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The BEGONIAN 

The BEGONIAN

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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.

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

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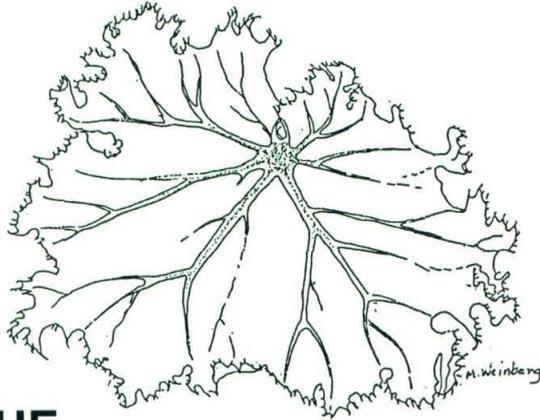
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COVER PHOTOS

front - B. 'Pink Chaser' shows off among other begonias at Oklahma City's Crystal Bridge. Photo by Brian Morgan taken at the 1994 ABS Convention.

back - the quilted begonia wall hanging designed and executed by Ruth Franklin will be the grand "Grand Prize" at the 1995 ABS Convention, "Begonia Super Stars" in California Labor Day weekend.



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A Begonia "Super Star":
Fancy frilled leaf of
B. 'Madame Queen',
ADR Medal winner in 1964
drawing by Mary Weinberg

Quick!

Check your mailing label: if it says 7/95 or 8/95 your membership is about to expire. Please renew! We don't want to lose you!

Tours!

by Brad Thompson

By now you have received your Convention packets (or will be receiving them shortly) and I'm sure you have already read with excitement about the tours we will be having. Your packet contains most of the relevant details you need to know about the tours, but I'd just like to throw in a few more comments to try and pull in the two or three of you who haven't decided yet.

The first tour to the city of Orange, California is a pre-convention tour for you collectible and antique lovers. I'm sure most of you collect something, whether it's figurines or plates or a myriad of other stuff we just can't live without. Believe me, if you collect it, then you will find it there. I spent 8 hours there one day and still didn't make it through all the shops, and I bought enough stuff to keep addictions at bay for quite a while. I know some of you collect those majolica plates that look like rex leaves - anyway, I saw several of those and I wasn't even looking for them. Come early, you'll love it, trust me.

Our second tour is a special one also. Many of you I'm sure have been to Mike Kartuz' Greenhouses before, but it's exciting every time. I live close enough to drive there in a couple of hours and I still relish every trip and spend hours there just trying to soak it all in: this is a plant lover's paradise. The next stop is Weidner's Begonia Gardens, where you will definitely be overwhelmed. All of her acres of space are filled with huge lush plants and her fields of tuberous begonias are breathtaking. Her plants are big but reasonably priced, and she does have some small plants for travellers. The last time one of our groups took a bus tour there we filled the entire luggage

area of the bus with giant baskets of B. 'Cleopatra' plus had to put other plants in the aisles (in fact, we skipped the other stop we were to make because we had a hard time getting people to leave, and didn't have one more inch of space in the bus). We're also going to Rancho Soledad Nursery to see a demonstration of Mable Corwin's rexes being tissue-cultured - you don't want to miss that either.

The program we put together for the kickoff of the Convention, our "Magic of Superstars" show, will be a real treat for everyone (including me), and we're all looking forward to it. One of the magicians does a spectacular show with trained doves that fly out over the audience (I wonder if we should wear hats - but I'm sure they're potty-trained) and is really something to see - as are the other two magicians. These guys aren't the big name guys you see on television that are all show, these guys are real magicians that have won awards from their fellow magicians, and they do real magic to astound us all. You'll be sorry if you miss it.

Our third tour visits two private homes of Doug Frost Branch members who grow fantastic plants and who have beautiful homes. One is the home of Arlene and Jack Hoskins, who have built their home and immense collections of a variety of plants, not just begonias, over many years. They grow all of the plants to perfection and have incorporated all of the collections into elaborate and beautiful landscaping over their entire property, which is definitely worth seeing. The other home is that of Mary and Eddie Sakamoto, who bought a new house last summer. The Sakamotos

have gone to great pains to have their home beautifully landscaped and to build a huge shadehouse/greenhouse for Mary's continually growing collection of begonias. I like to visit there because Mary test-grows all of my begonia hybrids for me, and you'll get to see them too, if you take this tour. As an added note, anyone who has eaten food prepared by Eddie Sakamoto can attest to the fact that just the food alone will be worth the price of the tour.

Our fourth tour will be to the International Fern Show and the Los Angeles County Arboretum. Almost all of us who grow begonias also have an interest in ferns because they are perfect companion plants, they can grow in those places that are too shady for the begonias, and because they just set off the begonias so well. Anyway, if you collect ferns or just like to look at them, this is the place to go because of all of the rare varieties that you'll see there that you probably won't ever get to see anywhere else. You'll also get an opportunity to buy some of those rarities - it may be a one-time chance because you can't buy most of these unusual ferns out of catalogs. The Arboretum itself is worth the trip, and covers more area than you will be able to see in one tour, and has its own large collection of begonias to see (yes, I did say begonias), so there is something for everyone to see. They also have a gift shop, with more plant-related stuff for you to get to take home.

Tour number five to the Magic Castle in Hollywood is being given priority to you out-of-towners because Herb Wilkinson can get the rest of us in later, but for you folks that don't live here this will more than likely be your only chance to see it. It is a private magic club open only to members and is quite lavish, historical, and of course magical, but you can't get in without a member to invite you (thanks, Herb) so don't miss your only chance. All of us have

that yearning to see something truly amazing and this tour will be it, you'll remember it forever. Now I'm sure some of you are saying (very few probably), "I'm not really all that interested in magic." I had similar thoughts about visiting the Cowboy Hall of Fame during the Oklahoma Convention, but I kicked myself all the way home for not taking my camera along and still talk about how thrilling it was to see all of the statues and art. Don't kick yourself later, sign up for this tour right away, seating is limited.

Our last tour to the Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens will appeal both to the upper crust and the lower crust among us. You can mingle with famous paintings or you can get down to earth with the pansies. This place certainly has something for every taste, and you will not be able to have a dull moment. This place is huge, and you'll have a lovely time: guaranteed.

With constraints on space, I really couldn't tell you every little thing about each of the tours but hopefully I was able to get you as excited about these tours and this convention as I am. We really made every effort to make these tours special in every way, and went to great lengths to make sure all of you, our honored guests, have a magical time with us in California. We look forward to seeing all of our old and also our soon-to-be friends. Come to be with us for ABS Convention '95! If you go to all the conventions we look forward to seeing you again, and if you haven't gone to a convention before, make this your first, you'll remember it for the rest of your life. Aren't begonia people wonderful?

*715 W. 220th SP#45, Torrance, CA 90502
is the address of Brad Thompson - one of
the most enthusiastic of the wonderful be-
gonia people. Watch for his great hybrids in
the 1995 Convention Show & Sale!*

Convention '95, "Begonia Superstars"

A Note to Travellers

No matter where you live, we want you to feel a part of the Superstars Supershow!

If you live more than 400 miles from Irvine, California, there's a Division in the Show just for you. Bring a begonia (or two or three, or maybe more) in a small pot (not to exceed 4"), and enter it in any of eight classes (one for each begonia horticultural classification: Cane-like, Shrub-like, Rhizomatous, *Semperflorens*, *Trailing-Scandent*, *Tuberous/Semi-Tuberous*, *Rex*, *Thick-stemmed*).

