



*The BEGONIAN*

November-December 1995

# The BEGONIAN

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Publication of the American Begonia Society

## American Begonia Society

Founded January 1932 by Herbert P. Dyckman

### Aims and Purposes

*To stimulate and promote interest in begonias and other shade-loving plants.*

*To encourage the introduction and development of new types of these plants.*

*To standardize the nomenclature of begonias.*

*To gather and publish information in regard to kinds, propagation, and culture of begonias and companion plants.*

*To issue a bulletin 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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## COVER PHOTOS

**Front** - This dramatic shot of B. 'Wee Paws' won the Artistic Photo Division at the 1995 Convention for Sylvia Ben.

**Back** - *B. amphioxus* was discovered in Sabah and described by Martin Sands of Kew Gardens in the Kew Magazine, May 1990. Bill Ash grew and photographed this specimen.

## IN THIS ISSUE

### Convention 1996: "Begonia Superstars"

"Begonia Superstars was truly super. Hearty applause to Show Chairman Herb Wilkinson and his Committee - Mary Sakamoto, Margaret Fisher, and Brad Thompson. These people are dynamos of creativity, and they got the job done with style and pizzazz. The plants were just amazing with trophies to match and the plant sale one of the best ever. The tours were memorable and seemed to go off without a hitch and the seminars terrific. We were lucky enough to have an extra seminar given by Dr. Jin Xiaobai of Beijing Botanical Garden who was on his way to Texas to speak to the Southwest Region in Fort Worth. Dr. Xiaobai presented a slide show of Chinese Chiuhaitang (Begonias) species found in the mountains of southern China..."

- from the Westchester Branch newsletter, edited by Janet Brown

*In this issue we'll give you a tantalizing glimpse of a magical weekend, and continue coverage in January...*

**Awards - 184...Show Results - 185...Quick Photo Takes - 188**

### Articles

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### Quick!

**Check your mailing label -  
if it reads 11/95 or 12/95,  
your membership is about  
to expire. Please renew!  
We don't want to lose you.**

## Eva Kenworthy Gray Award Goes to Mae Blanton

The Eva Kenworthy Gray Award is given for contributing original material to help rank and file members further their studies of begonias, or for contributing something of a spiritual value toward cementing goodwill and harmony among members. Our 1995 recipient, Mae Blanton, qualified on both counts.

Mae has been an ABS member for over thirty years, serving in several capacities including Round Robin Director. She has written numerous articles for the **Begonian**, served as Horticultural Correspondent for four years, and her pamphlet "Terrariums for Beginners" is a best-seller

for the Bookstore. Active in several Robins, Mae also maintains correspondence with ABS members throughout the country and abroad, and contributes seed of some of our rarest and most difficult begonias to the Seed Fund.

Mae received the Herbert P. Dyckman Award for Service in 1975 and her B. 'Glennis Crouch' was awarded the Alfred D. Robinson Medal for Begonia Hybrid in 1990, making her the fifth ABS member to receive all three of the Society's top awards. Mabel Corwin, Margaret Lee, Thelma O'Reilly, and Rudolf Ziesenhenné are previous "Triple Crown" winners.

## Ann Salisbury Receives Herbert P. Dyckman Award for Service

The Herbert P. Dyckman Award is presented to a member who has rendered long-term or very outstanding service for ABS above and beyond the normal duties of an officer. This year's winner became involved in ABS only a few years ago, but in that time has taken on the duties of Advertising Manager for the **Begonian**, Back Issues, Seed Fund, Holiday Greetings, 1994 Convention Registration and

Treasurer (and had her report in within 30 days!) - most of these simultaneously. She has also been handling overseas mailing of the magazine. For the past four years, she has been the unofficial trouble-shooter whenever ABS has had a problem.

Ann is now tackling the biggest job of all, and we look for great things during her presidency!

## B. 'Silvermist' Wins Alfred D. Robinson Medal

Distinctively beautiful B. 'Silvermist' won the Alfred D. Robinson Medal for outstanding begonia hybrid. A cross between B. 'Kentwood' and *B. dichroa*, B. 'Silvermist' is the second winner created by hybridizer Irene Nuss. Her B. 'Eunice Gray' won the Medal in 1970.

