot away, as she had one which revived itself after apparently being dead. Barbara Nunes (VA) had the same experience with *B. 'Mabel Corwin'*. Mae Blanton (TX) has been busy as a little bee planting seed. Some of the ones she planted had been in her

refrigerator since 1973, and, believe it or not, they germinated in 27 days. Others she had success with were dated 1975, 1979, and 1983.

Mary Ellen Taback (VA) warns a fellow fern grower that her spore grown ferns should be a very good size before they are planted outdoors. She says the immature ones just will not adapt, which she finds a little unusual among plants. However, Mary Ellen says one good thing about growing from spores is that one gets so many plants that it makes experimenting with growing conditions possible without fear of losing the variety.

There are about as many ways to propagate as there are growers. Rhodora Buss (IA) says a quick way to get a nice pot of rhizomatous begonias restarted is to take tip cuttings - 3, 4, or 5 - and stand them in a plastic Cool Whip tub in just a little bit of water. When they have rooted well, just pot them up in your regular mix. She warns to be sure and pot them up before the roots get too long and intertwined. After losing her entire collection because of a contractor's negligence, Elaine Ayers (OH) has been busy repotting newly ordered plants. She found that the begonias adapted better after repotting if she spread the roots out as much as possible instead of just placing the root ball in a larger pot.

From the propagation Robin: I thought you might be interested in the mix in which Brad Thompson (CA) plants his seed. He says it is mostly perlite and a medium which appears to be made from ground wheat hulls or straw. Brad says a few days after planting, a sort of gel forms on top that seems to keep the seeds evenly moist and does not allow them to move around. He comments that it is very

strange stuff, but works great for him. Houston Knight (CA), of the same Robin, is a great believer in foliar feeding. He says most fertilizer companies now sell water soluble fertilizer for this particular reason. They have learned that plants take up 75% of the foliar-fed fertilizer right through the leaves. Houston uses "Grow-More," and is getting nine trace elements at the same time. However, this may be a localized brand. He says to read the label to make sure the 20-20-20 fertilizer you buy says "water soluble."

I have a note from Joan Campbell (MT) stating that she had received through a Robin seed of a semp that is winter hardy in Ohio. After planting the seeds, she thinks the plant is *B. mollis*, or a cross thereof. She would be interested in hearing from the person who circulated the seed or anyone who planted them to see if the others agree with her.

Many of you who have trouble growing *B. carrieae* may be interested

in a tip from Frances Hoffman (NY). She recommends watering your plant by standing the pot in water until the surface soil is damp, and then not watering again until the pot feels light. She says *B. 'Withlacoochee'* seems to like the same treatment, but if it is kept too wet during the winter months, it develops mildew easily.

I have been asked by several fairly new growers to start a "Beginners" Robin. Should you also be interested in one, please drop me a note. I will also need an experienced grower to lead this group, so let me know if you would be willing.

Ever wished you had a friend you could talk to about begonias? Don't be shy - meet several new friends at once - join a Robin! Write:

Margaret Coats
11203 Cedar Elm
San Antonio, TX 78230



SHOW NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

Kay & Lorne Bradley and **Lloyd Olson** of East Bay Branch were among the ABS members winning honors at the *San Francisco County Fair*. **Debbie Best** won a "Best in Show" for sempervirens.

At the *Potomac Branch Show* in October **Philip Seiden** won Best of Show with *B. 'Kitty'*, Sweepstakes with 13 blue ribbons, and 5 cultural awards. Other winners were **Johanna Zinn**, whose *B. U074* won the terrarium division and a cultural award, and **Joyce Caveny**, who won best species with *B. aconitifolia* and also took the Showing is Sharing Trophy.

Linde Saksen took Best of Show at the *Buxton Branch Show* in October with an enormous *B. scharfii*. This plant was pictured in the November-December 1988 **Begonian** after winning the Massachusetts Horticultural Award at the ABS Convention in Boston, but was frozen during the severe winter. Under Linde's care it rebounded to take not only Best of Show, but four other special awards.