Begonias too big to cram in a 4" pot? Take a photo of your biggest and best begonias, because there's also a Division for photographs of begonias to be judged horticulturally. For camera bugs, there's a Division for begonia photographs to be judged on artistic merit.

Another possibility is entering the Arts & Crafts Division, with classes for drawings (black and white), paintings (oil, acrylic, water color), fabric (handwork and needlework), ceramic, china painting, leaded glass, jewelry, and a final class for other mediums.

So tuck those begonias, photos, handcrafts, and artwork into your luggage, and show them off in California! There are lots of ribbons and trophies for you to take home.

Seminars!

Thelma McRae, Seminars Chair

Friday, September 1 :

Bob Manthorne of the Los Angeles International Fern Society, an expert on epiphytic ferns:

"Davillias and Polypodiums"

Carol Notaras, ABS Treasurer and former President, award-winning grower of *Tuberhybrida*:

"Growing Tuberous Begonias"

Brad Thompson of Palos Verdes Branch and several others, newsletter editor for three branches; and Paul Tsamtsis of Sacramento Branch, former President, and currently newsletter editor:

"Hybridizing Canes the California Way"

Saturday, September 2:

Bruce C. Boardman, ABS Vice-President and Conservation Chair, and Tamsin Boardman, Editor:

"Begonias in Australia"

Kelton Parker, Curator of Begonias at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden and ABS Research Chair/Research Librarian:

"Begonia Species and Our Species Bank"

***Don't Miss the "Begonia Super Stars"
Super Fun!***



Begonia mariannensis

by Dieter C. Wasshausen

In August 1990, Dr. Tracy McLellan wrote to me about what she thought was an undescribed species of *Begonia* from Trinidad, West Indies. She had collected seeds and had taken photographs of the suspected new taxon found along the Marianne River, a north-flowing river in the Northern Range Mountains of Trinidad, about 1 km. from the Arima-Blanchiseuse Road. I agreed with her initial diagnosis and we decided to publish her find jointly as a new species in the recent issue of *Brittonia* (*Brittonia* 47(1): 21-23, 1993), a journal of systematic botany. As it was difficult to publish the color photographs of our new species in that journal I thought it would be nice to share them with the readers of the **Begonian**.

Begonia mariannensis clearly belongs in section *Begonia* (*Begoniastrum* A. DC.) because of its staminate flowers with 2 sepals and 2 petals, pistillate flowers with 5 tepals, 3 bipartite or bifid stigmas, and unequally 3-winged capsule with bilamellate placentas.

This herbaceous stemless perennial appears to be similar to *Begonia glandulifera* Griseb., a species previously described from Trinidad but also found in Venezuela's

Peninsula de Paria. *B. mariannensis*, however, is smaller overall and has leaves of quite different shape. *Begonia glandulifera* is 30-60 cm. tall, has leaf blades that are semicordate-ovate, 30-45 x 22.5-30 cm, and peduncles 30 cm. long. In

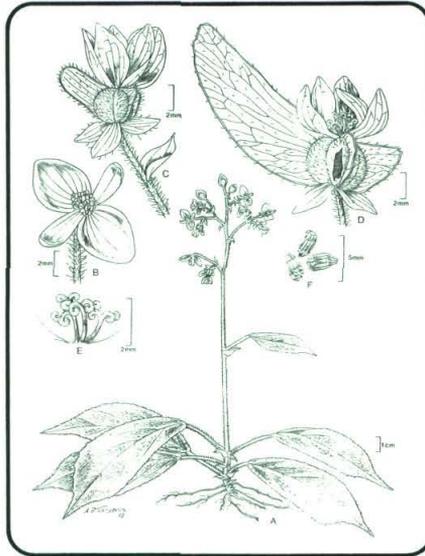
contrast, *B. mariannensis* is 10-15 cm. tall, has leaf blades that are elliptic to obovate, 5.5-11 x 2-4 cm., and peduncles 7-10 cm. long.

The new species is purported to grow along the steep banks of the Marianne River in dappled shade and full shade of the tropical evergreen forest. In her correspondence Tracy tells me that she has grown both *B. glandulifera* and *B. mariannensis* from seeds collected in the field. Both are some-

what difficult to keep alive and, unfortunately at present, she does not have any living plants.

Dieter Wasshausen, Ph.D., is Curator of the Department of Botany at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. 20560, and a co-author of *Smithsonian Institution Contributions to Botany* #60: *Begoniaceae*.

Botanical drawing of *B. mariannensis* by Alice Tangerini, from the cover of *Brittonia*, January-March 1995, New York Botanical Garden.



Growing Begonias in Hanging Baskets

by Greg Sytch

Begonias make superb candidates for hanging containers. However, some varieties are better suited for this style of growing. Choose begonias that are natural spreaders, that arch outwards, or that have blossoms that hang down.

The first step in growing begonias in baskets is to prepare the container. I have found that begonias generally do not like the self-watering pots on the market, because they hold too much water in the pot, which may cause root rot. Instead, I like to use wide, shallow baskets, and thin plastic works better for me than the thicker plastic.

Soil should be light in weight, porous, and not compact easily. This is the only time that growing in a heavier mix may be allowed, because a suspended container will dry out quicker than one sitting on a bench or windowsill. Think about weight, however, because you may have to move the plant at a time when it has just been watered thoroughly.

The hanging basket may also need to be watered more often, since it dries out rapidly. Many growers remove the saucers that come attached to plastic baskets, especially when growing outside. If you use the saucer, always make sure water does not sit in it.

Now comes the fun: choosing your basket plants.

For quick, dramatic baskets, I love to use canes that grow compactly. Since they are usually higher up in the growing area,

they receive more light and grow more quickly. Cane begonias classified as low-growing or intermediate work best, or any cane that arches naturally. Some varieties I have been successful with include the following:

'Black Jack': thick, dark, cut chocolate leaves with red reverse and huge fragrant clusters of rose-colored flowers. The stems arch without any effort on your part.

'Nokomis': classified as a Superba' - and it can get huge if grown upright in a pot - when pruned early the branches will cascade outwards. The leaves, a rich green, are heavily splashed with silver and the fragrant pink blossoms hang easily.

'Anna Christine': beautifully ruffled midnight-black leaves are highlighted with a deep red reverse. Considered compact, it blooms anytime with lightly fragrant rose-red flowers.

Trailing-Scandent begonias are a natural for baskets, and there is not much to be said other than that they are at home grown in this fashion.

Many of the shrub-like begonias are stunning in baskets. Some of the best are:

echinosepala: spreading species from Brazil with thin, glossy green leaves and arching stems. The massive displays of fragrant white flowers occur all year, but the plant may rest after a heavy blooming.

'Caravan': felted dark bronze leaves with a cream mid-stripe highlight the red reverse. A spreader, it naturally grows outwards to form a full basket, but can drape over the rim with age. The beautiful pinkish-white fragrant blooms appear anytime.

Reality is that any begonia may be grown in a basket, but pay attention to their special needs while suspended and you can have gorgeous specimens in no time at all. Enjoy begonia baskets, and utilize that often-wasted space up high in your growing area.

Greg Sytch works his basketry magic in Florida. His address is P.O. Box 1033, Port Richey, FL 34673.

Quote:

"Only in my later, golden years have I smartened up: I know now that currently trendy issues may come and go, friends may desert you and enemies ignore you, but a begonia is something you can count on."