*"Begonia Superstars"*

## 1995 Convention Show Results



photo by Eleanor Calkins

### **BEST OF SHOW**

B. Rex Cultivar

Exhibited by Arlene Hoskins

Trophy donated by Ann & Gene Salisbury

### **SWEEPSTAKES**

Brad Thompson, with 9 blue ribbons  
Trophy donated by Doug Frost Branch

### **SHOWING IS SHARING**

Brad Thompson, with 61 entries  
Trophy donated by Palos Verdes Branch

## DIVISION WINNERS

*to win a Division, a plant must score at least 93 out of a possible 100 points*

Cane-like: B. 'Fabulous Tom'  
Exhibitor: Brad Thompson  
Trophy Donor: Astro Branch

California Cane: B. 'Pink Jade'  
Exhibitor: Lincoln Ching  
Trophy Donor: Sacramento Branch

Superstars (ADR winners): B. 'Nokomis'  
Exhibitor: Robert Ammerman  
Trophy Donor: Westchester Branch

Shrub-like: B. 'Morocco'  
Exhibitor: Iris Bird & Bob Golden  
Trophy Donor: Barkley Branch

Rhizomatous: B. 'Palmgarten'  
Exhibitor: Mary Sakamoto  
Trophy Donor: Orange County Branch

Rhizomatous, Rhizome Erect:  
B. 'Verschaffeltii'  
Exhibitor: Vivian Hill  
Trophy Donor: Miami Branch

Rhizomatous, Crested/Spiral:  
B. 'Misty Meadows'  
Exhibitor: Carol Notaras  
Trophy Donor: Carol & Peter Notaras

Thick-stemmed: B. Jaros #9  
Exhibitor: Iris Bird & Bob Golden  
Trophy Donor: Jacksonville Branch

Rex: B. Rex cultivar  
Exhibitor: Arlene Hoskins  
Trophy Donor: Mae Blanton Branch

Tuberous: B. 'Bumble Bee'  
Exhibitor: Robert Ammerman  
Trophy Donor: San Francisco Branch

Trailing-Scandent: B. 'Orococo'  
Exhibitor: Iris Bird & Bob Golden  
Trophy Donor: Alfred D. Robinson Branch  
in memory of Alice Clark

Species: B. unknown trailing-scandent  
Exhibitor: Virginia Carlson  
Trophy Donor: Buxton Branch

Superstar Classics: B. 'Sophie Cecile'  
Exhibitor: Dorothy Miller  
Trophy Donor: San Miguel Branch

Hanging Baskets: B. 'Wild Irish Rose'  
Exhibitor: Brad Thompson  
Trophy Donor: Thelma & Tim O'Reilly

Novice: B. 'Freddie'  
Exhibitor: Jack Reiching  
Trophy Donor: Dallas Area Branch

Traveling Begonias: B. 'Snowfall'  
Exhibitor: John Howell  
Trophy Donor: Fort Lauderdale Branch

New Introductions, Hobby:  
B. 'Enchanting'  
Exhibitor: Brad Thompson  
Trophy Donor: South Bay Branch

Collection of Begonias:  
Exhibitor: Joan Coulat  
Trophy Donor: Monterey Bay Branch

Novel Grown: *B. gehrtii*  
Exhibitor: Bob Ammerman  
Trophy Donor: Southwest Region

Contained Atmosphere: *B. soli-mutata*  
Exhibitor: Carol Notaras  
Trophy Donor: Buxton Branch in honor of  
Wanda Macnair

Artistic Photographs: B. 'Wee Paws'.  
Exhibitor: Sylvia Ben  
Trophy Donor: Rubidoux Branch

Begonia Arts & Crafts: wall hanging  
Exhibitor: Ruth Franklin  
Trophy Donor: Houston Satellite Branch

Ferns: *Davalia genolepis*  
Exhibitor: Dorothy Miller  
Trophy Donor: Santa Barbara Branch

Other Shade Plants: *Echeveria runifonii*  
'Montrose'  
Exhibitor: Joy Blair  
Trophy Donor: Kay & Lorne Bradley

