

March/April, 1994

The BEGONIAN



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 that will be mailed to all members of the society.

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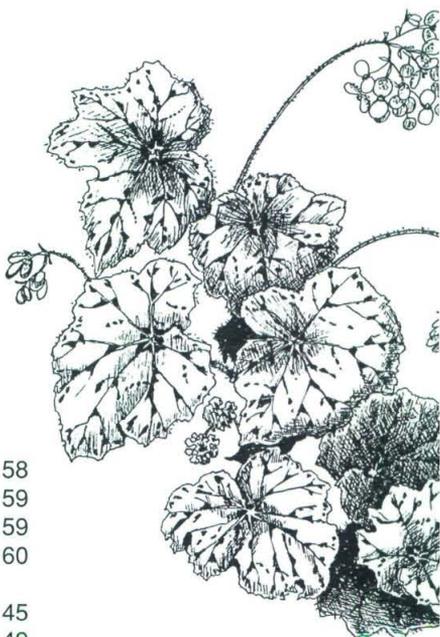
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COVER PHOTOS

Front - *B. froebelii* and its startlingly red blooms were painted by Joy Porter.

Back - *B. 'Can-Can'* struts its stuff. Just guess where this beauty was grown. No, not California, not upstate New York, not northern Europe...see article, page 45.



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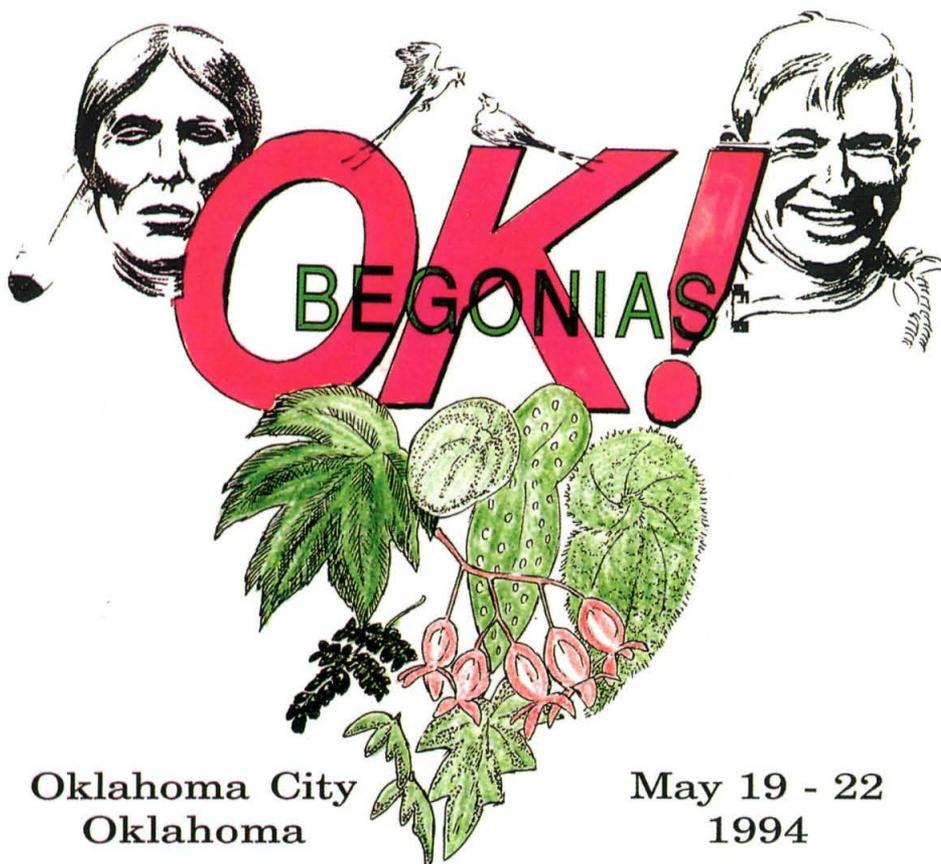
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B. 'Dancin' Fred'

cultivar by Kit Jeans Mounger
drawing by Kit Jeans Mounger

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just a portion of the Neuman greenhouse

Tuberous Begonia Culture in the Midwest

Text & photo by Leo Neuman

The climate of the Midwest is most inhospitable to the flowering of tuberous begonias. Heat is anathema to the growing of quality plants.

While we have grown begonias for over 40 years, we have long ago given up on establishing them in outdoor beds. To grow these plants satisfactorily it is necessary to lessen the debilitating effects of heat in an environmentally controlled greenhouse. Our goal is to exhibit each summer a massed display of the finest quality plant material that we can obtain. This is a hobby inasmuch as we have no commercial interest in merchandising tubers.

Growing is done in a 20x60 foot area which includes a greenhouse and shadehouse. The greenhouse is used primarily to display over 200 flowering pot plants and to root cuttings. Stock is increased by vegetative propagation through cuttings taken only from quality tubers. The rooted cuttings are grown on in the shade house until threatened by frost.

The Growing Medium

Every grower has his or her favorite mix. We have grown begonias in many combinations of materials, including composted loam, unmilled sphagnum moss, oak leaf mold, cow manure, peat

moss, garden soil, perlite, vermiculite, and calcined clay (Terra Green). With the advent of each new medium supplied by the trade, the mystique grows. Although I cannot say we have found the perfect mix, most are quite acceptable. However, having grown progressively lazier over the years, I now refuse to mix bale upon bale of these materials, and presently resort to a standard commercial mix known as Sunshine Mix #4 marketed by Fison Horticultural, Inc. It is a coarse, fibrous product that drains well due to an extra allotment of perlite and yet holds an abundance of moisture for good growth. Many of the mixes on the market are too finely grained, causing the mix to become "muddy" with excessive watering.

Fertilizing and Watering

In the past few decades several thousand people have visited our greenhouse during the flowering season. Inevitably the question most often asked is "What do you feed these things?" While no one would question that proper fertilizing is necessary, this is one of the least important concerns we have with respect to quality growth. Each new formulation on the market comes with yet another extravagant claim; most are just a new way to deliver the old N-P-P combination in yet another fashion.

Having said this, however, I do think it appropriate that attention be paid to the needs of the plant with respect to so-called trace elements. When using combinations of materials such as peat moss, perlite, and vermiculite, clearly there is a dearth of anything that might be considered nutritional. Plants are not fed in the manner of hogs feeding at the trough. The minutest amounts of nutrients must be in soluble form to be absorbed into the plant cells by osmosis. This indicates that the grower must have available to the plant at all times all of the essential elements. The plant will then use what it needs depending upon the metabolic requirements at any particular time in the growth cycle.

We meet this need by using a combination of dry slow-release fertilizers (some containing trace elements) in the potting mix, and also applying a very dilute solution of fertilizer (also containing trace elements) with each watering. The slow-release fertilizers have the advantage of lasting through the complete 6 month growth cycle from rooting to flowering. The concentration of elements in the liquid fertilizer (by use of a fertilizer injector) can be altered at any time, depending on the grower's assessment of the plant's growth pattern.

Plant research indicates that as flowering approaches the nitrogen level may be reduced and the potassium level increased. This is easily done with a change in the fertilizer formula of the liquid portion used during the watering. This method does not lead to salt build-up inasmuch as the pots are flooded at each watering until the fluid flows freely out the bottom holes. Old salts are flushed out and replaced with fresh nutrients with each watering.

Temperature, Light, Humidity

These environmental factors are considered together, as they are somewhat related. It is only by culture in a greenhouse that one can even hope to have any degree of control over these elements.

Although touted as shade plants, tuberous begonias can only realize optimum growth when plants are given maximum light - short of direct sunlight. Shading of some type is obviously necessary, but can lead to problems if it is continuous during periods of cloudy or rainy weather.

Heating concerns are the easiest to handle. Any heater of a size appropriate for general greenhouse use would certainly be sufficient for use with tuberous begonias. Heat is only needed when the tubers are dormant during winter, or when they are ready to sprout in late winter/early spring. Throughout the late fall and early winter, as tubers ripen and approach dormancy,

temperatures need not be above the 40 degree range. We set ours at 42 degrees - the minimum for our thermostat. This poses no real strain for any heating system.

Cooling and humidity maintenance are another matter. While the lush flowers seem to indicate the need for tropical warmth, quite the opposite is the case. Plants are content when grown with day temperatures not exceeding the 60 degree range, and night temperatures somewhat lower. Relative humidity is best at 60% or higher.

This ideal is all but impossible to achieve in this part of the country. During the July/August flowering period greenhouse temperatures may easily reach 120-130 degrees, when the sun is near the meridian. Concomitantly, the relative humidity drops to zero. These two accompanying factors spell disaster in short order.

To blunt the effect of the burning rays of the sun a moveable shade cloth of white nylon (50% shade) is drawn over the entire house a couple of hours on each side of noon. For ease of handling, this is attached to a 300 foot continuous belt mounted on 13 pulleys. To maximize light at other times the shade cloth is retracted, and on cloudy days it is not pulled at all.

An evaporative cooler is mounted outside at one end and the cooled air is circulated through the greenhouse and expelled by an 18" extractor fan mounted in a gable. While this does increase humidity to some extent and leads to cooling during mild summer days, it does not do the job during extremely hot weather. A device called a fogger is quite useful in cooling and particularly helpful in maintaining the humidity level. It is essentially a large fan, mounted at one end and at the ridge of the greenhouse, whose hub and blades are fitted with pathways through which water is permitted to flow. The rapid spinning of the blades causes the water escaping from the extremities to be turned into fog particles. This stream is propelled directly down the greenhouse ridge where the heat build-up

is greatest. Cooling is accomplished as the fog (water particles) change to water vapor (a gas) and absorbs the heat of vaporization. A valve in the fogger waterline controls the amount of fog emitted from zero to perhaps 40 gallons per hour. Controlled by a thermostat and solenoid, the operation is virtually automatic. When evening approaches and humidity rises to unacceptable levels as outside temperatures drop the water flow may be stopped and the fogger fan used as a ventilation device to clear the greenhouse of unwanted moisture. The 18" extractor fan at the opposite end extracts the vapor-laden air from the greenhouse.