- Jim Wright, Dallas Morning News columnist

IN MEMORY

Ruth Wills, a founding member of Fred A. Barkley Branch, was one of those gifted growers who could coax the most difficult plant to shine. Her terrarium plants especially were always outstanding: no one who saw it will ever forget her *B. raynaliorum*, a Cultural Award winner in 1984. Ruth could always be counted on to have an extra (or two) of whatever was most rare and unusual for the time, and she delighted in sharing. A reliable workhorse in her branch, she also made friends across the country through participation in Round Robins and attendance at National Conventions.

Ruth died this spring, after lengthy illness. We were lucky to have known her, and hope her warm smile and begonia expertise are being put to work in a better place.

-Tamsin Boardman

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B. 'Mickey's Pride'

*her latest,
and some say her greatest*

by Barry Mann

This latest creation from Mickey Meyer has literally **stood** up to the test.

In 1992 when Dot and I visited the home of Mrs. Mickey Meyer in Tathra, New South Wales, we spied this little beauty amongst the many other wonderful begonias in her collection. It was mid-autumn and the small plant had only two tiny leaves, but that was enough to see that this one was something special. As winter was approaching Mickey willingly gave us a leaf and asked that we test grow it for her.

Unfortunately, as we were packing up to leave the leaf was accidentally dropped and stood on! Regardless, we carried this leaf with us for four more days, until we finally arrived home from our journey.

Dot immediately put this poor crushed and battered leaf down in her usual medium, and you guessed it, shortly after new plantlets emerged. By early spring we had a fine specimen plant (meanwhile Mickey's parent plant succumbed to an unusual, severely cold winter in her region).

Over the past two years we have test grown this begonia for Mickey, and at the recent Association of Australian Begonia societies Convention at Easter, 1995, this hybrid was introduced to the delegates with several small plants being given to some of those attending (one to American delegate Tom Keepin). Hopefully, through this distribution this hybrid will find its way into many collections. It certainly deserves to live after having survived the very small space between a slab of concrete pavement and someone's leather-soled size nines (guess whose?).

Hybridizer Mickey Meyer of New South Wales, Australia, is familiar to ABS members through her Round Robin letters, seed donations to our Seed Fund, and lovely begonias we've grown from her seed.

Barry Mann, Convention Chair for the 1995 Convention of the Association of Australian Begonia Societies, and wife Dorothy, former AABS Seed Fund Director, are justly famed for their incredibly gorgeous begonias. Their home garden (at 49-51 Goddards Road, Yamanto, Ipswich, Queensland 4305, Australia) has been featured on gardening programs throughout Australia.

See page 122 for another article by Barry, not exactly relating to begonias - but perhaps something to consider as we work in greenhouses and dash about to shows.

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Description:

rhizomatous, compact growth.

leaf size 10" x 8", cleft, double spiral, acuminate.

margins undulate, serrate-ciliate.

surface silver sheen, pinky-mauve splashed deep green,

veins bright green; reverse pink.

Has not yet flowered.

Do You Know COLIN?

by Barry Mann

Just who is COLIN, you may well ask!

I was introduced to COLIN some years ago whilst performing duties as an industrial and domestic accident investigator. You see, no matter what the accident or where it happened (at home, in the workshop, or on the roads) COLIN was always there and indeed played some part.

So let me introduce COLIN:

Complacency
Obstinacy
Laziness
Ignorance
Neglect

Complacency: the "she'll be right, it won't happen to me" attitude. Well, the casualty wards of most hospitals are full of people who think like that.

Remember. If it can't happen to you, it probably will.

Obstinacy: the "I'm going to finish shifting this soil today even if it kills me" attitude. That night as he lies in the local coronary care unit, he says to his loved ones, "By jove that last barrow load was heavy."

Remember. when your body tells you it's done enough, STOP.

Laziness: The newspaper is on the roof but you'd have to go into the house for the shed keys just to get the ladder out, then put it all away again; why not put one foot on the fence, the other on that branch, then reach up - OOPS! - slipped with one foot on each side of the fence. (Enough to wipe the grin of anyone's face, isn't it?)

Remember. Always use the right tools for the job - after all, why buy a ladder if you don't use it?

Ignorance: You've bought a new appliance, but why bother reading the manual? Let's just plug it in and pull the trigger. OOOPS - what's the terrible burning smell?

Remember. Always read the instruction booklet first. Manufacturers do modify their products - or, in cases of chemicals, alter their formulas.

Neglect: You know the car needs new tires and is due for a brake check, but you've promised a weekend camping, so why not one last trip and then have the car serviced next week?

Remember. That one last trip may be just that!

Now that you've been introduced to COLIN, ask yourself just how well you know him. If it's just a casual friendship then BEWARE. But if you classify him as a close personal friend I'm afraid you're ACCIDENT PRONE.

P.S. The author apologizes to those whose parents gave the the name Colin.

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To a Begonia

Some poets claim
they can clearly see
a flower smiling.

I too sense
in passing you
something beguiling.

But with your myriad tiny bows
and in some leaves a curl,
I see no smile
but see in you
a giggling little girl.

by Gonny Van den Broek, courtesy of
The Poet's Domain, vol. 11, Spring 1995
Copyright ROAD Publisher 1995,
Painter, Va.

Thank you to Carrie Karegeannes for
sending this delightful poem and
obtaining permission to reproduce it.

A Brief for Botany

There should be no monotony in studying your botany,
It helps to train and spur the brain - unless you haven't gotany.

It teaches you, does botany, to know the plants and spotany,
And learn just why they live and die, in case you plant or potany.

You learn from reading botany of woolly plants and cottany that grow on earth
And what they're worth, and why some spots have notany.

You sketch the plants in botany, you learn to chart and plotany,
Like corn or oats. You jot down notes - if you know how to jotany.

Your time, if you'll allotany, will teach you how and whatany
Old plants or trees can do or be.
And that's the use of botany.

Anonymous. Found in the Volunteer Voice, Fort Worth Botanic Garden

SPOTLIGHT ON:

Begonia decora



Text & photo by Patrick Blanc

Begonia decora Stapf is found at intermediate altitudes (3900-5600 ft.) in the mountains of the West Malay Peninsula. It grows mostly on the ground, among dead leaves where it is hidden. Two forms are said to grow side by side: one with a red reverse, the other with a gray-green reverse. Natural propagation by rooted leaves leads to the development of populations that can cover a few square meters. The location is always dark and saturated with humidity.

Habit: Small rhizomes growing on the ground surface and producing rounded brown or green leaves with pale green veins. The leaf blade is puckered and pubescent. Pink flowers on long peduncles.

Culture: Light and acid potting mix, high atmospheric humidity. An ideal terrarium plant. Does not like bright light or being sprayed with hard water.

Propagation: From leaf cuttings.

from le petit bégo-fil, newsletter of Assoc. Francoise de Amateurs de Begonias (via the Members at Large Newsletter, translations by Francoise Fairchild)



THE AMERICAN IVY SOCIETY INC.

AIS is the International Registration Authority for Hedera, provides sources for new and unusual ivies; publishes three ivy newsletters, *Between the Vines*, and one *Ivy Journal* a year with reports on research hardiness testing, life-sized photos of ivies. Each member also receives an ivy plant.