Exhibits & Displays, Hobbyist:  
Exhibitors: Ruth & Walter Pease  
Trophy Donor: Joan Coulat

Exhibits & Displays, Commercial/Clubs  
Exhibitor: Westchester Branch  
Trophy Donor: Ronnie Nevins

## Thank you!

to those who donated trophies for Divisions where there was no winner: members of Long Beach Parent Chapter, Alamo Branch, Santa Clara Valley Branch, and San Gabriel Valley Branch, and to the friend who donated a trophy in memory of Mignon Waters (unawarded trophies were auctioned off at the Banquet).

## Thank you!

to Hikoichi Arakawa, Bob Butler, Margaret Fisher, Hitoshi Hanamoto, Joyce Hesse, Mary Ann Leer, Wanda & Richard Macnair, Marie McCooney, P. J. Masters, Yuji Murotani, Irene Nuss, Nancy Rentfro, Claire Resnick, Sharon Seelert, Peggy & Paul Strother, Yoshinobu Tanoue, Herb Wilkinson, and Whittier Branch for their generous contributions to the Trophy Fund.

## CULTURAL AWARDS

*to win a Cultural Award, a plant must score 95 out of a possible 100 points*

### 98 points:

*B. soli-mutata*, Carol Notaras

### 97.33 points:

*B. Rex* cultivar, Arlene Hoskins

### 97 points:

Iris Bird & Bob Golden, *B. 'Orococo'*

Carol Notaras, *B. 'Misty Meadows'*

Mary Sakamoto, *B. 'Palmgarten'*

### 96.5 points:

Ronnie Nevins, *B. Rex* cultivar

### 96 points:

Elaine Baxter, *B. 'Bokit'* hybrid

Lincoln Ching, *B. 'Pink Jade'*

Eric Seel, *B. venosa*

Sharon Seelert, *B. 'Kit Kat'*

Brad Thompson, *B. 'Fabulous Tom'*, *B. rajah*

### 95 points:

Robert Ammerman, *B. 'Nokomis'*

Iris Bird & Bob Golden, *B. 'Tangier'*

Virginia Carlson, unknown trailing-scandent

Lincoln Ching, *B. 'Irene Nuss'*, *B. albo-picta*

Ronnie Nevins, *B. Rex* cultivar

Mary Sakamoto, *B. 'Mary Sakamoto'*

Eric Seel, *B. 'Jumbo Jet'*

## SHOW & TOURS



A Parade of  
Superstars

Margaret  
Ziesenhenne (left)  
and Thelma O'Reilly  
view the Winners'  
Table



Arlene & Jack Hoskins'  
garden: tropical  
splendor

Mary Sakamoto's  
lath house was  
planned with space  
for viewing



GUESTS  
EXHIBITS  
PLANT SALE  
BOUTIQUE



Among a large number of foreign visitors were Mary & Milan Sulc of Switzerland



Just part of a blue-ribbon display by Ruth & Walter Pease

Begonia Sale! The plants were plentiful and irresistible

Ken Dahquist's ceramics were a highlight of the Superstar Boutique



# Restoring Fragrance in Tuberous Begonias

by Howard Siebold

My first crosses to produce tuberous begonias were made in 1981. Crossing B. 'Yellow Sweetie' and some fragrant species with regular tuberhybrida gave me two with fragrance out of a thousand seedlings planted. Only one of those had a decent flower. Each year more appeared and as I was able to cross fragrant with fragrant, the percentage of offspring with fragrance increased. This year, the 1994 crosses have produced about 80 with fragrance out of 320 seedlings planted.

My arthritis and bad back tell me that I just cannot take care of that many plus about 600 display tuberhybrida. I really have to cut back at least 50%.

My goal is to promote fragrance to the point where there are as many tuberhybrida with fragrance as there are without. I have the parent stock that will give the results mentioned above. I can produce the seed, but now I need help in growing the seedlings necessary to achieve that goal.