While I consider this device to be quite novel but welcome, it does present problems which we continue to address. For one thing it is noisy. Second, there is water droplet fallout along the pathway from the fogger to the extractor fan. While this does less damage than a gentle rainfall outdoors, droplets do land on the blooms and cause premature blotching. (It is, of course, for this reason that we do not spray the plants when they are in full flower.) We have alleviated this condition somewhat by mounting a long 4 foot wide strip of clear polyethylene film over the display stage directly under the path of the fog stream. Water droplets are effectively collected in this "net" and harmlessly directed to the side aisles where they disappear in a bed of gravel.

While these extended procedures will seem extravagant to the begonia grower working in a more favorable climate, they do, at least, enable us to grow acceptable plants based on our standards.

Dressing Plants for Display

Mature tubers send up numerous shoots. Each of these may eventually produce 3 to 5 side branches. Furthermore, buds are produced early in the growth cycle from all stems and branches. For this reason growth must be managed. Tubers are planted in communal flats in early spring

when they break dormancy. When 2 to 3 inches tall they are planted in individual pots 3" larger than the rootball. After the roots fill the pot, the plant is given the final potting, staked, and tied. All the plants are grown one stem up. All excess tuber growth is removed, and only one branch is allowed to grow roughly parallel to the main stem.

All initial buds are removed. We will likely discard at least 1,000 buds before permitting the first one to flower. For the remainder of the season all sidebuds to the central male flower are taken off as they appear.

After the first flush of large blooms, the flowers become progressively smaller and the plants start to take on the characteristics of a hollyhock stalk. Before this point is reached, the mainstem and side branches are stopped to prevent further bud formation. The buds remaining are permitted to flower to full bloom.

These later blooms are cut and given to nursing homes, hospitals, churches, etc., or, indeed, to anyone wishing to make use of them. The quantity available at the end of the season is such that we are able to place dozens in containers on our front lawn and distribute them to any and all. We are located on a bus line, and each year several of the drivers stop, let the passengers off to pick up begonias, reload, and proceed to their destination.

Curing and Winter Storage

Our handling of the tubers in the fall is somewhat different from that suggested in the *begonia literature*. Since the plants in the pots enjoy the protection of the greenhouse, we let them remain there until all leaves and stems fall away naturally. This can take up to sometime between Thanksgiving and Christmas. During this period the greenhouse resembles a garbage dump. We are "cleaning up" daily.

Eventually the tops will have disintegrated and the tubers are ready for winterizing. Here again the tubers are left in the pots in which they flowered, and the pots are stacked in pyramid-fashion until evidence of growth once again appears in spring. When the pink pips appear the pots are emptied; tubers are cleaned and soaked in a fungicide/insecticide solution, and left in trays of vermiculite or perlite to dry. As growth becomes more evident they are placed in flats for rooting. The procedure from this point on is outlined above in the paragraphs Dressing Plants for Display.

To make this procedure work successfully, it is necessary to control watering carefully in the final stages of growth. One cannot end up with a stemless tuber in a waterlogged pot. The medium in the pot must be nearly dry when the plant gasps its last.

Propagation

Excess shoots from the tubers and extra branches from the mainstems provide cuttings to increase our stock of desirable plants. These are rooted in a propagation chamber whose base is thermostatically controlled heating mats. A humidifying system keeps the leaves of the cuttings moist at all times and is controlled by an electric time clock. Cuttings are struck in the #4 Sunshines Mix in 3" plastic pots.

When rooted these are transferred to 5" pots and moved to the shade house for growing on. The shade house is a 50% shade cloth permanently mounted to a steel framework. Tubers are harvested from these pots the following spring during the regular tuber planting season, and treated in the same fashion as the mature stock.

Leo Neuman lives at 808 Central Avenue, Wilmette, IL 60091.

Don't you wish you lived on his bus line?

A melodrama, in which the unlikely combination of surgery, television, and Tovah Martin inadvertently leads our innocent heroine into the world of hybridizing begonias...



Pollen-Fest!

Text & photo by Mary Simon

What can a dedicated “dirty-thumber” do when surgery leaves her with no muscle and very little energy?

She can look in on Victory Garden...wherein I saw Tovah Martin escorting an interviewer down the aisles of Logee’s Greenhouses, in the begonia section.

The interviewer pointed to a plant and asked its name. Tovah said “That is *Begonia maculata* var. *wightii*!” When I saw the blooms on *B. maculata*, I lurched over the tangle of unkempt plants under the lights and groped for *maculata*...if it was in bloom in Connecticut, why not in Marietta?

My fine self-asserting *B. maculata* had its first flower cluster! I don’t know what else happened on Victory Garden...I was absorbed in the very low-energy work of hybridizing. There were Begonias ‘Tom Ment’, ‘Corliss Engle’, ‘Coral Chimes’, all in bloom, and all getting involved in the pollen festival. It was fortunate that the neighbor’s cat wasn’t visiting at the time, or else he, too, would have been incorporated into the pollen-fest!

As *maculata* produced newer flowers, ‘Bumble-Bee-Simon’ was ready. The three begonias mentioned above received pollen from *maculata*; subsequent (female) flowers on *maculata* received pollen from the three hybrids.

Weeks passed...I found that *maculata* would not accept pollen from any of the other plants in bloom, but all of the others were obviously growing seeds from *maculata*'s pollen. The only pollen that *maculata* would accept was its own, so I "selfed" the last of its fine white blooms.

More weeks passed, and the seeds germinated very well and (yes, I AM prejudiced!) I am very pleased and amazed with the results: the deep red color on the back of leaves of B. 'Corliss Engle' came through on beautifully spotted leaves, and the variations in leaf shape, color, and "spotting" are very gratifying.

How can a beat-up body do so much with so little energy - or cost? Most hybridizers are no doubt familiar with all of this excitement, but I had the joy of discovery to carry me on.

All of the cane begonias that received *maculata* pollen produced (thus far) only coral-colored flowers, even though the leaves have a variety of *maculata*-shaped leaves and spots.

The **Begonian**, July-August 1992, page 142, has a photo of B. 'Flamingo Queen', which I have admired since I first saw it. Well, I now have a cane begonia with the very same leaves but with coral-colored flowers!

Mary Simon (alias "Bumble-Bee") lives at 105 Nelson Ave., Marietta OH 45750. Her "pollen-fest" report was written for Round Robin #82, General Culture.

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IN MEMORY

Paul Coulat passed away suddenly at home on November 23, 1993. Paul was a "closet" supporter of the activities of Sacramento Branch. He didn't grow plants, but he provided moral and physical support to wife Joan, which allowed her to do even more for the branch.

Many can remember when Joan and Paul offered the use of the Banquet facilities at their family restaurant Aldo's for our Birthday Dinner. Paul learned how to get plants to our annual shows undamaged. On occasion, he even supplied his talents for our snack table at monthly meetings.

I was always struck by both his kindnesses and the fact that he didn't need for people to know about them. He had a sense of humor that would lie hidden until he would pop it on you when you least expected it. I'll miss him, and our deepest sympathies go out to Joan and her family.

- Paul Tsamtsis

It is with sorrow that her begonia friends learned of the death of **Arline G. Peck** on January 9, 1994 at the age of 87.

Arline, a long-time member of Buxton Branch, was also a past President of both the Connecticut and Rhode Island Branches. She treasured her begonias and was an active and enthusiastic member of ABS, enjoying shows, conventions, Rob-ins, and especially the Seed Fund.

With her begonias, she traveled thousands of miles to shows over the past forty years. She was generous, sharing cuttings and experience, and she will be remembered fondly.

- Joy Porter

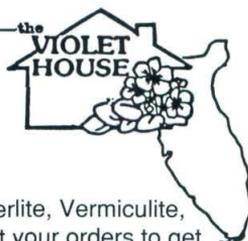
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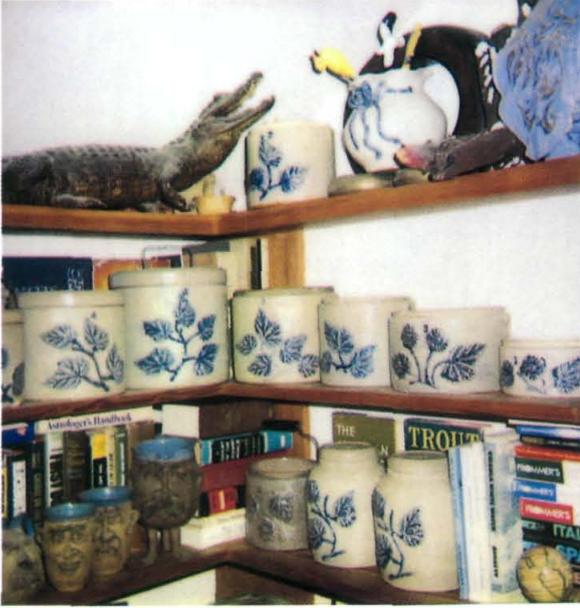
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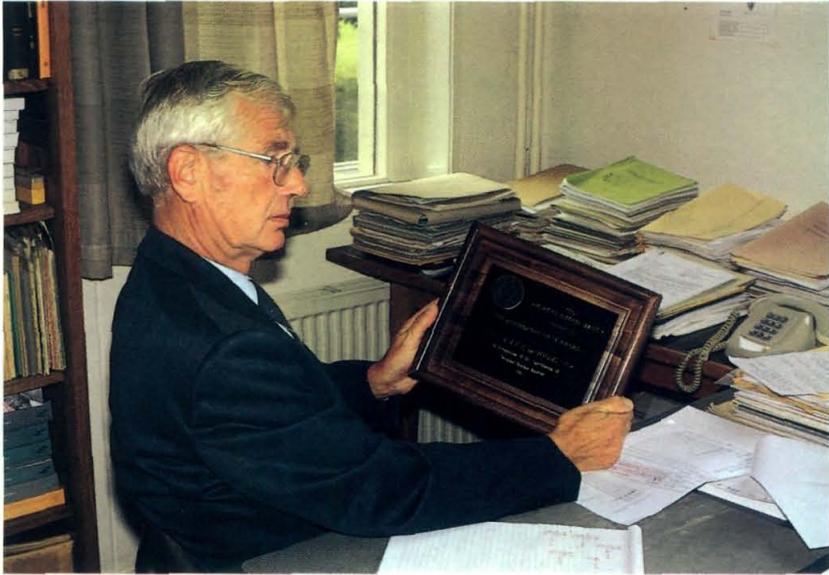


Maxine Zinman enjoyed Mary Bucholtz' article on begonia majolica, and points out that majolica isn't the only begonia-decorated tableware. Maxine sent this photo of her collection of begonias on salt-glazed pottery, circa 1880's. (The alligator must have come from last year's ABS Convention in Florida.)