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Tamsin Boardman reviews

“Growing Tuberous Begonias in Australia”

Ralph Willsmore

40 pages, soft cover

19 color plates

5 Star Press, South Australia

In 1991 Bruce and I were in the bookstore-giftshop at the Adelaide Botanic Gardens in Adelaide, South Australia when a gentleman seeing our camera-and-binocular-draped necks and hearing our funny accents remarked jovially, “I say, are you tourists?”, then laughed heartily at his own joke. When he learned we were visiting for the Australian Begonia Convention, he told us we just had to see “my ponga.” It took a bit before we understood he didn’t have a “ponga” - he wanted us to enjoy a real treat, the Willsmore Begonia Farms at Myponga, a town about 60 miles from Adelaide.

He was so enthusiastic and insistent that the next day we drove past some lovely views of the ocean into the hills - dry hills covered with dryland grasses and scattered cattle, with a few gum trees, looking thirsty. At Myponga dust arose in clouds from the road behind us: begonia habitat? we asked ourselves. Had that nice gentleman at the Botanic Gardens been playing a joke?

After a few wrong turns and with some help from townspeople, we turned into a drive with a large shadehouse. Outside were a friendly elderly dog and cheery beds of annuals, and inside - oh, my! what seemed like millions of tuberous begonias in flower, each bloom bigger and better, an incredible profusion of beauty. We lingered for hours, enjoying not only the begonias but delicious tea and scones, and used all our film and wished for more.

Despite lingering, we did not get to meet the Willsmores, who had taken one of their very rare days off. But their staff were friendly and knowledgeable (and the cook superb), and it was a most enjoyable experience, relaxing and exciting at the same time.

Now Ralph Willsmore has written a book, to tell how he weaves his magic with the lovely tuberous begonia.

You’re probably asking why a book on growing tuberous begonias in Australia would be of interest here. There are, after all, plenty of books on growing tuberous begonias - you know, those gorgeous flowers you can only grow in cool climates?

What’s different about this book is that the author grows beautiful big tuberous begonias and lives in a warm climate - a climate with its share of drought, wind, and long periods of extreme heat. Because he fell in love with, and tried to grow, tuberous begonias only to find that the standard tubers perished in his area, Ralph Willsmore spent years creating *Tuberhybrida* that will thrive in conditions considered ‘way beyond the pale.

His book gives simple tips to keep *Tuberhybrida* not only alive but flourishing, and I found it so encouraging that I’ve just potted up a dozen tubers (too late for much of a show this year, but next year I can use the experience gained). Topics of special

interest to those of us in hot climates include locating plants to reduce heat and watering in extreme heat.

Heat is not the emphasis, however. There's a short history of Tuberhybrida, a listing of classifications of flowers, suggestions for growing in shadehouses and greenhouses, discussions of potting mixes (including recipes for soil-based mixes - that's rare), propagation, cuttings, dormancy and tuber storage, seven pages on problems and how to deal with them. For U. S. growers sizes are given in inches and feet and cups as well as metric measures. And every few pages there are excellent photos of Willsmore hybrids.

There will, however, be language stumbling blocks: on page 25, there's a reference to a "household laundry copper" - does that mean a copper kettle? Or is "copper" a generic term for a kettle? It also

takes adjusting when told to expect dormancy "in the latter part of April and May"...just when (hopefully) our plants are getting started. (I think adding 6 months may solve that problem).

Lists at the back of Willsmore hybrids (one list is for the beginner: tubers that are hardier or more resilient), will be very tempting.

"Growing Tuberous Begonias in Australia" is available by mail order from Willsmore's Begonia Farm, P.O. Box 280, Myponga, South Australia 5202, Australia. Price is \$9 plus \$3 postage *in Australian currency*. (At current exchange, that's about \$9 U.S.).

The ABS Book Store has a few copies, and we hope to get more. Price is \$10 US

NEW BOOK RELEASE

Growing Tuberous Begonias in Australia

Written by Ralph Willsmore - 35 years of growing and hybridizing
40 pages, 19 colour plants of Australian Hybrids

Send to: Willsmore's Begonia Farm,
P.O. Box 280,
MYPONGA. South Australia. 5202
AUSTRALIA

Price: \$9.00 per book
Add \$3.00 postage U.S. A. & U. K.
(Australian dollars)

In the News...

San Diego Home & Garden magazine for April, 1995 had an exciting article by Damon Hedgpeth entitled

"Bounty of Begonias

They aren't our official plant, but maybe they should be."

Interviews with **Marge Lee, Mabel Corwin**, and **Michael Kartuz** followed, along with reminiscences of San Diego's earlier growers **Alfred D. Robinson and Alice Clark**, lots of good growing information, a special feature on **Thelma O'Reilly** (see below), and mentions of local ABS branches.

Thelma O'Reilly has had a busy spring collecting titles! On March 12 the Virginian-Pilot & The Ledger-Star dubbed her 'The Begonia Queen' and "Detective Thelma", lauding her nomenclature expertise in tracking down begonia identifications. In April she was featured in San Diego Home/Garden' as "The Species Queen" for her work with begonia species, (identified and, especially, unidentified). Also in April she visited the Convention of the Association of Australian Begonia Societies in Brisbane and spoke on "Bewitching Begonias: Species", also participating in a panel on setting judging standards.

Bruce C. Boardman, ABS V-P and Conservation Chair and also a member of the Queensland Begonia Society, was Banquet Speaker at the Australian Convention in Brisbane hosted by the Queensland Begonia Society. The title of his talk was "Taking Care of the Little Things."

On May 23, **Dr. Sandra Scarr** appeared on *CBS This Morning* on a panel of experts discussing children and schooling. It's an interesting coincidence that Dr. Scarr had also visited Brisbane and the Queensland Begonia Society in the spring, becoming their fourth US-based member.

Kathleen Huckabee received the 1995 Instructional Leadership Award given annually by Tarleton University to a Texas teacher for outstanding achievement and commitment. Kathleen teaches advanced science sections at Granbury High School, and has involved her students in community projects; cooperation with local medical facilities in research, observing surgeries and autopsies, and participating in labwork; instituted new college-level courses and spring-break working field trips in her efforts to keep students motivated and active in the learning process. Her goal: "to make it next to impossible for students not to learn."

Down Houston, Texas way, the Armand Bayou Garden Tour is a big event. Among the outstanding gardens featured last April was that of ABS member **Rose Shipley**, and her begonias were much admired.

Riddle:

If a begonia and a pot cost a dollar and a dime, and the begonia costs a dollar more than the pot, how much does the pot cost?

a teaser from the
Alamo Branch newsletter

Answer on page 140

Show News

Around the Country

Members of **Houston Satellite Branch** shone at the *Gulf Coast Gardeners Forum 1995 Spring Show*. **Alice O'Donnell** received blue ribbons for Begonias 'Pink Jade', 'Jumbo Jet', and *dichotoma*. Begonias taking blues in horticulture were 'Kentwood', shown by **Pat Franz**; 'Lospe Tu', shown by **Alice Pearson**; 'Dancin' Fred', shown by **Sue Shelley**; and Begonias 'Joe Hayden', 'Lospe Tu', and *suffruticosa*, shown by **Estelle Sullivan**. Estelle was also awarded the Marie Workman Award for design, and her winning design included B. 'Joe Hayden'.

Buxton Branch has done it again: another Gold Medal for their exhibit at the *New England Flower Show*, plus an educational certificate. Featured this year was a simulated greenhouse structure, with plants and signage to identify and illustrate the various horticultural classifications of begonias. The exhibit was planned and implemented by **Frank Green**, with assistance from **John Harrington** and **Dottie Gardner** and her family.