I will donate, free, seed from those parents to any grower who can convince me that he or she has the ability and the facilities to grow at least 200 plants each year. Considering the diverse ancestry of the tuberous begonia, that number would give us the data that we need. New seed will be furnished each December.

The grower must agree to:

- (1) Report each December on the number of seedlings obtained and the number with some fragrance. Some will have a stronger scent than others do. The figures are needed for each cross so that the best parents can be identified.
- (2) Each variety with fragrance must be labeled and the label must carry this notation - "A Howard Siebold cultivar".
- (3) All plants become the property of the grower. Under the rules of the American Begonia Society, the grower is entitled to name any worthy of being named. If the name is to be registered, I can furnish parentage from the number of the cross.
- (4) I would hope that any grower finding fragrance would root cuttings and share with growers less fortunate. We would reach our goal quicker that way.

The seed will be sent in packets of 200 seeds. If a grower has room for growing more, he may request more than that. Requests for less than 200 seeds will be honored only if there is an excess of seed available.

Seed must not be carried over to the next season as it would defeat the purpose of the program under (1) above.

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*Howard Siebold has already registered some fragrant and very beautiful tuberhybrida; some of his crosses are available commercially (unfortunately, under names different from their registered ones). His address is 2775 E. Sun Vista Circle, Clinton, WA 98236-9118.*

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# 1994: A Fruitful Year of Begonias

by Bill Ash

Here in England Muriel and I displayed an exhibit of mainly foliage begonias just before we attended the 1994 Oklahoma Convention. The twenty-foot stand took twelve hours to complete. Species shown included *plantanifolia*, *diadema*, *palmata*, *boliviensis*, *decora*, *imperialis*, *dregei*, *pustulata*, *breviramosa*, *malabarica*, *longimaculata*, *gehrtii*, *grandis* ssp. *evansiana*, *masoniana*, *serratipetala*, and *luxurians*. *B. boliviensis*, grown from the ABS Seed Fund, caused the most comments; the fuchsia-shaped blooms on the 2 1/2" plant were much admired.

Hybrids shown were 28 named Rexes, including 'Comtesse Louise Erdody', 'Roi de Roses', 'Fairy', 'Helen Lewis', 'Ironstone', 'Glory of St. Albans', 'Fireworks', 'Fireflush', 'Curly Merry Christmas', 'Princess of Hanover', 'Emerald Giant', 'Silver Giant', 'Louise Closson', 'Vista', 'Raspberry Swirl', 'Filigree', 'President Carnot', 'Vesuvius', and 'Radium'.

Also shown were Begonias 'Tingley Mallet', 'Compte de Lessops', *bartonea* hort. 'Winter Jewel', 'de Elegans', 'Orange Rubra', 'Di-Anna', 'Snowcap', 'Tom Ment', and a large basket of *B. 'Charm'*.

At the back of the stand were shade plants which we grow in the Conservatory, such as *Anthuriums warocqueanum*, *crystallinum*, and *veitchii*; and *Allocasias cuprea*, 'Amazonica', 'Green Velvet', and *watsoniana*.

It was the first time we had shown so early in the year, at the beginning of May. The foliage plants were brought on under mercury lights and we were also successful

in producing 9" blooms on six named Tuberhybrida with the aid of sodium lights. The plants were given a sixteen-hour day. The lights produced exceptionally beautifully coloured foliage and flowers.

The Royal Horticultural Society awarded us a Silver Gilt Flora Medal. Seven judges judged the exhibit and were very impressed, as many of the plants had not been seen in this country before outside of a botanic garden.

We had a wonderful time in the United States as the guests of Barbara and Kelton Parker. It was lovely to meet old friends and to meet many new ones, to hear about varying growing conditions in different states - which made me realize how much easier it is to grow foliage begonias in the U.K. with our more equable temperatures.

One of the highlights of the Convention was listening to Mabel Corwin's seminar on Rexes. Her aim to produce hardier forms of Rex will be welcomed by many frustrated growers in America and also eventually abroad. The thicker-leaved varieties are easier to propagate than many old English types, whose parents originated near to the Equator.

Hugh and Betty McLachlan joined us in putting up a display of foliage begonias at the Ayr Flower Show in Scotland, which was very much appreciated.