Begonia Quilt



Vera Miller of Nebraska has put together a "begonia friendship" quilt, with squares done by Betty Benningfield, Mae Blanton, Marilyn Cates, Effie Clemens, Linda Clemons, Ingebong Coons, Glennis Crouch, Jerry Eubank, Ruth Franklin, Merle Gotcher, Alene Hooten, Judy Jolly, Virginia Kettler, Pam Lee, Lula Leonard, Mary Ann McCracken, Erma Platte, Carol Pugh, Gloria Quinn, Ozella Ramey, Ann Rogers, Anita Ruthenberg, Sue Shelley, Jennie Turner, Diana Wilkerson. The quilt measures 90" x 105". *Come to OK City, admire the quilt, and take a chance on winning it!*



Dr. de Wilde with the Eva Kenworthy Gray Award

Meet Dr. J. J. F. E. de Wilde

by Thelma O'Reilly

It was an honor, on behalf of the American Begonia society, to inform Dr. de Wilde that he was the 1993 recipient of the prestigious Eva Kenworthy Gray Award.

ABS members who pursue the research and identification of begonias, taxonomists, and scientists interested in *Begoniaceae* are familiar with Dr. de Wilde's accomplishments.

He is a *Begonia* taxonomist, specializing in the African begonia species at the Department of Plant Taxonomy, Wageningen Agricultural University, The Netherlands. A partial listing of his works includes:

1. *Begonia loranthoides* Hook. f. (Section *Tetraphila* A. DC.) by J.J.F.E. de Wilde (taxonomy) & J.C. Ahrends (cytology) in *Acta Botanica Neerlandica*, Amsterdam. 28 (4/5) 1979. p. 352-374.

2. Re-establishment of *Begonia cavallyensis* A. Chev. and the Altitudinal Vicariad *Begonia fusicarpa* Irmscher (Section *Tetraphila* A. DC.) F. A. Hagman & J. J. F. E. de Wilde in *Mededelingen Lanbouwhogeschool, Wageningen, The Netherlands* 83-9 (1983) pl-19.

3. *Begonia* section *Cristmen* J. J. F. E. de Wilde new section. In *Agricultural University Wageningen Papers* 84-3 1984. P. 113-129.

As Editor of Wageningen Agricultural University, he has published three volumes of *Studies in Begoniaceae* and an impressive list of papers that cover begonias of the African continent. In this capacity he has been involved with various taxonomic methods, both those used historically and new methods evolving, such as chromosome number, ovary placentation, pollen characteristics, and seed micromorphology.

Dr. de Wilde's enthusiasm, inspiration, and guidance have helped the various authors with whom he has worked. J. M. Reitsa, author of "Placentation in Begonias from the African Continent" (which appeared in *Studies in Begoniaceae I*) and *Begonia* Section *Baccabegonis* (which appeared in *Studies in Begoniaceae II*), wrote: "I am particularly indebted to Dr. J. J. F. E. de Wilde for his guidance and stimulating interest."

A letter I received from Prof. Dr. L. J. G. van der Maeson contained the following remarks:

"We, as Dr. de Wilde's colleagues, are also very proud of the distinction bestowed upon him by the Begonia Society. We appreciated your award; indeed it is Dr. de Wilde's contributions in the field of Begonia in Africa that is a series of important outputs of our department. His intense scientific efforts are producing ample fruits."

Dr. de Wilde's latest publication is *Studies in Begoniaceae* III 91-4 (1991).

Again, congratulations Dr. de Wilde. The ABS looks forward to your future publications.

Busy Thelma O'Reilly is Awards Chairman, serves as U-number project chair for the Nomenclature Department, and is Seminars Chair for the 1994 National Convention, "Begonias: OK!". Her address is 10942 Sunray Place, La Mesa CA 91941.

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Quote:

"It's nice to be important,
 but it is more important to be nice."
 Westchester Branch newsletter

IN THE NEWS...

There's a new publication out from **Elvin McDonald**: THE NEW HOUSEPLANT: Bringing the Garden Indoors. Photos include a series of **Mabel Corwin** as she roots a begonia leaf.

Two begonias made the "New Plants '94" listing in Flower & Garden magazine's January issue: **B. 'Hot Tamale'**, an ever-blooming cane by Logee's Greenhouses; and **B. 'Frosty Morn'**, a rex by hybridizer Paul Lowe. To order: Logee's address is Dept. B., 55 North St., Danielson CT 06239 (catalog \$3) and Paul Lowe's address is 5741 Dewberry Way, West Palm Beach FL 33415 (cuttings only; list \$1 plus SASE).

Kathleen Huckabee is the lead author of a paper in the December 1993 issue of *Oral Surgery - Oral Medicine - Oral Pathology* on a study on the effects of smokeless tobacco on regional tissue blood flow. Results? More bad news for devotees of snuff and chewing tobacco.

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In our last issue, Freda Holley described her begonia display at the 1993 Gardenfest in Clarksville, Arkansas, which led to an invitation to address the Arkansas State Horticultural Society. The following is the text of her presentation, which was illustrated by slides taken of her begonias and supplemented by handouts of the **Begonian**, copies of "Growing from Seed", and ABS membership information.

Begonias are Fun!

by Freda Holley

My infatuation with begonias began more years ago than I care to count. My husband says that since we retired it has gone from love to avarice. He is probably right, because no matter how many I grow there are always more I want to try. And the more I grow, the more I learn and the more fascinated I become. It is their endless variety that I find so much fun.

Begonias come with large leaves, and small leaves. Some are tall; some are short and drooping. Some begonias are edible, even said to be delicious. Some have large flowers, others small; or clusters of flowers; or flowers peeping out of the foliage like stars. The leaves can be slick and shiny; or slick and spotted; or puckered; or fuzzy; or shaped like a palm leaf.

My begonias regularly give me complete surprises. Often the first leaves are totally unlike the final leaves; sometimes even the whole plant changes. One year I have *B. dregei*, this dear little bundle of leaves and blooms; the third year *B. dregei* becomes this tall and stately bonsai. One winter a big, beautiful begonia I had totally disappeared: dead, I thought. The next spring, a forest of leaves springs up in its pot. Turns out that this is the one begonia (*B. grandis* ssp. *evansiana*) that is hardy enough to survive outside as far north as

New York. It also produces little bulbils in its leaf axils that fall to the ground and sprout in spring, hence the forest: my plant had produced bulbils aplenty.

Species begonias are those found in nature. Their seed reproduce the parent more or less exactly. Most species originate in the tropical rainforests; as the rainforests are disappearing, so are the begonias. Many are thought to be lost already, and more will be unless we begonia lovers can preserve them. Many of us try to raise as many of the species as we can, even though they are not always the most beautiful of plants and are sometimes more difficult to grow.

There are various ways to put together begonia collections, and I have always thought one of the fun ways would be by geography. Since they have been found right around the globe centered in the tropical and semi-tropical regions, their origins are interesting. I have, for example, begonias from Mexico (*B. carrieae*), Guatemala (*B. crassicaulis*), Honduras (*B. sericoneura*), Brazil (*B. echinosepala*), Bolivia (*B. leathermaniae*), Borneo (*B. diadema*), South Africa (*B. dregei* "Natalensis"), Nepal (*B. hatacoa* 'Spotted').

Hybrid begonias are those created by man or nature by the crossing of one species with another or with a hybrid. There are almost a thousand registered hybrids (and many more unregistered ones) in addition to the species. Any begonia raised from hybrid seed represents a potential new cultivar that can be named, described, and registered with the American Begonia Society.

The botanical system of classification is complex and not often used by hobby growers. Instead, the American Begonia Society accepts eight horticultural classifications, which are further subdivided for cultural or exhibition purposes. This system is described in detail in the standard reference works for begonia lovers: Begonias, The Complete Reference Guide and Begonias, 1984 Update, by Mildred and Edward Thompson.

The eight categories are:

1. cane-like, with fibrous roots and bamboo-like stems
2. shrub-like, which sometimes look like the canes but have more stems and branch more easily. They are often used for hanging baskets.
3. thick-stemmed, with tree-trunk-like stems. Some are popular for bonsai plants.
4. rhizomatous, comprising the largest group of begonias. They have thick rhizomes that creep along, under, or over the soil; a few grow upright. One of the most famous of this group is *B. rex*, whose hybrids gave rise to the whole next classification.
5. Rex cultorum; all members of this group are hybrids. It is, at least on some days, my favorite group because of the lovely leaves: some pink, some silver, some light - all beautiful. Some say we come to begonias loving the flowers and finish loving the leaves.
6. semperflorens, meaning, of course, everblooming. As a matter of fact, my introduction to begonias began with these everblooming beauties. This is probably the best known group because they are

usually fast growing, sturdy plants. Almost everyone is familiar with these as popular bedding and basket plants.