Branch members distinguishing themselves at the show included **Betsey McBratney**, whose *B. solanathera* won in hanging baskets; **Phyllis Podren**, who took a blue with *B. herbacea*; and **Wanda Macnair**, who took home blue ribbons for *Begonias raynalianorum*, *rajah*, U074, and (in a special "mother plant and baby" division), B. 'Joy Porter'. Wanda also won in succulents and gesneriads, and was a featured speaker.

The *Barkley Branch Show* in Oklahoma City April 29 & 30 was the scene for multiple victories for husband-wife growing team of **Ann & Gene Salisbury**. Their B. 'Harbison Canyon' took Best of Show and a Cultural Award (97 points), their 23 blue ribbons won them Sweepstakes, and their 121 entries gave them the "Showing is Sharing" Award. Their entry in the Southwest Region Hybrids Division, Dorothy Caviness' B. 'Red Lace', won the Division and a Cultural Award (96.2). Other Salisbury entries winning Cultural Awards were B. 'Passing Storm' (95), *B. popenoei* (95.6), and B. 'Cupid's Curl' (96.5).

Other winners in the large show of 252 entries were **Linda & Mike Clemons**, whose B. 'Gold Coast' in full and glorious bloom won Best of Division in terrariums and a Cultural Award with 95 points; **Thelma Dodd**, who won the Artistic Division with an acrylic of B. 'Lenore Olivier'; **Diane Horne**, whose B. 'Catedral' won the **Heritage Begonias Division**; **Effie & Howard Clemens**, who won Best Species in Show with B. U068; and new member **Pat Udell**, who won the Novice Division with an unnamed rex cultivar.

The *Miami Branch Show* in May was full and high on quality: there were 216 entries from 29 exhibitors representing three counties. Top honors went to **Maybelle Green**, whose *B. bowerae* 'Major' took Best of Show and a Cultural Award with 98 points. Following close was Best of Show Runner Up B. 'Little Brother Montgomery' with 98 points, grown by **Elizabeth Mateus**. **Bob Cochran** won Sweepstakes, with 21 blue ribbons and **Fran DeMare** was Sweepstakes Runner Up with 12 blues.

B. 'Lana' won first in the Novice Division and a Cultural Award (96) for **Chuck Gonzalez**.

Additional Cultural Awards went to **Joyce Pridgeon** for B. 'Looking Glass' (98); **Bob Cochran**, for B. 'Chuck Jaros' (97.5); **Daisy Farm**, for a B. rex hybrid (97); **Virginia Jens**, for a B. rex hybrid (97); **Fran DeMare**, for B. 'White Freckles' (96); **Clara Bada**, for B. *cubensis* (95); **Peggy Fratus**, for B. 'Mad Hatter' (95); and **Charles Jaros**, for B. 'Venepi' (95). (Note: this list, taken from the branch newsletter, is incomplete - there were a total of 27 Cultural Awards given.)

Special features were two displays: Paul Lowe hybrids (mounted by Peggy Fratus, Elizabeth Mateus, and Virginia Jens), and a large display mounted by Daisy Farm.

Best of Show at the *Southwest Region Get-Together*, "Lone Star Begonias: Y'all Come!" in San Antonio, Texas in May was a stunning B. 'Lubbergei' entered by **George Macias**. And thereby hangs a tale: George brought three plants, intending to enter them all in the Novice Division. The Entries Committee took one look at his plants and demurred; George ended up entering, and winning, three Divisions.

John Howell won both Sweepstakes (with 15 blues) and "Showing is Sharing" (with 56 entries). **Don Miller** won "Best Southwest Region Hybrid" with B. 'Peach Parfait', an Asmussen hybrid. First in the Novice Division went to **Mary Ellen McCormick's** B. 'Tom Ment'. New member **Lisa Holmes** won Best Artistic Entry with a very lovely begonia on stained/etched glass. (Because the Get-Together was so close to our printing deadline, neither the list of Cultural Awards nor photos were available at press time. We'll try to include these in the next issue.)

At the annual show of the *Fort Worth Garden Club* the **Mae Blanton Branch** had a lovely display designed by **Barbara Hamilton** with plants provided by **Kelton Parker**. In the Educational Division, an exhibit by **Kelton Parker** and **Tamsin Boardman** featuring the Fort Worth Botanic Garden's Begonia Species Bank was awarded a blue ribbon.

GESNERIAD CORRESPONDENCE CLUB

RON & LOIS KRUGER, EDITORS
207 WYCOFF WAY WEST, EAST BRUNSWICK
NJ 08816 Membership \$5 US; \$6.75 Canada; \$12
foreign; Braille \$5 (all payable US funds to Ron
Kruger) includes a bi-monthly newsletter; seed &
tuber funds, round robins; listing of pen pals with
various plant interests.

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF PLANT
FRIENDSHIPS!

From the Mailbox,

continued

Here's suggestion for a rhizomatous begonia that appears as if it is going to die: cut a small piece of the rhizome off, with some roots attached if possible, and pot it in a smaller pot. This will give you a back-up in case your plant does indeed succumb.

If you have a question, problem, or even a tip, don't hesitate to contact me at P.O. Box 1033, Port Richey, FL 34673. If you would like to call, by all means do so at (813) 841-9618. I think you'll find me available most evenings except for Mondays and Thursdays.

From the Mailbox

Greg Sytch, Horticultural Correspondent

Two questions this spring dealt with problems growing rhizomatous begonias:

Q: A recent OHIO caller was desperately seeking answers to her dilemma. Her rex and rhizomatous begonias were not growing well, had spindly growth, and developed blotchy, scarred leaves that gradually rotted, leaving only newer growth. The condition was worsening with the onset of spring weather, and she was very worried that she would start losing her beloved begonias.

A: The soil is too wet! I discovered that she used packaged soil of “whatever was available” in the stores. She said that it did seem heavy, was dark, did not drain well, and caked when dry. It was an obvious case of drowning begonias. My advice was to try and find a “professional” mix locally, and amend it with additional perlite. I also told her about the formula I have used lately that has increased the health of my rexes and rhizomatous dramatically:

- 1 part peat moss
- 1 part vermiculite
- 3 parts perlite
- 2 parts soil conditioner

The soil conditioner is a formula of finely chopped pine bark and charcoal that I find at a local Home Depot. It is reasonably priced at \$3.50 for 3 cu. ft., and increases the drainage of the soil. Then I suggested that she “pot down” by taking the plants out of their current pots, lightly shaking loose soil off, and potting them in a pot that fits the root system snugly. This allows excess water to drain. By now I’m sure that all of her rex and rhizomatous begonias are newly potted down in soil and pots more appropriate for the plants.

I also mentioned that while the rhizomatous are in heavy bloom they are not putting forth leaves as quickly as they would the rest of the year. Therefore consumption of water is less. This is a great time to allow for just a little bit less water, perhaps waiting that extra day or two between waterings. Otherwise, her watering frequency should be fine as she follows good culture practices.

Q. I have, over the years, lost some plants with rhizomes that I am able to revive for a while. Two or three leaves will grow but then a leaf will get limp and drop off. At the same time a sturdy, new leaf grows. but then another leaf drops off. Eventually I lose the plant. I grow my plants in a terrarium in an east window, and I just set the plants in their pots in the terrarium. I grow mainly in plastic pots, as I have found that clay dries out too fast. Perhaps the plastic keeps the plants too wet? Thanks for any help you can offer as I am sure I will have more problems in the future. ILLINOIS.