At the beginning of October we took some eighty foliage begonias and some Aroids (which I enjoy growing also) to London, which is 160 miles away. We were very pleased to be awarded the Royal



The Royal Horticultural Society Show, London, October 1994

Horticultural Society's Gold Medal, which is rarely awarded to an amateur. Besides the varieties displayed at the earlier show, we had *Begonias pearcei*, 'Wanda', *imperialis*, *amphioxus*, *hatacoa*, Rex 'Green Gold', and *Symbegonia* B24 (this plant from the Glasgow Botanic Gardens is edged in white and a vigorous grower compared to *Symbegonia sanguinea* and U012, both of which are thriving in my propagator - but I have trouble propagating U012).



Close up of the most popular plants in the Malvern Exhibit, May, 1994

To end an exciting begonia year we had a cruise in the South China Seas. We saw "Martin's Mystery" in good form at Singapore Botanic Gardens, and some I had never seen before. We spent a few hours in the Botanical Gardens in

New Guinea, and then went up into the mountains where many of the exotic begonia species such as *breviramosa* and *Symbegonia* are endemic. Lastly we visited Darwin Botanical Gardens, which had a few species in a shade house. *B. breviramosa* was in fine form, with leaves 12" long.

We look forward to meeting begonia colleagues at San Antonio in May, 1995.

Bill Ash is Curator of the National Rex Collection, and a volunteer grower for both Glasgow and Kew Gardens. He and Muriel did make the 1995 Southwest Region Get-Together in San Antonio, and Bill took to the podium to talk about species preservation in England. Muriel and Bill live at Brevirimsa, Mucklestone Wood Lane, Loggersheads, Salop, Shropshire TF94ED, England.

**Ed. Note:** This article was intended for the May-June 1995 international issue, but was lost in the editor's (so-called) filing system. I'm so grateful to have found it at last, and to be able to share with you the 1994 adventures of this begonia-loving couple. - Tamsin Boardman

## An ABS member in France writes:

**WANTED - seeds or unrooted cuttings:** *Begonia prismatocarpa* 'Variegation', *B. xanthina* and its varieties, *B. acaulis*, all the varieties of *B. masoniana*, *B. U255*, *B. pearcei*, *B. 'Mandarin Orange'*, *B. 'Encinitas'*, *B. geranioides*, *B. tayabensis*, *B. U012*. I will pay the cost of international mailing. Please write: Alain DELAVIE, 45 avenue Emile Fruchart, Bât. A, Esc. B, 91210 DRAVEIL, FRANCE.

## Quote:

"Nothing is more frequently opened by mistake than the mouth!"  
Marion Lindgren, in the Westchester Branch newsletter

## Show News Around the Country

Best in Show at the *Westchester Branch Show* in July went to *B. rajah*, with 97.5 points, grown by **Brad Thompson**. In addition to *B. rajah* (which also took the Contained Atmosphere Division), Brad won Cultural Awards for *Begonias semidigitata* and 'Cachuma' (96), 'Mary's Surpize', 'Lee's Luxurians', 'King Tut', and 'Euphrates' (all 95 points).

Cultural Awards were also given to **Ronnie Nevins'** *B. rex* cultorum (97), **Ossie Williams'** *B. 'Kit Kat'* (97), **Solveig Heimdahl's** *B. Ginny'* (96.2), **Clair Christensen's** *B. ludwigii* (96), **Patricia McElderry's** *B. 'Mary Ann Flunker'* (96), and **Mary Sakamoto's** Tuberhybrida (96).

The Novice Division was won by *B. 'Snow Capped'*, shown by **Laverne Hanell**.

Judges were **Katherine Alberti**, **Pat McElderry**, and **Mary Sakamoto**, assisted by clerks **Joy Blair**, **Janet Brown**, and **Stephanie Snyder**

## In Memory

When will we ever meet another person like **Chuck Jaros**? He was kindness and goodness combined together with a warm smile and an eagerness to help. He was the antithesis of that mean-spirited attitude that is troubling our society today.