AROUND ABS

Notes from our Newsletters

Happy Birthday to Long Beach Parent Chapter! This will be their (and ABS') 58th birthday.

On October 17 the world watched in horror the news from San Francisco. It was with relief that we learned the toll was not as large as at first feared. Newsletters from the ABS branches in the area report that our begonia friends are unharmed, although there were losses among pots and plants.

Despite the quakes San Francisco Branch went ahead with Christmas party plans, which included participating in that city's "Toys for Tots" program. Sacramento Branch in California and the Mae Blanton Branch in Texas were among the branches across the country that took part in food basket programs for the needy.

The October issue of The Buxtonian had a disturbing quote from the World Wildlife Fund: "Runaway destruction of our planet's rain forests - 25 to 50 acres every single minute - is alarming. Especially when you consider that half of our prescription medicines come from natural sources like plants - and nearly half of all plant species on earth are found in these rain forests!"

Our newsletters are chock full of suggestions for growing begonias more successfully. Here's a selection:

Seed growers will be interested to learn that research at California Poly at Pomona shows that seeds that are spritzed with fertilizer at planting yield better germination and juvenile growth. Houston Knight, writing in the Whittier Branch newsletter, suggests

planting begonia seed in your usual manner, then spraying the soil surface using a foliar fertilizer at about 1/2 to 1 teaspoon of 20-20-20 (or 15-15-15) per gallon of water.

The Potting Shed, newsletter of the Edna Stewart Pittsburgh branch, had suggestions in October for growing begonias indoors:

"Growing plants under lights gives great control over the growing environment - if the grower chooses to exercise it. For example, most rhizomatous begonias need long nights to set bud and bloom. They are "photoperiod sensitive". To get these to bloom, reduce the number of hours the lights operate to about 9 to 10 hours per day. It will take several months for blooming to occur. On the other hand, to get small plants to develop more rapidly, increase the number of hours to 16 to 24. Of course, with all that photosynthesis taking place, additional nutrients will be required also. An increase in fertilizer will be needed.

"Pest problems can develop rapidly in the favorable indoor environment. Check periodically and take action to prevent the spread of any problems noted. The use of so-called preventive sprays is a waste of time and money, and harmful to you and the environment. On the other hand, sound growing techniques are effective, cost no more, and benefit you and the environment. Any spray - soaps, organics, or chemical - should be a last resort.

"Seed can be planted at any time. Gentle bottom heat and some light are beneficial. Seed of species and hybrids started now will provide nice plants for next spring and summer.

Start tuberous and semperflorens types for bedding in December or January. Transplant while small - when the first true leaves appear is the standard recommendation. This prevents unnecessary damage to the fine, tender roots which develop much faster than the visible parts. A seedling 1/4 inch tall can have roots 2" or longer!"

The same newsletter in November reported an item from an American Horticultural Society publication stating that "vinegar, while toxic to plants at high concentrations, may be useful and beneficial in reducing the pH level of container grown plants. Tap water is generally highly alkaline in order to minimize corrosion in pipes, and this can cause the pH of potted plants to rise slowly. Vinegar in a solution of 1 Tablespoon per gallon effectively reversed this situation. The lowered pH allowed nutrients in the media to be available to the plant."

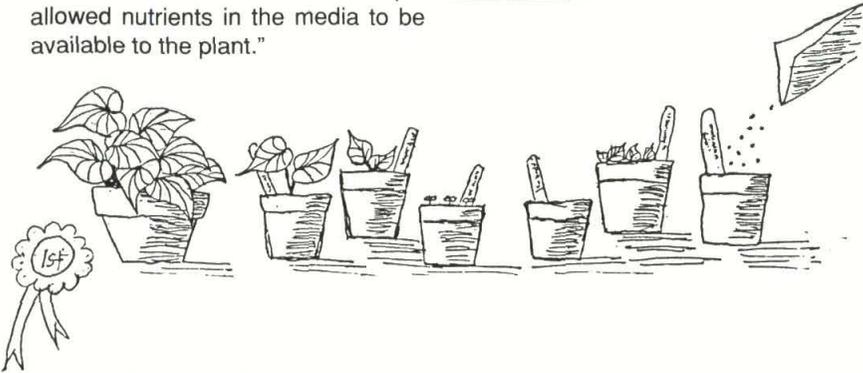
Interestingly enough, the "vinegar solution" also came up in a Mae Blanton Branch meeting, where Martha Curry used litmus paper to demonstrate vinegar's effectiveness in lowering alkalinity in water. She suggested using the vinegar with every watering in areas with highly alkaline water.