A. Your problem with rhizomatous begonias is probably keeping the soil too wet to suit them. They prefer soil that is moist but somewhat dry in between waterings. I also suspect that your soil is too heavy and does not drain well. First, switch to a fast-draining soil that is light weight, and includes perlite. If you are growing in a terrarium, try mixing in a little sphagnum, unmilled, with the soil and perlite. This will allow excess moisture to drain away and not suffocate the roots. Then be careful with watering. In terrariums, begonias need far less water because the high humidity keeps moisture at the roots longer. Wait until the soil feels, or appears, dry before lightly watering again.

continued, previous page

Coming Events

July 15-16: Westchester Branch Show & Sale at Fox Hills Mall Center Court, 6050 Sepulveda Blvd. at Slauson Ave., Culver City, Los Angeles, CA. Saturday 10 am - 7 pm, Sunday 11 am - 6 pm.

August 25-27: San Francisco County Fair 56th annual Flower Show, "The Secret Garden". Friday & Saturday 10 am - 5 pm, Sunday 10 am - 4 pm. Admission \$5, Senior/disabled \$3, children under 3 free. Preview Aug. 24 6:30-8:30, \$15. Watch for **San Francisco Branch** booth!

August 31-Sept. 2: "Begonia Super Stars". 1995 ABS Convention. Hosted by Doug Frost Memorial Branch and featuring the "Begonia walk of fame" highlighting winners of the Alfred D. Robinson Medal. Radisson Plaza Hotel, directly across from Orange County Airport.

October 8: Palomar and Alfred D. Robinson Branches co-sponsor Show & Sale at Quail Gardens, Encinitas, California.

Please note: the date for this show & sale has been changed, and the earlier date announced in the May-June issue is not valid. Thank you to Eileen Clause for notifying us.

**Start planning now...
1996 Southwest Region Get-Together**

May 24-26

(Memorial Day weekend)

Dallas, Texas

Harvey House Downtown

Hosted by the **Dallas Area Branch**, with some terrific surprises in store.

Y'all come!

BULLETIN BOARD

ABS News

ABS Board Meeting: Highlights

Meeting during the Southwest Region Get-Together in San Antonio, Texas on Saturday, May 13, the ABS Board approved the appointment of Beth Castellon as Seed Fund Director and granted a charter to Western Reserve Branch of Cleveland, Ohio. Approval of a new branch in Massachusetts was given pending a name change, requested by the Board to avoid confusion with an existing branch.

(Because the meeting was so close to the **Begonian** deadline of May 15, full Minutes will not be available until the next issue.)

Research Director to Visit St. Louis Botanic Gardens

ABS Research Director/Research Librarian **Kelton Parker** will be spending part of his summer in St. Louis, exploring the extensive library at the Botanic Gardens for additions to our begonia literature. Besides research material, Kelton will visit with staff and contact the Garden's Center for Plant Preservation on behalf of our Species Bank in Fort Worth.

Southwest Region has contributed \$500 towards expenses, and a generous anonymous donor \$100. If you'd like to help defray costs, additional contributions may be made by sending a check to ABS Treasurer Carol Notaras, 2567 Green St., San Francisco, CA 94123.

Thank you, Ann Salisbury!

It seems Ann has turned into an unofficial ABS "Trouble-shooter," picking up responsibilities at a brisk pace when illness hits another officer: first it was Advertising Manager for the **Begonian**, then Back Issues, then the Seed Fund.

Two of these responsibilities end in August, when Book Store Chair **Betty Benningfield** takes over Back Issues and **Beth Castellon** becomes Seed Fund Director. Until then, however, please order seed and Back Issues (and recent overprints of the **Begonian** - the overprints are sent to branches or members wishing to give them away to prospective members at displays, shows, sales, for cost of postage only) from Ann at 452 Tonkawa, OK 74653, or call (405) 628-5230.

Holiday Cheer: Deadline August 31

Joan Coulat is contacting branches about extending holiday greetings in the November-December **Begonian**. These must be in to Joan by the end of August to make printing deadlines - it's a BIG help if you anticipate the deadline!

Elections

We're all busy, true; but it takes only a few minutes to clip out your ballot, vote, address an envelope, and lick a stamp. There's no contest this time around, so you may not think it matters. It does, however, to the candidates, who have agreed to dedicate a lot of time and effort in the coming year to seeing that ABS runs smoothly. Your vote is a vote of confidence and a "thank you!" to the dedicated few willing to serve. Please give them your support! They need it.

If there are two ABS members in your household, you will receive a second ballot by mail. Please do not duplicate the ballot.

*Ballots must be received by **July 21**. Votes will be counted on July 22.*

The ABS By-Laws, Article VII - Elections, Section 5, state:

"The Committee shall invalidate any ballot containing any writing other than the marks necessary to register votes for candidates nominated under the procedures provided for under these By-Laws..." The Ballot Counting Committee reminds members that the ballot is voided if personal remarks or additions are made on the ballot.

Please don't invalidate your vote! Comments may be made on a separate piece of

About the Candidates

Ann Salisbury has been a member of Barkley Branch (OK) since 1986. She has served as Vice-President, Newsletter Editor, Show Chair. On the national level she was Registration Chair and Treasurer for the 1994 ABS Convention as well as being in charge of printing; has been Advertising Manager for the **Begonian** for 3 years and handled Back Issues for 2 years.

JUDGES' CORNER

Judging Schools

There will be a Judging School at the 1995 ABS Convention, "Begonia Superstars". Please let Judging Chair Maxine Zinman know if you are planning to attend so that she can have sufficient copies of the course materials available. Her address is Rt. 1, Box 73, Boyce, VA 22620.

Accredited judges who have not taken the course lately are urged to attend and keep up with changes.

Note: The Judging School that was to be held by the Canadian Begonia Society in July has been postponed until further notice.

Interested in judging at "Begonia Superstars"?

Judges who will be attending the 1995 Convention please let Maxine know (address above).

Conservation News

"It's collecting and cataloging from before sun-up 'til well after sun-down - and no one is invited to go along unless they're willing to work as hard as we do." So there are very few new botanists going to the rugged rainforests of southern China with Bob Cherry and the half dozen botanizers and horticultural enthusiasts. Bob grows commercially in New South Wales, a couple of hours, by car, northwest of Sydney, Australia. You've seen photos in past issues of some of the begonia he's collected.

Michael Ferraro pours over the literature - what little is available - of collections made in Papua New Guinea and tries to recreate the traverses made by early plant collectors. When he gets back to Flecker Botanic Gardens in Cairns, Queensland, Australia, he'll key out what he can and write up the ones that he can't, hoping that someone in his network can put a name to them.

These were just two of the individuals that Tamsin and I met on our too brief visit to Australia in April, and both presented slide lectures at the Fourth Australian Begonia Convention in Brisbane.

Later, we were delighted to meet the curator and staff of the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney, and we looked in upon their current activities. And we were guests of Shirley & Peter Sharp, NSW Begonia Society officers, at a lecture by staffer Geoff Breen, who spent six months 100 kilometers west of Hanoi, Vietnam, teaching propagation techniques to the local university staff. His slides for this program were a narrative of his trip and the RBG efforts in Vietnam, although, later, he was the featured speaker for the NSW Begonia

Society in May and was to show more extensively begonias that he had seen in the wild.

We visited three more botanic gardens on Oahu, Hawaii, hoping to see the endemic *Hillebrandia* - no luck - but we got lists of collections and made acquaintances of some very fine growers, so our stops were very much worth the effort.

Renewing acquaintances with our Aussie friends, and looking in on back country gardens of various hobby growers filled our 3 weeks in Australia. There were, of course, the magnificent birds and a sighting in the wild of a koala that richly filled the time away from gardens and ferneries.