I met the Jaros family in the seventies at a flower show...I was working a booth next to Charles and Helene. I thought I was not good enough for begonias but the Jaros' convinced me to join their society. I had, of course, grown begonias in St. Augustine, which has ideal conditions for most begonias.

After that I began my Jaros-Begonia scrapbook. I collected articles about all events. Chuck did not make the news but he was the Guardian Angel for the Jaros collection whenever mother and son went on trips or to conventions. He was always there during the staging of our shows, carrying in props and plants. Whenever he saw me and others unable to carry or lift, he offered assistance.

We will all miss him, and we will miss the Jaros family now that they have moved. Chuck did leave us his goodness in his son: the apple did not fall far from the tree. The wonderful partnership of Helene and Chuck is an inspiration to all who were witness to it.

We are grateful for having known you, Chuck.

- Edythe Ropeik,  
in the Miami Branch newsletter

On Tuesday, July 25, **George Fletcher** passed away. George hadn't been ill, just worked a little too hard that day, which was nothing unusual for George.

George and his wife Ann were very active members of our group. If there was a job to be done or someone needed help, George was always there with Ann at his side, ready to do what they could to assist.

Even though they lived in Orange, the three-hour drive never kept George from attending monthly meetings or helping out at plant sales. The last memory many of us have of George is his helping out at our June picnic, spending the entire afternoon behind a very hot grill cooking hamburgers and hot dogs for everyone else to enjoy...

You cannot speak of George without speaking of Ann. They were a team. They gave a lot of their time in many different ways. They worked with the Orange County Association for Retarded Children. They were Master Gardeners. As a team, George and Ann touched a lot of lives. He will be deeply missed, especially by members of Astro Branch and Southwest Region.

George, thank you for being who you were, for the pleasure of having known you, and for taking the time to be part of our lives.

We can take some solace knowing that George is now happily working in Mother Nature's Grandest of All Rose Gardens.

- Tom Keepin,  
in the Astro Branch newsletter

# Growing Canes the Florida Way

by Greg Sytch

Down here in the Sunshine State, we grow big canes. No, not just big canes, but **BIG CANES!** Huge. Colossal. Immense. You get the picture.

Our subtropical southern climate allows us to grow outdoors all year long, and canes bloom prolifically in winter as in summer. Our light is more intense. Our humidity is consistently high. Our winter days are long.

Despite all the advantages of a beautiful begonia climate, there are hurdles to overcome. Freezes do occur, usually every four or five years. At such times begonias left outside are "pruned by nature," but resprout quickly since the soil never freezes. Winds are a problem winter and spring, reducing a show specimen to tatters with one quick cold front. Summer thunderstorms can blow up out of nowhere, blasting those precious plants with hurricane-force winds. Tornadoes occur (though not of the magnitude endured by the Midwest). Hurricanes often threaten, as Erin recently did by ripping through my plants in a flash.

But all those problems seem a distant memory when weeks of gorgeous weather settle over the "Suncoast", as Tampa Bay is affectionately known. Canes thrive on very high light levels, which is never a problem here. In greenhouses, sunny days boost footcandles to decent ranges, and lush growth is followed by fabulous flowers. The canes love it here!

Beautiful begonias don't do it all on their own, however. There are some tricks to growing canes here. First, you must feed canes constantly in Florida. Canes are

hungry feeders to begin with, but here feeding is a constant chore. I personally use a time-release plant food incorporated into the soil mix three times a year. Brands vary, but I have found that 13-13-13 works best, since I can supplement it with any other formula as needed. In winter, the time-release works much longer than in summer (it breaks down much faster at temperatures over 850). Therefore, in summer, canes are fed twice. I never "top dress", as this can burn plants, but lightly re-pot a cane in need of fertilizer, making sure the pellets are buried beneath the soil where they will remain cool.

Pruning is necessary every month of the year, and a delight in winter, when chilly days have me confined to the greenhouses, enjoying the beautiful and often fragrant blooms. Winter cuttings take just a few weeks longer to root under the benches than in summer. They grow rapidly despite the season. Come spring, growth zooms!