How many of us really observe our plants? Rudolf Ziesenhenne gave a seminar on rhizomatous begonias for Palomar Branch. The Palomar Planter printed a tidbit from that talk:

"The hair on the stems are always pointed downward, making it difficult for insects to climb up."

Had you ever noticed that?

A picture is worth a thousand words: the one below is from the November issue of Garden Grove's The Shadehouse.



Art Monday, editor of The Shadehouse signs off "I'll see you at the meeting, bring a friend." Houston Knight repeated that theme, with a slight difference: "Bring a friend, a neighbor, or even an enemy!" Well, perhaps if exposed to begonia fellowship, that enemy would become a friend.



THE AMERICAN IVY SOCIETY

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.

Minutes of the Board of Directors' Meeting

October 22, 1989

The Board of Directors of the American Begonia Society met October 22, 1989 at the home of Houston Knight, 13455 Hadley St., Whittier, California. There were 19 present.

President Michael Ludwig called the meeting to order at 11:45 a.m. Jeannette Gilbertson led the Flag Salute and read the Aims and Purposes.

Secretary Ingeborg Foo read the minutes of the previous meeting. They were approved with the following corrections: the New York convention for 1993 is on hold and Oklahoma City has voiced interest in the 1993 convention.

Treasurer Eleanor Calkins reported a balance as of September 30, 1989: checking \$8,690.99, savings \$42,516.53, for a total of \$51,207.52.

Eleanor Calkins urged members to send contributions for Tracy McClellan's Africa trip directly to Eleanor, earmarked Research Fund - Tracy McClellan.

Correspondence: Eleanor Calkins read a letter from Frank Green inquiring about the interest on the money we have in the bank. Eleanor has sent a letter of explanation.

Thelma O'Reilly received a letter from Russ Richardson asking about the advertising campaign.

The New York Botanical Garden has not received the **Begonian**. John Ingles will look into the matter.

Alethea Thomas and Tom Keepin were appointed to the Awards Committee.

Special Reports

Judging: Judging course at the San Francisco Convention was attended by 17 people, and the course at the Potomac Branch show was attended by 11.

Audit Committee: Eleanor Calkins read the correction: total expense for the year was \$26,395.07, leaving a balance of \$9,843.97. Membership Chairman expenses should read \$1,406.27, making expenditures total \$31,482.58.

Norma Pfrunder asked about the Bookstore. There has not been an expenses and income report.

Conservation: Martin Johnson has received almost all the funds necessary for Scott Hoover's trip.

Historian: Norma Pfrunder is receiving more newsletters from the East Coast.

Long Range Planning: Bob Hamm is in search of a location for the 1994 convention.

Members at Large: Thelma O'Reilly will have newsletter 15 ready by the end of October. Mexico is now represented for the first time. Thelma is looking for someone to replace her as MAL Director.

Membership: Life Members, 80; Institutions, 128; Dues paying members, 1,354.

Parliamentarian: Margaret Lee reported that the proposed Seed Fund Supplement is against the society's By-Laws, Article 4 Section 6e of October, 1985. Diana Gould has been notified.

The proposed award for Dr. Barkley cannot be accepted at this time. At the convention in 1983 the proposal was made that no new award in the future will have a name other than American Begonia Society.

Public Relations: Lorra Almstead is looking for a replacement.

Round Robin: Twelve Robins were sent in August including Australia and Holland. Six Robins were sent in September including Holland and United Kingdom.

Convention: Peter Notaras reported all members in the San Francisco area are well after the earthquake. No financial report from the convention.

Show Entries: Tim Last has all the mechanics for new entry cards. Branches interested in using them can contact him.