When we catch our collective breath from the busy-ness of May and early June commitments, we shall begin our correspondence with those collecting begonias and see what we can do to expedite the distribution of some of the seed our direction. It was exciting to meet the new AABS Seed Fund Director, Philip Labrie, an entomologist and begoniac who is using tissue culture techniques to propagate species.

Best of all is to be reminded that begonia conservation efforts are going on in many ways in other countries.

- Bruce C. Boardman

Quote:

"It's not the load that gets you down, it's how you carry it."
Marion Lindgren, in the Westchester Branch newsletter

CLAYTON M. KELLY SEED FUND NOTES

Thank you! to Ann Salisbury, who has been filling back orders and will send seeds offered this issue.

Welcome aboard! To Beth Castellon, whose knowledge and expertise will be a great asset to the Seed Fund.

Beth takes over in August - until the next issue, please direct Seed Fund orders to Ann.

Donors make every effort to ensure their plants are correctly labeled and seed is pure. However, accidents will happen: wind, birds, and bees have been known to create new crosses even under guarded conditions. You may find slight variations among your seedlings, but if they differ greatly from each other or from the description given in the Notes, please let us know so we can notify others who may have ordered the same seed. Thanks!

Cane-like

B. dichroa (Brazil, 1912) is a delight with almost continual, profuse, fragrant, orange flowers. Low growing, it is gorgeous in a hanging basket.

Certainly *not* low-growing is *B. leathermaniae* (Bolivia, close to the Brazil border,

1983), which can grow to 10 feet. Along the way it tends to drop its lower leaves and develop a swollen basal stem. Classified as one of the Superba types, it has a distinctive collar of hairs at the top of the petiole, and develops crystal-like glands (no, that's not a sign of illness), mostly on the underside of the leaf. Green leaves are marked with darker green and have a pale red underside. Large but infrequent flowers are pink or white flushed with pink. Cover photos by Jack Golding appeared in the **Begonian**, Sept.-Oct. and Nov.-Dec. 1983. The Nov.-Dec. issue also has an article by Thelma O'Reilly and Carrie Karegeannes on this interesting begonia.

Shrub-like

Shrub-like begonias don't all look alike, and our seed offerings this issue certainly represent diversity.

An easy grower with a dainty appearance is *B. cubensis* (Cuba, 1858). It has small rippled bare leaves and profuse white flowers spring through fall. Photo, Thompsons' Begonias: The Complete Reference Guide, p. 96.

Felted peltate leaves characterize *B. peltata* (Mexico, 1841). Growth habit tends to be straight up. Flowers

are held high and come during the times you expect your rhizomatous begonias to bloom, in late winter-early spring.

B. taiwaniana (China: Taiwan, 1911), with medium sized leaves, has a mature height of 2 ft. Growth habit is described as similar to that of an erect rhizomatous type. It blooms summer into fall. This one is hard to come by; seed was last offered in 1989.

B. U199 (Panama) was introduced in 1986 by seed field collected by Roberto Brin at an elevation of 3200'. Leaves are entire, slender, about 5 1/2" x 1 1/2"; flowers are white.

Rhizomatous

B. crassicaulis (Guatemala, 1842) goes dormant, losing all of its leaves; then, before new leaves appear, puts on a great shower of flowers held high above the rhizome. The leaves themselves, when they return, are deeply incised, large, glossy. This one is not temperamental - just don't throw out the pot when it enters dormancy. There's a good black and white photo (with leaves) by Eleanor Calkins on p. 139 of the July-August 1992 **Begonian**.

Distinctive - indeed, unmistakable - foliage is the claim

to fame of *B. gehrtii* (Brazil, 1959). Glossy green rounded leaves with a crinkled surface and whitish veins resemble a spider web. White flowers appear in winter. Looks difficult, but it's main requirement is to be kept cool. Black & white photo, **Begonian** Sept.-Oct. 1988, p. 172.

Distinctive in a different way is *B. thiemei* (Central America: Honduras, 1895): leaves are compound and large. A mature plant can cover four or five feet in diameter, with flowers in late winter-early spring reaching up to over 5 ft. Rhizomes are appropriately enormous, too. Flowers under different conditions may be white, whitish green, or pale pink, and come in late winter-early spring. Leaves may be green or dark, almost black. This species is variable, and has been discovered and rediscovered and given different names: *macdougalli*, *macdougalli* var. *purpurea*, *purpurea*; *B. thiemei*, as the earliest name, is correct. Don't be surprised if your seedlings vary somewhat.

Thick-stemmed

There's a good selection of these hard-to-find begonias this time:

B. dichotoma (Colombia, Venezuela, 1792) has angular, shiny, glabrous leaves and sprays of white flowers. Black & white photos: by Dr. Jan

Doorenbos, **Begonian** Oct. 1979, p. 239; by Lynda Goldsmith, July-August 1986, p. 120.

Perfect for the windowsill or a small tree in a dish garden is *B. dipetala* (India, 1828), with hairy, medium-sized leaves and fragrant white flowers in winter through early spring. It's hard to imagine a thick-stemmed begonia looking dainty, but *dipetala* succeeds.

Large dark leaves with dramatic white veins and profuse white flowers (winter-spring) characterize *B. paranaënsis* (Brazil, 1944). Black & white photo by Chuck Anderson, **Begonian** July 1980, p. 193.

B. sericoneura (Central America, 1853) is easy to grow. It is classified as trunk-like, non-ramified, but is a vigorous plant that sends up many shoots, some of which grow at strange angles. Flowers are white and come in late winter-early spring. In periods of stress it will go dormant (this seems to depend more on cultural or weather conditions than season).

B. U115 has tentatively been identified as *B. multinervia* (Costa Rica, Panama, 1852). *B. multinervia* branches, unlike many of the thick-stemmed begonias, giving it a more shrub-like appearance; leaves are dark green turning reddish in strong light. Flowers are

white, making a nice contrast to the dark leaves.

Also available is seed labeled *B. U172*, which has been identified as *B. sericoneura*. You might enjoy growing them side-by-side to see if you detect any differences.

Trailing-scandent

B. radicans (Brazil, 1831) is another one of those begonias that has been called many names: *procumbens*, *limminghii*, *limmingheana*. *B. radicans* is correct (to the best of our knowledge at this time). By any name its deep coral flowers are a joy, especially appearing as they do in winter. Leaves are glossy green, shiny, rippled, with pale red underneath. *B. radicans* likes warmth, and may lose leaves if allowed to get too cold during winter. There's an excellent article and drawing by Mary Weinberg in the **Begonian** March-April 1989, p. 67.

Note: Space & budget do not allow for printing photos of all the Seed Fund offerings, so we refer to other sources. Best of all is the Thompsons **Begonias: The Complete Reference Guide**, now unfortunately out of print. Botanic gardens have copies in their libraries, and some may still have a copy in their gift shops. Back issues of the **Begonian** are available from Ann Salisbury, P.O. Box 452, Tonkawa, OK 74653.

CLAYTON M. KELLY SEED FUND LISTING

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

The Seed Fund would appreciate receiving donations of any fresh seed, as our supply is very limited at this time. Thank you!

All packets of species seed are \$1 each, and all packets of hybrid seed are 50c each.

All orders must be accompanied by check or money order payable ONLY in US funds to The Clayton M. Kelly Seed Fund

Costs of mailing:

US only: 1-12 packets, \$1; 13-24, \$1.35; 25-36, \$1.71; 37-48 (2 cans), \$2.30; 49-60, \$2.66.