Summer sees heavy, quick growth and massive flower displays. Cuttings often root in three weeks. But just keeping up with the dropping, spent blossoms can be full time job. It's necessary: in periods of heat, humidity, and heavy rains, a few missed, spent flowers can turn the plant below into a mushy mess overnight.

Then comes the light. To maximize space in the greenhouses I grow all of my big canes outdoors most of the year. Since winter sun is much stronger in Florida than in northern states, adjusting plants to the strong light of spring and summer is not as risky. In fact, some canes grow happily, in pots, in two to three hours of direct full sun,

even during summer. Any plant must be introduced gradually, but the expected leaf burn is not as drastic and plants adjust quickly. Needless to say, this sun exposure leads to big, bountiful blossoms!

So when you come down to the convention next spring in South Florida, expect to see big canes here:

really **BIG CANES!**

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## Hybridizing: A Beginner's Success

by Greg Sytch

Hybridizing is thought of as being only for the very skilled, the few who actually knew what they were doing, and had a goal when crossing two plants. I believed this, until spring of 1994 when I decided to have a go at this delicate art.

I looked around a greenhouse of blooming luscious rhizomatous begonias for plants that would be very interesting if paired together. My first concern was ease of growth. I wanted to produce begonias that were not finicky, were able to withstand neglect, yet be absolutely gorgeous! Wishful thinking, I pondered.

Then it occurred to me - if I use a hybrid with a species, I would get the variability of the hybrid with the vigor and ease of growth of the species, so I chose *B. manicata* as the male (pollen parent). This most beautiful species is classified as an upright-stemmed rhizomatous, large-leaved; it's vigorous, as I had two specimens well in excess of two feet across. Then 'Cowardly Lion' and 'Joe Hayden' came to mind. They were beautiful, yes! They were easy to grow, definitely! Off I went, eagerly pushing the male pollen into the female blossoms. I decided to pollinate many females, as I really was not sure if this would work. Weeks of daily examinations revealed that the pollen took, and the seed pods had swelled. But as we all know, swelled seed pods do not always mean fertile seeds.

I then harvested several seed pods off each cross, allowed them to dry for a few days, and prepared special containers for sowing. I used clear snap-lid terrariums, 5 1/2" x 9 1/2" - large enough to fit snugly 6" below the light tubes. After filling the containers with my regular soilless mix, I gently tapped huge quantities of seeds onto the soil surface, sprayed with water, closed the lids, and prayed!

In one week, thousands of tiny seedlings appeared. I continued to spray every other day, eventually mixing in some diluted fertilizer. In eight weeks, some seedlings were developing color, and it was evident that they all looked very different from each other. Sixteen weeks, and it was time to transplant them into additional containers, as they were crowded indeed. I knew I must be very careful in selecting which seedlings to transplant, as I only had room for a few - not the thousands before me. I used the same terrariums, allowing ten seedlings per terrarium with ample room in between. Constant spraying with fertilizer, and in one month they had outgrown the containers. It was time for individual small pots in the greenhouses. Most went directly into 3" square pots, which were perfect for the root systems. The hardest part was choosing which seedlings to grow on. I decided to grow up 48 seedlings, and I looked for leaf color, growth habit, and vigor in making my selections. Little did I

know that it was the start of a fantastic series of rhizomatous begonias.

By October, the seedlings were well into 4 1/2" azalea pots, showing amazing growth. Of course, they were being coddled at every opportunity, fed every week, and misted whenever possible even in our Florida humidity. Some took right off, others grew more compactly. I liked the difference: I love BIG BEGONIAS, but always enjoy compact specimens that are different. It was very clear that the cross with B. 'Cowardly Lion' gave some seedlings that would be huge, while others would probably mature in 5" or 6" pots. Seedlings from the B. 'Joe Hayden' cross were more uniform, and that makes sense, since 'Joe Hayden' came from somewhat similar parentage, while 'Cowardly Lion' has B. 'Bokit' and B. *carrieeae* in its background.

Excitement mounted as spring approached. Here in Florida rhizomatous begonias typically bloom from very late February into April, with the peak season during the end of March. Our winter days are not as short, so the signal to bloom comes a little later. When these crosses did bloom, it was a feast for both the eyes and the nose. Some were large, others fragrant, some white, others pink, while still others blushed with a darker color. Success!