Speakers Bureau: Muriel Perz is looking for a replacement.

Membership Secretary: John Ingles will be reimbursed \$50 per year for a post office box.

New Business

Houston Knight, Tim O'Reilly, and Michael Ludwig are on a committee to investigate the possibility of liability insurance.

Houston Knight asked the Society to print cultural information sheets for branches for their new members.

Astro Branch asked the Society for financial aid to be used for advertising. The Board voted to send \$129.00.

Branches gave reports of their activities, shows, plant sales, etc.

The next Board meeting will be held on January 28, 1990, at 11 a.m. in the Ecke Building, Encinitas, California.

Meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Ingeborg Foo
Secretary

ELECTED OFFICERS

President Michael Ludwig
7007 Mt. Vernon Ave., Lemon Grove, CA 92045
(619) 461-6906

Past President Arlene Davis
157 Monument, Rio Dell, CA 95562-1617

First Vice-President Jeannette Gilbertson
410 JoAnn Circle, Vista, CA 92084

Second Vice-President Joan Coulat
4111 DePaul Court, Sacramento, CA 95821

Third Vice-President John Howell
129 Trillium, San Antonio, TX 78213

Secretary Ingeborg Foo
1050 Melrose Way, Vista, CA 92083

Treasurer Eleanor Calkins
910 Fern Street, Escondido, CA 92027

APPOINTED CHAIRMEN & DIRECTORS

Awards Committee Rudolf Ziesenhenn
1130 N. Milpas St., Santa Barbara, CA 93103

Audit Committee Marion Paris
4793 Soria Drive, San Diego, CA 92115

Ballot Counting Ronnie Nevins
1913 Aspen Circle, Fullerton, CA 92635

Book Store Bob Bailey
5190 Mission Blvd., Sp. 90, Riverside, CA 92509

Branch Relations Director Douglas Hahn
7736 Stonehill Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45230

Business Manager John Ingles, Jr.
157 Monument, Rio Del, CA 95562-1617

Clayton M. Kelly Seed Fund Diana Gould
7700 Deanton Ct., Citrus Heights, CA 95610

Conservation Committee

Co-chairman Scott Hoover
718 Henderson Rd., Williamstown, MA 01267

Co-chairman Martin Johnson
959 Glennan Dr., Redwood City, CA 94061

Historian Norma Pfrunder
3484 Jefferson St., Riverside, CA 92504

Long Range Planning Bob Hamm
10065 River Mist Way, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

Members At Large Thelma O'Reilly
10942 Sunray Place, La Mesa, CA 92041

Nomenclature Carrie Karegeannes
3916 Lake Blvd., Annandale, VA 22003

Parliamentarian Margaret Lee
1852 31st St., San Diego, CA 92102

Public Relations Lorra Almstedt
1965 Celeste Lane, Fullerton, CA 92633

Research Paul Tsamtsis
1630 F St., Sacramento, CA 95814

Research Librarian Lorra Almstedt
1965 Celeste Lane, Fullerton, CA 92633

Round Robin Margaret Coats
11203 Cedar Elm, San Antonio, TX 78230

Convention Advisors Carol & Peter Notaras
2567 Green St., San Francisco, CA 94123

Convention Chairman Melba Schultz
603 Chauncey, San Antonio, TX 78216

Show Entries Tim Last
437 Prospect Ave., #15, Brooklyn, NY 11215

Slide Librarian Daniel Haseltine
6950 W. Nelson St., Chicago, IL 60634

Speakers Bureau Muriel Perz
2943 N. "H" St., San Bernardino, CA 92405

BEGONIAN STAFF

Editor: Tamsin Bordman, Bos 249, Roanoke, TX 76262 (817) 481-4305, 481-2169

Editorial Associates: Phyllis Bates, Bruce C. Boardman, Jack Golding, Mary Weinberg

Please send manuscripts to editor, with SASE if return requested.

For subscription, dues, circulation inquiries contact John Ingles, Jr., 157 Monument, Rio Dell, CA 95562-1617



American Begonia Society
P.O. Box 56
Rio Dell, CA 95562-0056

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