7. tuberous/semi-tuberous, which can have blooms as large as dinner plates. They are often sold in February in our area as tubers for early summer bloom. Anyone who has visited San Francisco and the Pacific Northwest has seen mass displays of tuberous begonias.

8. trailing-scandent, begonias that trail or climb, and represent the smallest grouping.

Propagating begonias is surprisingly easy. All those that I know can be started by taking tip cuttings. In the summer I often just prune a branch and stick the cuttings down in potting soil. They almost invariably root, and start to grow in a few weeks if they are watered regularly. A more difficult way, but one which will produce many plants, is to take wedge or leaf cuttings of rhizomatous, rex, and thick-stemmed types. The cuttings are usually placed in a covered container in sterile soil or vermiculite and placed under good light. This will not work with some begonias, such as the canes; I also find it much more difficult. However, it is one way to get many duplicates of particularly fine plants.

I personally love to start plants from seed. It is often the only way to get the species, and the hybrids always give those wonderful surprises. Begonia seed are extremely fine. You may recall how fine petunia seed are: it takes about 250,000 petunia seed to make one ounce. Well, begonia seed are four times as small! It takes one million or more seed to make an ounce. In one of the 1993 seed catalogs hybrid double petunias sold at 35 seed for \$1.25, and mixed rex begonia seed sold at 100 for \$2.95. According to my calculations, this puts petunia seed at \$8,929 per ounce, and begonia seed at \$29,500 per ounce. Compare this to gold, which when I last checked was selling for less than \$400 an ounce.

Fortunately, as a member of the American Begonia Society I can buy species seed from their seed fund at one dollar a packet and hybrid seed for 50 cents. Of course, the packets contain a lot less than an ounce, but they still give me more plants than I know what to do with! I am now producing my own hybrid seed, particularly of the canes, which are easier to hybridize.

I use crumbled Jiffy-6 pellets mixed with fine vermiculite in a recycled juice cup to start seed, which are just sprinkled on the top of the soil and not covered. These are placed about six to eight inches under a two-foot fluorescent light strip in the warmest place I can find in my house in the winter. Because the seed are so fine, I always have too many plants in the cup. Just as soon as the plants have the first true leaves I use tweezers to transplant them to a recycled margarine tub, this time spacing them evenly but close together. From this point I use potting mix of 1/3 fine potting soil with perlite (the commercial kind for starting seed), 1/3 peat moss, and 1/3 vermiculite. I water the seedlings from a quart of water mixed with 1 teaspoon of soluble plant food and the 1/4 teaspoon recommended dosage of a combination insecticide/fungicide. The latter is very important because the seedlings are subject to mold, mildew, and insects. For the same reason, I water only when they are quite dry.

I continue transplanting to margarine tubs until there are three or four fair-size plants per container. Then I transplant this group to a 6 inch bulb pot. When they outgrow this, I either transplant each plant to a 6" azalea pot, or fill a 10" basket with quite a few plants. It really seems to me that multiple plants in a container do better. This may be because they like the company and talk to each other, but it is more likely because the soil does not remain soggy.

Most plants end up in 10" baskets in a potting mix of 1/4 potting soil, 1/4 peat moss, 1/4 coarse vermiculite, and 1/4 sand. Whatever the mix, it should be very light.

I usually start my seed in the winter (from November to January), although the seed will start year around. Some seeds are reported to germinate better in July and August. Growth varies as much as the begonias themselves, even within the same batch of seed. Some of my rexes from last winter bloomed this fall, while others are still tiny. Surprisingly, many seedlings outpace tip cuttings or leaf cuttings in growing to full size or to blooming. Canes take at least two years or more to reach display size, but they vary a lot. *B. lubbersii* at 9 months is dwarfed by a hybrid cane of the same age. Semperflorens are usually grown from seed or tip cuttings and discarded after only one year. On the other hand, I read of one cane that had been kept continuously growing in the same pot for 25 years.

However you start begonias, it may well be that you will soon have too many. The bad news then is that begonias will freeze, so that a heated and lighted space is necessary come winter. The exception, of course, are the tuberous begonias that will go dormant; but even so the tubers need to be started in late winter under lights.

Fortunately, most begonias do very well outside here in Arkansas in the summer. They do want shade for most of the day. My spot is on the east side of our house, under a large oak tree. I am now looking for another shady place, and would I love to have a greenhouse!

Freda Holley, PhD., is a member of the Johnson County (Arkansas) Master Gardeners. Her bravery on behalf of begonias isn't limited to speaking engagements: she even grows tuberhybrida -successfully! - in Arkansas. Her address is P.O. Box 99, Ozone, AR 72854.

Convention Briefs

Packets

were mailed January 28th - watch for yours!

Hotel Rooms

will be held for ABS members until April 19 - **please reserve early**. After that date your chances of getting a room in the Convention hotel are slim.

Begonia Trailblazers

On Saturday morning there will be a panel of distinguished long-time ABS members (including several "Triple Crown" winners of ABS awards): Mabel Corwin, Margaret Lee, Irene Nuss, Thelma O'Reilly, and Rudy Ziesenhenne discussing ABS' early days and begonia pioneers.

Donations

are solicited for Show Trophies (Division trophies are \$30, and make a very nice memorial), the plant sale, and the hospitality room.

Donations may also be made to the Begonia Species Collection at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden; to the Fred A. Barkley Begonia Research Grant, sponsored by Southwest Region; and to the Barkley Begonia Collection Preservation Fund, sponsored by the Buxton Branch.

Please send all cash donations, specifying which fund(s) you are helping, to Convention Registrar & Treasurer Ann Salisbury, Box 452, Tonkawa OK 74653-0452. Make check out to "ABS '94". (All donations are deductible if you itemize.)

Also most welcome: non-perishable baked goods for the hospitality room!

Coming from Afar?

Enter the show! The Show Schedule & Rules for the judged show includes a category for "Travelling Begonias", and there are divisions for horticultural photos, artistic photos, and begonia arts and crafts.

Can't come?

We'll miss you! But did you know you and your begonias can enter the show anyway? Here's how:

If you live more than 250 miles from OK City, take a photo of your prize begonia, and enter it in Division W (you can enter as many photos as you like). The photo will be judged horticulturally, for the perfection of your plant (or plants).

There are also show divisions for artistic photos of begonias (Division WWW to be judged on artistic merit, not horticulturally); for artwork and for crafts featuring begonias (Division X). Divisions WWW and X will be judged by artistic judges.

Entries for Divisions W, WWW, and X may be mailed in. Send to Laura Kirby, 3709 N. W. 125th St., Oklahoma City, OK 73120. Entries must be postmarked on or before May 10, 1994 (that's to give the Placement Committee time to plan on displaying them). Please enclose stamped, self-addressed envelope (or stamps and label for packing box) for return of your material.

Q. I'm a Member-at-Large, and I'm considering coming to the convention - but I don't know *anybody*! That's scary...

A. If you love begonias, you'll feel right at home surrounded by friends who understand your passion - begonia folks are the friendliest nuts around! There's even a (free!) MAL breakfast on Saturday, so you can meet other isolated begonia lovers. Hope to see you there!

1994 National Convention Seminars

by Thelma O'Reilly, Seminars Chair

Seminar presentations at "Begonias: OK!", scheduled for Friday, May 20, 1994, feature five well-known ABS members covering begonia subjects. The sixth seminar participant presents highlights of two captivating states in the world's smallest continent.

Mabel Corwin "The Royal Rexes"

A noted begonia expert shares information about dazzling *Begonia rex* hybrids and cultivars and presents a preview of her exciting new introductions.

Kit Mounger, Bruce & Tamsin Boardman "Mad About Species"

A trio of begonia personalities promise a program of information and fun in the fields of begonia history, species distribution, and hybridizing.

Irene Nuss "The Cherished Canes"

ABS' "Cane Queen" shares the treasures of the past and present as she highlights the history of favorite cane species and cultivars.

Thelma O'Reilly "An Australian Adventure"

A begonia traveler discovers Victoria and South Australia on a non-stop adventure of experiences with friendly Aussies, unusual fauna, fascinating flora, and beautiful begonias.

TOURS

by Bruce C. Boardman, Tours Chair

Oklahoma: OK!

Rogers & Hammerstein saw the state as a land of hope, great beauty, and good living - if you just applied yourself and the elbow grease. Modern Oklahoma has fertile farms, horse ranches, oil wells, and a look of prosperity that belies the Dust Bowl images of the 30's & 40's. You'll see some of this energy from our motorcoach windows as we travel to show you Oklahoma History - Natural & Cultural - on five tours. They're all different, they'll all be fun! Come on along -

Oklahoma: OK!

Indian Country, Pre-Convention tour on Wednesday May 18, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.: The Plains Indians used bison as mobile grocery & hardware stores. Spanish explorers changed the life of the prairie with their horses, and the Comanches became the greatest mounted cavalry ever known. But on their land were other resources...Jim Biggs of Oklahoma State University will be our guide as we explore hunting sites, battle grounds, buffalo herds, & burial sites of famous warrior chiefs. (All prices are for transportation and entry fees - lunch on your own.) \$35

Guthrie, Thursday May 19, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.: Oklahoma's Territorial Capitol is a slice of the 19th century. We'll tour old residential areas and the elegant & exotic Scottish Rite Masonic Temple, before turning you loose in the galleries, boutiques, craft shops, and restaurants of the architecturally rich downtown. \$17

Myriad Gardens & Kirkpatrick Center, Friday May 20, 8:15 a.m. to 2 p.m.: We'll visit the Crystal Bridge and surrounding gardens of the Myriad Gardens complex, then take you to the Kirkpatrick Center, a museum complex housing Red Earth Indian

Center, Oklahoma Air Space museum, Omniplex Science Museum, International Photography Hall of Fame, numerous galleries, and - a Conservatory and Botanical Garden! You can lunch in the Garden Cafe when you need a break from the fantastic activity areas. \$25

Sunrise Birding in OK City, Saturday, May 21, 6:30 to 8:30 a.m.: Neil Garrison, Director of Martin Park Nature Center, will show us the garrulous Scissor-tailed Flycatcher and other avian visitors at local birding hot-spot Rose Lake. Bring your own binoculars and dress for early morning chill. \$5.