Canada only: 1-12 packets, \$1.10; 13-24, \$1.46; 25-36, \$1.82; 27-48 (2 cans) \$2.35; 49-60, \$2.71.

Mexico only: 1-12 packets, \$1.15; 13-24, \$1.51; 25-36, \$1.87; 37-48 (2 cans), \$2.50 49-60, \$2.81.

All other international mail: 1-12 packets, \$1.85; 13-24, \$2.68; 25-36, \$3.68; 37-48, \$4.68; 49-60, \$5.68.

Please send your order with payment in U.S.dollars (check or money order) to:

Ann Salisbury
P.O. Box 452
Tonkawa, OK 74653
U.S.A.

Species Seed

\$1 per packet

B. crassicaulis
B. cubensis
B. dichotoma
B. dichroa
B. dipetala
B. gehrtii
B. leathermaniae
B. paranaënsiis
B. peltata
B. radicans
B. sericoneura
B. taiwaniana
B. thiemei
B. U115 (multinervia)
B. U172 (sericoneura)
B. U 199

AROUND ABS

Notes from our Newsletters

Happy Birthday! to Santa Barbara Branch, 55 years old in May - mere youngsters, however, compared to Theodosia Burr Shepherd at 59.

Knickerbocker Branch (a mere youngster at 30+ years old) celebrated in May by honoring their past Presidents, all twenty of them. The first Knickerbocker President, Toby Lothman, and Adele Zemansky are the only founding members still active in the branch.

Welcome to our newest branch, Western Reserve Branch of Cleveland, Ohio! Pinellas County Branch members know how to welcome newcomers: they've already sent a big box of begonia cuttings to Cleveland.

Here's a great gambit for getting members to attend a business meeting and re-enlist at dues-paying time: Buxton Branch members admired tremendously the B. 'Buttercup' grown by Wanda & Dick Macnair. So the Macnairs divided their large plant and grew cuttings in a sweater box. At the annual business meeting on May 6, each PAID-UP member received a 'Buttercup' plant (but you did have to be there to win). Growing the 'Buttercups' will be part of an on-going challenge, as prizes will be awarded (at both the annual fall show and again at a spring meeting) for the best grown of the plantlets.

Members of Palm Beaches Branch got excited about another cultural project: creating their own "oddball" containers. The recipe "for creating a planter to fit whatever shape you desire" is:

Mix together:

2 parts peat

1 part sand

2 parts perlite

2 parts cement (not concrete).

Add water as needed so that the mix holds together in your hand. As it hardens, shape or carve it however you wish. If you wish to color it, add your color choice to the water as you work on the shape.

Wouldn't it be interesting to have a "home-made pots" division in a show?

Palm Beaches is also offering the most exciting begonia field trip: to Fortín de las Flores, in Mexico's Veracruz state, for sightseeing as well as begonia collecting (oh, yes, there'll be other plants, too).

Potomac Branch has sent all members a "begonia inventory" questionnaire designed to determine not only what begonias their members are growing but also *how* they grow them. Light source, temperature range, watering cycle, soil medium, and fertilizers are covered, and the final section asks each member to select 3 begonias with excellent growth habits and three with fair to poor growth habits, then comment on the causes for the differences in growth. 'Tis enough to make you think, isn't it? And that, of course, is what you're intended to do.

While we love all begonias, we can't help but have favorites. For Janice Koza, editor of the newsletter for Fort Lauderdale Branch in Florida, one of the favorites is Begonia 'Sophie Cecile'. Here's what she has to say about Sophie:

"B. 'Sophie Cecile' was created by talented hybridizer Belva Kusler in 1961 by crossing B. 'Lenore Olivier' with *B. scepstrum*. It is a cane-like, Superba type

begonia with dark green, deeply cut, silver-splashed foliage and fragrant rose-pink flowers. It will bloom throughout spring and summer, if you are lucky.

"I have three plants of *B. 'Sophie Cecile'* at the present time, and one of them bloomed last summer. It does have pretty pink flowers, but is a shy bloomer for most people. I grow my plants in a coarse, loose mix of eucalyptus bark, oak leaf mold, potting soil, perlite, lava rock, peat moss, and anything else that is lying around. Two of my plants receive full sun with some protection via shade cloth and one of them receives morning sun only with bright shade the rest of the day. I use Nutricote and supplement with a variety of liquid fertilizers, plus I like to foliar-feed my plants with Watch Us Grow. This works well for me.

"*B. 'Sophie Cecile'* will grow very tall, especially when planted directly in the ground. My plants are in large containers and are about three to four feet tall, but I have seen a beautiful large specimen planted in the ground at Daisy Farm Nursery that may have been about six feet tall or more, and if I remember correctly, it was *blooming readily from cuttings*.

"If you aren't currently growing *B. 'Sophie Cecile'* and you happen to come across one at a plant sale or on the raffle table, grab it and take it home. You won't be disappointed!"

Another begonia getting a write-up in Florida was *B. huegelii*, plant of the month for Pinellas County Branch in May. Editor Greg Sytch wrote,

"At this difficult time of year, I do have one begonia that is thriving, *B. huegelii*. *B. huegelii* is classified as shrub-like, hairy-leaved, and wide-leaved, with leaves well over 3" at maturity. In fact, some of my plant's leaves easily attain ten inches across.

"This species originated in Brazil, and was discovered in 1851. Although the Thompson's [Begonias: The Complete Reference Guide](#) advises it is for the collector, it has been a rewarding and undemanding grower under my conditions.

"*B. huegelii* has beautiful felted, dark bronze leaves with small white hairs and a beet-red reverse. The combination is stunning! The overall effect is very dark and haunting. Growing tall and bushy, mine have reached 3-4 feet tall and as wide in one growing season, fast by any standard.

"The blooms are also special. In late winter, into spring, and often during summer, spikes of white blooms flushed with pink, hairy, and perhaps slightly frilled, arise from the leaf axils near the top branches. While I never have noticed any fragrance, the color and shape add much interest to an already interesting plant.

"An easy species to grow in Florida, it requires some sunlight during the day, likes to dry out before watering, and takes neglect well. I highly recommend it: *B. huegelii* should be in every begonia lovers' collection!"

Ed. Note: Jacques Jangoux photographed *B. huegelii* "at home" in Brazil for the Jan.-Feb. 1989 **Begonian** cover.

Remember homework? Designed to help you learn? In their April newsletter, Theodosia Burr Shepherd Branch suggested homework as a sneak preview of the program ahead: "If you want to do some homework, read the Thompson's pages 48-50." Okay, here's homework for the rest of you: read the pages referred to, and figure out what their program was about.

Riddle answer:

the pot costs 5 cents

BEGONIAN MINI-ADS

Mini-ads are a service to our members. The charge is \$1.25 per line per insertion with a minimum of \$5. Payment must accompany order. Make checks payable to ABS and mail to:

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Questions? Write to address above or call (916) 398-4023

Deadline for next issue is July 15

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Send \$2 for expanded 1995 list. Kay's Greenhouses, 207 W. Southcross, San Antonio, TX 78221.

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for conventions, fund raisers, or ? Your design! SASE for brochure to: Nicki, 168 Shamrock Dr., Ventura, CA 93003.

We regret the loss of two long-time Mini-Ads. Millie and Ed Thompson advise that their outstanding book, Begonias: The Complete Reference Guide, is no longer available; and Barbara Stewart of Stew's Greenhouses writes that they have discontinued their catalog business and are refunding orders received after April.

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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 though 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.**



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