Will Rogers Country, Monday May 23, 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.: Post-Convention tour to Tulsa and its fabulous Gilcrease Museum and Gardens, then on to the Will Rogers Museum/Memorial in Claremore to learn more about the cowboy/philosopher whose friends included kings and presidents. \$30

Correction, Apology, Update:

In the last issue the list of winners of the Alfred D. Robinson Medal of Honor was cut short. Winners since 1986 are:

1987: B. 'Christmas Candy' (Mabel Corwin)

1989: B. 'Connee Boswell' (Martin Johnson)

and

1990: B. 'Glennis Crouch' (Mae Blanton)

Quote:

In the last issue we printed the following Quote from the Alamo Branch newsletter: "Footprints in the sands of time are not made sitting down."

Now the same newsletter suggests:

"If you want to leave footprints
in the sands of time,
wear work shoes."

Recipe for a Happy Day

1 cup of friendly words
2 heaping cups of understanding
2 heaping teaspoons of time and patience
Pinch of warm personality
Dash of humor

Measure words carefully. Add heaping cups of understanding. Use generous amounts of time and patience. Keep temperature low. *Do not boil.* Add dash of humor and pinch of warm personality. Season to taste with spice of life. Serve in individual molds.

- from the Alamo Branch newsletter

Plant Table Surprise: *Begonia incarnata*

by Howard Berg

One of the advantages of being asked to "take home and grow" unsold plants from the plant table is that we get to grow plants that we might not otherwise acquire. Many of the unsold plants end up in the compost heap, since they were not vigorous plants - which is usually the reason they were unsold. Others grow and return to the plant sale table without much notice. But once in a while we have a begonia that surprises us. *B. incarnata* turned out to be a really pleasant surprise.

We haven't grown *B. incarnata* for years. In fact I think it was two houses or more ago that we last grew it. But a few months ago we brought one home from the Knickerbocker Branch meeting and today, still in its four inch pot, it's two feet tall and covered with bloom. I will probably pot it up and grow it on the patio this summer, and try to bring it to its full potential.

B. incarnata is called the rose-colored begonia in contemporary literature and the derivation of the name comes from the Latin for "flesh-colored." A comparison of the flowers with the 1938 edition of the horticultural color chart of the Royal Horticultural Society shows the flower to be a light shade of carmine rose (color 621/3).

At maturity *B. incarnata* could grow from three to four feet tall. The light green leaves have a few hairs in evidence and are five inches long, tapered, and two inches wide at the widest point. The plant has a graceful and pleasing appearance.

B. incarnata is pictured in many of the early botanical and horticultural books under its own name and its synonyms. The Curtis Botanical Magazine picture (T. 2900) is under the name *B. insignis*. To me, the most interesting picture and text on *B.*

incarnata is in Maund's The Botanist, 1839, T. 103, which shows a graceful depiction of the plant I'm growing with true colors in the leaves and flowers. The Curtis picture by Walter Fitch, who illustrated most of the Curtis begonias, shows the heavier hand and darker colors typical of Fitch. Part of the description in Maund says "...it is easily forced, and made to produce its handsome drooping branches of flowers in great profusion at all times of the year."

The Botanist gives us the story of *B. incarnata*'s introduction to culture:

"The *Begonia incarnata* was first obtained from some earth in which other Mexican plants were sent to the Berlin Garden by M. Deppe. It was thence sent to Edinburgh, by some mistake, under the name of *Begonia ciliata*, and Dr. Graham, ascertaining it was not that species, described it as a new one, giving it the name of *Begonia insignis*, by which it is generally known in this country." (England.)

Since the plant had been described and named by Link and Otto in about 1828, later taxonomists have restored the proper name to *B. incarnata* and other names are synonyms.

Howard Berg, a past ABS vice-president, lives at 16 Highview Terrace, New Canaan CT 06840. His article first appeared in the December 1993 issue of The Knickerbocker News.

Judges' Corner

Congratulations!

to new judges

Leora Fuentes (TX)

Diane Horne (OK)

Bill O'Geary (FL)

Judges:

Planning on attending the 1994 National Convention in Oklahoma? Please contact Judging Chair Maxine Zinman, Rt. 1, Box 73, Boyce VA 22620 if you would like to judge.

Those wishing to take the judging course at the Convention are urged to volunteer to clerk for the show. Sign up ahead of time by writing Judging Chair (address above).

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Report from Fort Worth

by Tamsin Boardman

Kelton Parker, Curator of Begonias at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden, reports the begonia collection began 1994 with approximately 350 species and 550 hybrids. There have been some losses over the winter, and donations of begonia cuttings or plants would be very welcome.

Begonias are back on view in the exhibition greenhouse (which had been closed for renovations and installation of a mist system) and are looking especially lovely with the rhizomatous in bloom.

Still ongoing is the project of photographing all of the collection's species (photos of hybrids are to follow when the species are done).

Kelton is proud of the begonia library, which now contains descriptions of over 1,500 begonia species and 5,800 reference entries of begonia literature published in 1,961 journals. Also found: the locations of 750 begonia species currently in cultivation, and locations for collections of 1,123 horticultural journals.

The library represents a big investment of time and energy by Kelton and volunteer Eve Fox. It is also a tremendous research resource. One small example:

The 1994 ABS National Convention is dedicated to Dr. Fred A. Barkley, and one of the tributes will be publication of a pamphlet containing all of his writings for the **Begonian**. Looking through all of the back issues was a daunting task.

Enter Kelton and his reference library. Within less than three minutes, the complete list was in my hands. Was I ever impressed!

Weather permitting, Kelton will ship cuttings to other botanic gardens and to ABS branches and individual members looking for that certain begonia. He can also provide copies of articles from the reference library and slides of individual begonias (write for updated list, enclose SASE).

All of this bounty is made possible by donations to the Fort Worth Botanical Society begonia collection fund, and Kelton wishes to thank all of you members and branches across the country and overseas who have helped to defray expenses.

In addition to cash donations, Kelton welcomes donations of cuttings and rooted cuttings - when trimming back your begonias' vigorous spring growth, please remember the collection and share some nice cuttings of your prize beauties. The address is: ATTN: Kelton Parker, Fort Worth Botanic Garden, 3220 Botanic garden Blvd., Fort Worth, TX 76107.

Please visit this wonderful collection when you are in Fort Worth. If you're coming to the ABS Convention in Oklahoma City, you'll be about 5 hours away. It's worth the drive!

Tamsin Boardman is a greenhouse volunteer at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden. Her address is Box 69, Bluff Dale, TX 76433.

Late breaking news:

Kelton Parker is going to share his knowledge and experience as Research Librarian for ABS.

BULLETIN BOARD

ABS News

Highlights of the

January 22, 1994

Board Meeting:

Appointed

Awards Committee:

Mary Sakamoto
14332 Yorba St.
Tustin CA 92680

Back Issues:

Ann Salisbury
Box 452
Tonkawa OK 74653

Public Relations/Special Advertising:

Mary Bucholtz
2411 Hendricks Ave.
Jacksonville FL 32207

Research Librarian:

Kelton Parker
3220 Botanic Garden Blvd.
Fort Worth TX 76107

Resignations accepted, with regrets and thanks

Ed Bates, Audit Committee
Stephen Coppins, Research Librarian

Because of press deadlines, Minutes of the meeting will appear in the May-June issue.

A complete list of ABS Officers and Committee Chairs appears in each issue. If you would like to volunteer your time and talents, contact the President or the Chair of the committee you're interested in - your note will be warmly welcomed!

Address Changes

ABS President **Gene Salisbury** has a new post office box for ABS mail. Please use **P.O. Box 452, Tonkawa OK 74653-0452** when writing to Gene, and for Back Issues orders.

Branch newsletter editors, secretaries, and publicity chairs: please check your mailing lists and be sure you have the correct address for the **Begonian** editor: P.O. Box 69, Bluff Dale, TX 76433. This address was changed a year ago, and mail will no longer be forwarded from the Roanoke address.

Awards Deadline

Awards Chair Thelma O'Reilly must have your nominations for ABS' top awards by **March 13**. Her address is 10942 Sunray Place, La Mesa CA 91941.

Back Issues

Back Issues of the **Begonian** may be ordered from Ann Salisbury, P.O. Box 452, Tonkawa, OK 74653-0452. Cost is 50 cents per issue plus postage, or \$2.50 per year plus postage (6 issues per year). Older issues (12 per year) are \$5 a year plus postage.

The earliest issues of the **Begonian** (January, 1934 through June, 1938) are available from the ABS Bookstore for \$25 (cost includes shipping). The Bookstore also has the **Begonian** Index, 1941-1989, by Pat Williams for \$8.50.

To order, send check or money order in US funds payable to ABS Bookstore to Anita Ruthenberg, 1016 W. Arlington Ave., Fort Worth TX 76110. Foreign orders add 20% postage; Texas residents add 7 3/4% sales tax.

AROUND ABS

Notes from our Newsletters



Stylish members of Miami Branch - from left to right, top: Charles Jaros, Marilyn Goldstein, Frances Demare, Lynn Cook, Katherine Bloschak
from left to right, seated: Anne Fergis, Jennifer Kellum, Helene Jaros, Alma Crawford
Photo by Charles Jaros

Begonia fashions are the latest fashion craze, and Miami Branch members are as *haute couture* as they come: sixty-two begonia-clad members showed up for their Christmas party, and a good time was had by all.

The Alamo Branch Christmas party was the occasion not only for merriment but also for congratulations. Awards went to Mary Ellen McCormick, Elizabeth Muth, and Tom Zoellner for perfect attendance at branch meetings, and to Lucille Dyess for bringing in the most new members. Tom & Marylyn Zoellner set up a table-top display of photos of special events and newsletters in the 1993 life of Alamo Branch, with a little beribboned horn to show how the branch "tooted" its horn during the year. The branch has issued a challenge: to do even better in 1994.

Lots of ABS branches have newsletters to keep their members informed. None can equal the record of San Francisco, though. For over ten years they've enjoyed punctual, informative newsletters, all from

the pen - well, actually the typewriter - of Herbert C. Bloom. Herb is taking on the presidency of 60 Plus Alpha of San Francisco State University; the position, coincidentally, includes preparing their newsletter. Herb, who also served as treasurer, will be hard to replace - this columnist will miss him, too.

Where would be the most appropriate place to hold a begonia meeting - especially in February, when it's too cold for the garden? How about a tropical rainforest? Astro Branch members did just that, meeting at the Tropical Rainforest on Galveston Island just a causeway away from Houston, Texas. 'Twas of course under glass. Begonias seemed happy anyway, and the begonia-lovers enjoyed it too.

Quote:

"Meetings are rather like cocktail parties. You don't want to go, but you're cross not to be asked."
Jilly Cooper, in the Queensland Begonia Society newsletter

Conservation News

Conservation: the word means different things to different people. Conserving plants, conserving buildings, conserving cities, conserving traditions and ways of life, conserving our poor trashed-out planet - all worthwhile aims.

For the ABS Conservation Committee, the aim is more focused: to do the best for conservation of begonias, species and hybrids (we tend to stress the species, because once a begonia species is gone it cannot be restored and the gene pool for the genus is diminished; but we're interested in all begonias).

To that end, the Committee has sponsored collection trips to various countries where begonias are native; sponsored the Species Listing Project; supported the Begonia Species Bank at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden and the Barkley Collection in Massachusetts; sponsored displays and handouts for ABS Conventions - and nagged in this column!

All this philosophizing serves as an introduction to our newest project. It all started with a letter from Freda Holley of Ozone, Arkansas (see her article on page 55):

Why don't we start a "Species Adoption" project? A member could sign up as a "parent" committed to keeping a particular species going. There could be a certificate of parentage, and the adopter would try to set seed and provide cuttings or started plants to other members. Perhaps the Seed Fund could provide a start of seed, or the whole process might begin at the convention in Oklahoma City with as many species cuttings as could be gathered.

Wow! What a terrific idea! The Conservation Committee is excited about this, President Salisbury is excited about it and has given his blessing - so: here we go!

Adopt-a-Species

Here's how you can participate: send your name and the name of a species you'd like to "adopt" (keep in cultivation, self-pollinate, and share with others through seeds and cuttings) to Bruce C. Boardman, P.O. Box 69, Bluff Dale, TX 76433. Please view this as a major, ongoing commitment.

We'll send you an adoption certificate illustrated by Kit Jeans Mounger, and a quarterly newsletter for adoptive parents. We envision the newsletter as a means of sharing growing and propagation methods, as well as keeping you in touch with what other "parents" are doing.

It's okay to adopt more than one species, but don't overload yourself. It's also okay if more than one member adopts a particular species - they can trade pollen, which should strengthen the strain, and more specimens in more places increases survival chances.

P.S. There will be plants and cuttings at the National Convention in Oklahoma City, "Begonias: OK!", and you can sign up there.

Brazil Expedition

Last year ABS contributed to an expedition to Brazil by Darren Duling of Kew Botanic Gardens. He's back now, and will be sending reports on begonias he met.

Few begonias are widely available in the nursery trade. Here's one we're seeing more and more often...even overseas!

B. 'Looking Glass'

B. 'Looking Glass' was created in the United States by hybridizer Patrick Worley in 1981. It is the result of a cross between B. 'Lana' and B. 'Orpha C. Fox'.

HABIT:

Nice plant, robust, strong and straight, belonging to the cane group. The leaves have a bright silvery sheen, with veins that form a dark green pattern. The reverse of the leaves is quite red. It can be reluctant to bloom, but has nice and rather large clusters of pink flowers.

CULTURE:

Like nearly all begonias, it should not be overwatered, allow the potting medium to dry somewhat before watering again.

It needs a lot of light (but no direct sunlight) if it is to retain its nice colors. It does not like drafts or cold (do not grow it below 61° F.)

PROPAGATION: Take stem cuttings, preferably in spring.

This description of B. 'Looking Glass' was taken from the Members-at-Large newsletter, edited by MAL Director Thelma McRae - who received it from Francoise Fairfield of Westland, MI - who translated it from "le petit bégo-fil", newsletter of the Assoc. Francoise de Amateurs de Begonias edited by Mme. Annie Danancher.

The MAL newsletter will be sent to any ABS member living too far from a branch to participate. Send Thelma McRae 4 stamped, self-addressed envelopes Plus \$1 to cover cost of color photos. Her address is 5471 S. Libby Rd. #15, Paradise CA 95969.

If you have a reading knowledge of French, consider subscribing to "le petit bégo-fil". Write Mme. Danancher at 11 Rue Myrha, Paris 75018 France for information.

Can you help?

Vernia (Mrs. Bert) Routh was an ABS member in the 1960's. She was active in the Round Robins, wrote several articles for the **Begonian**, and her nursery Routh's Greenhouse in Louisburg, Missouri advertised regularly in our magazine.

Mrs. Routh also created some lovely hybrids, which she named for her granddaughters. Among them were rhizomatous Begonias 'Roberta', 'Angie', and 'Anne Swain'.

Her granddaughters are grown now, and are interested in begonias! They would like to find their grandmother's hybrids. If you are growing any of the Routh hybrids and would be willing to share cuttings or plants with family members, please contact Arlene Ingles at 157 Monument, Rio Dell, CA 95562-1617 or call her at (707) 764-5407.

CLAYTON M. KELLY SEED FUND NOTES

Thank you! to **Jackie Davis, Joan Campbell, Beth Castillon and the New York Botanical Gardens, Evie McDuff, and Rudy Zieshenne** for their generous donations to the Seed Fund.

Shrub-like

The shrub-like begonias are noted for diversity of leaves and growth habits, and the offering in this issue reflects this diversity. *B. echinosepala* (Brazil) has small elongated leaves - it's been called the "peach-tree" begonia - branches easily, and grows compactly in a graceful arch, making it an ideal begonia for hanging baskets. Flowers are fragrant, white, profuse. Warning: it has a tendency to decline after blooming; just let it rest a bit.

B. obscura, also from Brazil, also has white flowers, this time with white hairs, and small bare longish leaves. The leaf margin is slightly toothed. Grow as a basket plant, or a small shrub.

B. olsoniae has distinctive foliage (dark green leaves with prominent light green, almost yellow veins) and a compact growth habit. (See Plate 11, Begonias; The Complete Reference Guide). Flowers are light pink at the end of long reddish stems, and can be everblooming in good conditions. *B. peltata* is from Mexico. It has felted peltate leaves and an upright growth habit. Flowers are white. Likes good light and is heat-tolerant.

Thick-stemmed

There's a good selection of the unusual and hard-to-find thick-stemmed begonias right now. From Africa (Tanzania, Kenya) comes *B. johnstonii*, with medium-sized green leaves with an interesting scalloped margin. Flowers are pink.

Native to Central America (Costa Rica, Panama) is *B. multinervia*. It has large bare green leaves with red undersides, and white flowers.

Rhizomatous

B. deliciosa (Borneo) stands erect, with its rhizome jointed at or below soil level. Attractive dark leaves are dotted with silver - and reputedly among the more palatable begonia leaves. If you've ever been interested in sampling begonias, this would be a good one to start with; grow it from seed only, so you can be sure no pesticides are used. Flowers are light pink tinged with a deeper pink, and fragrant.

Ecuador, a country with incredible diversity of plant and animal species, is home to *B. ludwigii*, which is trunk-like, non-ramified, with creamy white flowers

Native to Central America is trunk-like non-ramified *B. sericoneura*, which has been known by several synonyms (*hypolipara*, *lindleyana*, *pilifera*). Basifixed cordate green leaves have prominent veins and hairs with a reddish cast. It is an easy grower with spreading growth habit. Spring flowers are white and profuse.

Tuberous

If you're crazy about the rare yellow-flowering begonias, you'll love *B. pearcei*, the progenitor of the yellow-flowering Tuberhybrida. Discovered in Bolivia, *B. pearcei* is low-growing and has profuse yellow/orange flowers summer into fall.

Trailing/scandent

B. radicans has nice glossy light green leaves and is a vigorous grower. It's had a long history in cultivation under several different names: *glaucophylla*, *procumbens*, *limminghei*, *limmingheana*, and more; but let's try to remember it by its correct name! The Thompsons report deep coral flowers in profusion winter/spring, but I've never seen it bloom.

Unidentified

B. U049, tentatively identified as *B. juliana*, comes from Brazil and has velvety green leaves with red undersides. See article & cover photo, **Begonian** March-April 1986.

-Tamsin Boardman

CLAYTON M. KELLY SEED FUND LISTING

Marilyn Goldstein, Seed Fund Director

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The American Ivy Society

is the International Registration Authority for Hedera, provides sources for new and 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 2123, Naples, FL 33939-2123.

ROUND ROBIN NOTES

Virginia Hamann, Round Robin Director

#25, Midwest Growers II:

With cold weather just around the corner, members were moving plants indoors after summering them outdoors.

Marie Hollinger (IA) is lucky to have a greenhouse in which she grows canes. Rhizomatous and rex begonias are grown indoors under lights. She treats her plants with a fungicide before she sees signs of mildew.

Cheryl Owens (IN) is a new Robin member; she sent a picture of a bonsai that she had done.

Everyone agreed the slugs in gardens and greenhouses were extra large this summer!

#30, Rex:

Cynthia Bishop (CA) says her mealy bugs were getting too frisky. So she used Amways' LOC as a control. She sprays every three days over a fifteen day span. It works, and does not burn plants.

John Howell (TX) is using re-ground styrofoam to replace perlite, since perlite can store too many salts in the Texas heat. The disadvantage of the styrofoam is that it floats to the soil surface; so John top-dresses the soil with coarse quartz sand and Canadian peat.

#55, Species:

John Keller (NY) would like to do a study on soils. He wonders if begonias use a growing enzyme they produce in a soil-based potting medium. He referred to a soil mix using garden dirt, composted manure, and sand.

#82, General Culture:

Mary Simon (OH) was delighted to find blooms on her *B. maculata*. She is enjoying hybridizing, saying that Begonias 'Corliss

Engle', 'Coral Chimes', and 'Tom Ment' are enjoying a pollen festival. "Bumble Bee Simon", as she describes herself, began using pollen of the three mentioned begonias on *maculata*. She discovered that *B. maculata* would not accept pollen from the other plants in bloom, but the three plants produced seed from *maculata* pollen. She is delighted with the results, and sent pictures of plants with heavily spotted leaves, seedlings of 'Tom Ment' x *maculata*, and an unknown x *maculata*. A super hybridizer in the same Robin, Mabel Corwin, suggested that *Mary may have hit the jackpot on her first try.* (See article and photo, p. 49)

#15, Cold Climate Greenhouses:

Elaine Ayers (OH) uses Superthrive to soak all cuttings. She says soaking cuttings in Superthrive and sugar water will raise the dead! Dead plants, that is. She also finds that leaves sprayed with Wiltpruf will hold moisture. She places cuttings in a plastic bag to be used for propagation, then blows into the bag until it is puffed up before sealing it shut. This helps delicate leaves.

Joyce Martin (IL) was welcomed to the Robin.

#13, Canes:

Walter Dworkin (NY) sent pictures of his hybrids Begonias 'Angel Eyes' and 'Angel Baby'. Walter also uses *B. maculata* in his crosses, which have beautiful green foliage covered with white spots.

Carolyn Collman (CA) is enjoying her new propagation box, 18" deep and 36" square. It is lined with plastic. Her soil mix is added, and cuttings are sprayed with Superthrive when first planted. The box is placed on the sunny side of her greenhouse, and she reports excellent results.

#22/51, Propagation & Growing from Seed:

Mary Simon (OH) has used Park Seed Company's seed starting mix for 20 years, with no problems with "damping off" of seedlings!

#8, Tuberous Begonias:

Julia Meister (NY) gives the following growing tips:

1. when planting tubers, make sure the tuber has a pink sprout. If it doesn't, sit the tuber on moist starting mix, firmly planted into the mix.
2. Water only when dry.
3. Pot size should be suitable to size of tuber. Never put small tubers into a large pot. Julia would rather start with a 2 1/2" pot, let the plant get root bound, then transplant to the next size larger.
4. Rotting of tubers could be caused by planting too deep; 1/2" to 1" deep is her suggestion.
5. Tuber size does not matter for bloom size; small tubers can produce good-sized blooms.

Ken Mackey (NZ) is growing mini-picotee and mixed ruffled picotee tuberous begonias from seed. Sown on the shortest day of daylight, they are ready for their first potting up.

#4/23, Windowsill & Canes:

Martin Perlmutter (TN) likes the unusual leaves of *B. nelumbifolia* and *B. thiemei* (also known as "macedougalli"). Madeline Thomas (CA) sent a hint on houseplant medicine: "give your plants a shot of Geritol on a regular basis for 3 months. Within a month you will notice new leaves appearing."

#5, Hybridizing and Breeding:

Ken Mackey (NZ) readies tuberous begonia for his southern hemisphere growing season by cutting off growth in early spring, making them resprout. He leaves one stem on a cutting tuber, and not more than two on a two-year-old tuber. He noticed that if a tuber is allowed to flower, the flower is

usually a female. When he collects pollen it is refrigerated until he can use it.

Elmer Wagner (LA) and Howard Siebold (WA) discussed tissue culture in propagating. Quotes from the May-June 1987 **Begonian** state that this method, used on orchids and daylilies, is labor intensive and not used on ordinary plants. Elmer asks why research can't be done on begonias, which are not considered ordinary plants. He suggests that the rarest and most beautiful species and varieties could be multiplied and made available to all members at regional and national meetings, creating opportunities for further research and crosses.

Brad Thompson (CA) should be congratulated on his wins at the Palos Verdes show. He entered 32 plants and was awarded 32 ribbons, 6 trophies, Best of Show, and 10 Cultural Certificates! Brad said that the hard work of preparing his plants for the show truly paid off.

Make begonia friends across the country and world-wide: join the Round Robins. Write Director Virginia Hamann, RR 1, Box 10, Chester, IA 52134 and tell her what your special areas of begonia interest are; she'll connect you with a group of Robin friends.

DIRECTORY OF BEGONIA SOCIETIES

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETIES

Australia

Association of Australian Begonia Societies

Peter Henderson, Chair
79 Chuter St.
Stafford, Queensland 4053

Associated Societies:

Begonia Society of Western Australia, Inc.

Lyla Kilpatrick, Pres.
Lot 44 Canns Rd.
Bedfordale WA 6112

New South Wales Begonia Society, Inc.

Jean Whitten, Pres.
15 Carlo Close
Kincumber 2250 NSW

Queensland Begonia Society

Elsie Paton, Pres.
35 Daisy Road
Manly West 4179

Queensland, Australia

South Australian Begonia Society

Ted Williams, Pres.
P.O. Box 116

Stirling 5152, South Australia

Victorian Begonia Society, Inc.

Philip Wright, Pres.
74 Railway Place
Macedon 3440, Victoria

Belgium

Societe Belge du Begonia

Piron Gilles, Pres.
Chemin de Lancre, 4
B-4970 Coe, Belgium

Canada

British Columbia Fuchsia & Begonia Society

Lorna Herchenson, Pres.
2402 Swinburne Ave.
North Vancouver B.C.
V7H1L2

Canadian Begonia Society

Miree Lex, Pres.
70 Enfield Ave.
Toronto, Ontario M8W1T9

England & Wales

The National Begonia Society

Dr. Eric Caterall
3 Gladstone Rd., Dorridge
Solihull, W. Midlands B93 8BX
UK

France

Assoc. Francoise de Amateurs de Begonias

Mme. Annie Danancher
éditeur, le petit bégo-fil
11 Rue Myrha
Paris 75018

Japan

Japan Begonia Society

Mr. Tatsuo Suzuki, Pres.
2-1-11 Yakumo 2-Chome
Maguro-Ku
Tokyo 152

Scotland

Scottish Begonia Society

c/- 260 Bellfield Rd.
Coalburn, Lanarkshire
Scotland M11100NQ, UK

AMERICAN BEGONIA SOCIETY

REGIONAL

Southwest Region

Tom Keepin, Director
4513 Randwick Dr.
Houston, TX 77092

BRANCHES

CALIFORNIA

Alfred D. Robinson

2nd Tuesday, 10:30 a.m.
Homes of members
Crystal Zook, Pres.
526 San Elijo St.
San Diego, CA 92106

East Bay

3rd Thursday, 7:30 p.m.
Northbrae Com. Church,
941 Alameda Berkeley
Rich Bishop, Pres.
1404 Cypress
Berkeley, CA 94703

Garden Grove

1st Wed., 7:30 p.m.
12860 Euclid St.
Garden Grove
Ed Vogel, Pres.
9811 Oma Place
Garden Grove, CA 92641

Long Beach Parent Chapter

3rd Friday, 12:30 p.m.
Apollo Neighborhood
Center, Apollo Park
12458 Rives Ave.
South Downey
Vivian Hill, Pres.
5133 Ashworth St.
Lakewood, CA 90712

Monterey Bay Area

4th Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.
Monterey Senior Cntr,
Lighthouse & Dickman Sts., Monterey
(no meeting June, Aug.)
William Schramm, Pres.
17 Calera Canyon
Salinas, CA 93908

Orange County

2nd Thursday, 7:30 p.m.
Fullerton S & L
2310 E. Lincoln Ave.
Anaheim
Anne Jones, Pres.
11357 Darcy St.
Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670

Palomar

2nd Sunday, 2 p.m.
Quail Botanical Gardens
230 Quail Gardens Dr.
Encinitas
Ingeborg Foo, Pres.
1050 Melrose Way
Vista, CA 92083

Palos Verdes

1st Mon., 7:30 p.m.
S. Coast Botanic Garden
Teri Dykzeul, Pres.
23115 Falena Ave.
Torrance, CA 90501

Rubidoux

4th Thursday, 7:30 p.m.
W. Riverside Mem. Auditorium
4393 Riverview Dr.
Norma Pfrunder, Pres.
3484 Jefferson St.
Riverside, CA 92504

Sacramento

3rd Tuesday, 7:15 p.m.
Garden Center
3330 McKinley Blvd.
Sacramento
Paul Tsamtsis, Pres.
1630 F St.
Sacramento, CA 95814

San Francisco

1st Wednesday, 8 p.m.
Garden Center
Golden Gate Park,
9th Ave. & Lincoln Way
Susan Muller, Pres.
124 St. Charles Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94132

San Gabriel Valley

2nd Tuesday, 7:45 p.m.
Los Angeles State & County Arboretum
301 N. Baldwin Ave.
Arcadia
Beverly Hitz, Pres.
663 Anaby Ct.
Upland, CA 91786

San Miguel

4th Saturday
Members' Homes
Thelma O'Reilly, Pres.
10942 Sunray Place
La Mesa, CA 91941

Santa Barbara

4th Sunday, 2:30 p.m.
The Cottage
1130 N. Milpas St.
Santa Barbara
Rudolf Ziesenhenne, Pres.
(address same as above)

Santa Clara Valley

3rd Thursday, 7:45 p.m.
Rm 2, Kirk Com. Cntr.
1601 Foxworthy Ave.
San Jose
Jackie Davis, Pres.
170 Wingfoot Way
Aptos, CA 95003

South Bay

2nd Friday, 7:30 p.m.
Dana School Cafetorium
135th & Aviation
Hawthorne
Evelyn Isaac, Pres.
2022 Bataan Rd.
Redondo Beach, CA 90278

Theodosia Burr Shepherd

1st Monday, 7:30 p.m.
American Commercial Bank
6401 Telephone Rd.
Ventura
Pam Hantgin, Pres.
94 N. Santa Rosa St.
Ventura, CA 93001

Westchester

1st Thursday, 7:30 p.m.
 Univ. Christian Church
 5831 Centinella Ave.
 Janet Brown, Pres.
 7825 Kentwood Ave.
 Los Angeles, CA 90046

Whittier

1st Friday, 7 p.m.
 Room 1, Civic Center
 7630 Washington Ave.
 Whittier
 Beverly Hitz, Pres.
 205 E. Maple St.
 Ontario, CA 91961

CONNECTICUT**Connecticut**

4th Monday
 homes of members
 Priscilla Beck, Dir.
 312 Shewville Rd.
 Ledyard, CT 06339

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AREA**Potomac**

4th Sunday, 2 p.m.
 Green Spring Farm Park
 4601 Green Spring Rd.
 Alexandria, VA
 Ruth Ihara, Pres.
 Rt. 2, Box 182A
 Leesburg, VA 22075

FLORIDA**Fort Lauderdale Area**

1st Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.
 3245 College Ave.
 Davie, FL
 Sylvia Ben, Pres.
 2808 N. 46th Ave. #E551
 Hollywood, FL 33021

Jacksonville

3rd Monday, 7:30 p.m.
 Garden Club
 1005 Riverside Ave.
 Jacksonville
 Ruby Young, Pres.
 231 Tallulah Ave.
 Jacksonville, FL 32208

Miami

4th Tuesday, 8 p.m.
 Simpson Garden Center
 55 SW 17th Rd.
 Miami
 Alma Crawford, Pres.
 14250 Madison St.
 Miami, FL 33176

Palm Beaches

2nd Monday
 Horticultural Center
 531 N. Military Trail
 Helene Jaros, N. Dir.,
 2621 NW 23rd Ct.
 Miami, FL 33142

Pinellas County

3rd Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.
 Fellowship Hall, Church of
 Christ
 6045 Park Blvd.
 Pinellas Park
 Bob Koehler, Pres.
 5300 48th Terrace N.
 St. Petersburg, FL 33709

Tampa Bay Area

3rd Wed., 7 p.m.
 Members Homes
 Dora Lee Dorsey, Pres.
 8110 N. Edison Ave.
 Tampa, FL 33604

GEORGIA**Greater Atlanta**

2nd Sunday, 3 p.m.
 odd-numbered months
 Atlanta Botanical Garden
 Russ Richardson, Pres.
 1854 Chancery Lane
 Chamblee, GA 30341

ILLINOIS**Greater Chicago**

4th Sunday, 1:30 p.m.
 Oak Park Conservatory
 Earth Shelter
 621 Garfield St.
 Chicago
 Daniel Paulson, Pres.
 6339 S. Kenneth Ave.
 Chicago, IL 60629

MASSACHUSETTS**Bessie Buxton**

Call for meeting info.
 Frank Green, Pres.
 20 Cross St.
 Fitchburg, MA 01420

MINNESOTA**Minnesota**

2nd Wed., 7:30 p.m.
 Homes of members

NEW JERSEY**Elsa Fort**

Helen Green, Pres.
 2100 Hunter St.
 Cinnaminson, NJ 08077

NEW YORK**Knickerbocker**

2nd Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.
 (except July & Aug.)
 Hort. Society of NY
 128 W. 58th St.
 New York
 Vanessa Young, Pres.
 2975 Bainbridge Ave
 Bronx, NY 10458

Brooklyn-Queens-Nassau

3rd Sunday, 1:30 p.m.
 Planting Fields Arboretum,
 Oyster Bay NY
 Walter Dworkin, Pres.
 8 Rugby Rd.
 Westbury, NY 11590

OHIO**Greater Cincinnati**

Douglas Hahn, Pres.
 7736 Stonehill Dr.
 Cincinnati, OH 45230

OKLAHOMA**Fred A. Barkley**

3rd Sunday, 2:30 p.m.
 Will Rogers Garden Cntr.
 3400 NW 36th St.
 Oklahoma City
 Jim Jolly, Pres.
 300 N. Hickory Lane
 Moore, OK 73160

PENNSYLVANIA**Edna Stewart Pittsburgh**

3rd Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.
 Pittsburgh Garden Center
 Melissa Jones, Nat'l Dir.
 5220 Beeler St.
 Pittsburgh, PA 15217

William Penn

4th Tuesday, noon
Homes of members
Mrs. Jacques Le Roux,
Pres.
Dove Lake House
Gladwyne, PA 19035

TEXAS**Alamo**

3rd Saturday
Homes of members
Barbara Stewart, Pres.
30631 Blanco Rd.
Bulverde, TX 78163

Astro

1st Sunday, 2 p.m.
Gail MacGregor, Pres.
4407 Joyce Blvd.
Houston, TX 77084

Dallas Area

3rd Thursday, 7:00 p.m.
Northaven Gardens
7700 Northaven Rd.
Dallas
Don Miller, Pres.
1010 Mt. Auburn
Dallas, TX 75223

Mae Blanton

4th Wed., 10:30 a.m.
Homes of members
Kay Jennings, Pres.
5701 Oakmont Lane
Fort Worth, TX 76112

Satellite

4th Tuesday
League City Bank & Trust
League City
Helen Spiers, Pres.
1423 Laskey
Houston TX 77034

THANK YOU!

to all Branch Officers who
sent updated information
for this Directory.
Please check your Branch
listing and let us know of
updates and corrections.

Coming Events

March 19-20: South Australian Begonia Society will hold its annual show at St. Peters Town Hall, Payneham Rd., St. Peters, from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Admission is \$1.50. Morning and afternoon teas will be served.

April 16-17: Miami Branch Show & Sale, "Begonias in the Rainforest", at Fairchild Tropical Gardens.

April 23: Astro Branch Plant Sale and Mini-Show-Off at Memorial City Mall in Houston area, 9:45 a.m. - 6 p.m.

May 19-22:

"Begonias: OK!"

American Begonia Society Annual Convention

at the Embassy Suites, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, in Will Rogers Country "where you never met a begonia you didn't like!" Dedicated to Dr. Fred A. Barkley. Hosted by Southwest Region. Packets were mailed at the end of January - if yours hasn't arrived, or if you need one for a friend, please contact Registration Chair Ann Salisbury, Box 452, Tonkawa OK 74653-0452, or call her at (405) 628-5230.

July 30-31: San Francisco Branch Show & Sale at Tanforan Shopping Center.

August 26-28: San Francisco Branch participates in San Francisco Flower Show, Inc.

1995

April 14-17: Fourth Australian Begonia Convention in Brisbane, Queensland, hosted by Queensland Begonia Society. Seminars, plant sales, visits to local begonia collections. Cost approximately \$150 Australian currency covers all events, dinner. For more information, contact P. J. B. Henderson, 79 Chuter St., Stafford 4053, Brisbane, Australia.

Deadline for next issue is March 15.

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:

Cynthia Bishop
4150 Auburn-Folsom Rd.
Loomis, CA 95650
(916) 652-7311

Deadline for next issue is March 15

BEGONIA CUTTINGS AND PLANTS.

Send \$2 for expanded 1994 list. Kay's Greenhouses, 207 W. Southcross, San Antonio, TX 78221.

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In the

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- Audit Committee
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- Convention Chairman.....Martha Chesnut
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- Historian.....Norma Pfrunder
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- Judging.....Maxine Zinman
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- Long-Range Planning.....Kay Tucker
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- Members-at-Large.....Thelma McRae
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- Research.....Houston Knight
13455 Hadley St., Whittier CA 90601
- Research Librarian.....Kelton Parker
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- Round Robin.....Virginia Hamann
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- Seed Fund.....Marilyn Goldstein
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33019-2209
- Slide Library.....Charles Jaros
2621 NW 23rd Court, Miami FL 33142

OPENINGS
Begonian Editor
Horticultural Correspondent

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Plant Society Ads: Wanda Macnair, 177 Hancock St., Cambridge MA 02139

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

Help Available from ABS

These services are available to all ABS members. For names and addresses of department heads, see preceding page. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope when you write.

Members at Large

Members who do not belong to branches are represented at Board meetings by the Members-at-Large Director. MAL members receive a quarterly newsletter and work on projects by mail

Back Issues

Back issues of the **Begonian**, also current issues for branch use at shows, etc.

Bookstore

Books about Begonias! And more! Write for complete list.

Judging Department

Certifies accredited judges through judging schools and correspondence course.

Nomenclature Department

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.

Research Department

Works on problems relating to begonia culture.

Round Robins

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

Seed Fund

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

Slide Library

Write Slide Librarian for list of slide programs and videos.

Member Input Opportunities

Conservation Department

wants lists of species grown by members

Nomenclature Department

wants photos and information on "U" numbers members are growing from seed.

Research Department

solicits suggestions on projects and participation in research.

Seed Fund

seeks donation of seed and photos of plants grown from Seed Fund seed.

Slide library

requests individual slides of begonias as well as complete slide programs.

**See also "Openings", preceding page.
Participate. You can make a difference.**



American Begonia Society

157 Monument
Rio Dell, CA 95562-1617

Address correction requested

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