But now I have the hardest decision to make - the final cut. If two plants looked alike, I tossed the weakest grower, not just the least beautiful. I wanted vigorous begonias, the type the a typical "Aunt Mabel" in Iowa could grow on a windowsill. The final tally was about 15 beautiful, unique, textured rhizomatous begonias from 'Cowardly Lion', and about 5 from 'Joe Hayden'. Now I must begin to distribute these beauties to other growers, so they can tell me their opinions.

While this last step is still going on, I am preparing the finished products for their second flowering season, and perhaps introduction at the ABS Convention in April in Hollywood Beach, Florida.

The 'Cowardly Lion' crosses will be called the 'Florida Series', named after places in the Sunshine State. The 'Joe Hayden' crosses are yet unnamed. In the future you see a begonia called 'Tallahassee', 'Pensacola', or 'Honeymoon Island', you will know they came from Florida, and ultimately that they came from me.

Do you still think hybridizing is only for the skilled few? If I could take begonias and create beautiful new hybrids, then anyone can. I am now having lots of fun with canes, thick-stems, and shrubs. Did I tell you about my cross of B. *peltata* x B. 'Cowardly Lion'? We'll have to save that for another time...

---

*As you can see, Greg Sytch has fallen in love! Watch for the objects of his passion in Florida in April. Greg's address is P. O. Box 1033, Port Richey, FL 34653.*

---

It's that time, again, to send  
GREETINGS to old friends  
and say  
MERRY CHRISTMAS!  
In friendly contact from  
**Margaret Lee**

We Wish You Joy, Hope,  
and Peace  
For the Holiday Season  
and the New Year

**MAE BLANTON BRANCH**

## 1996 Awards Nominations

The 1996 Convention is coming up in April, and with it your opportunity to nominate candidates for ABS' top awards.

Every one of us knows at least one person who has worked long and hard for the benefit of the American Begonia Society, going beyond the normal call of elected or appointed duties - or a begonia hybrid that is outstanding in every way. Help the Nominating Committee reward dedicated members and super hybrids by submitting their names, along with the reasons the person or plant is entitled to be honored.

Deadline for nomination is February 1, 1996. Please send nominations to:

Mary Sakamoto  
6847 E. Sycamore Glen Dr.  
Orange, CA 92669

The **Eva Kenworthy Gray Award** is given for contributing original material toward helping rank and file members further their study of begonias; and/or for contributing something of a spiritual value toward cementing goodwill and harmony among members.

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

The **Alfred D. Robinson Medal of Honor** is for a registered, widely distributed begonia cultivar that has been released for at least five years and no more than fifteen years. The originator of the begonia must be a member of ABS.

*Please see listings of previous winners in the March-April 1995 issue.*

Best Wishes for  
a Happy Holiday  
and a Prosperous 1996  
from the

**Greater  
Atlanta  
Branch  
of ABS**

and site of the  
1996 Summer Olympics

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

AND

BEAUTIFUL BEGONIAS

IN 1996

**WESTCHESTER  
BRANCH**

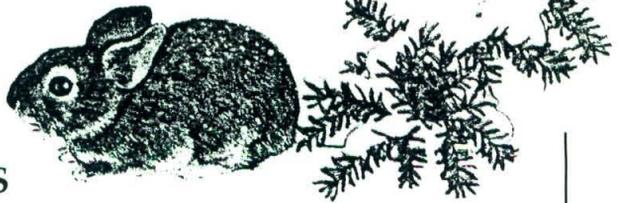


Happy Holidays  
and  
Great Begonia Growing in 1996!

**Santa Clara Valley Branch**

WE ARE HOPING THAT 1996 WILL BRING  
EVERYONE HEALTH,  
HAPPINESS AND MORE GREAT MONTHS  
OF BEGONIA GROWING.

**CAROL  
AND  
PETER  
NOTARAS**



*Season's Greetings  
and Best Wishes for  
Good Begonia  
Growing in 1996*

*Wanda & Bob Cochran*



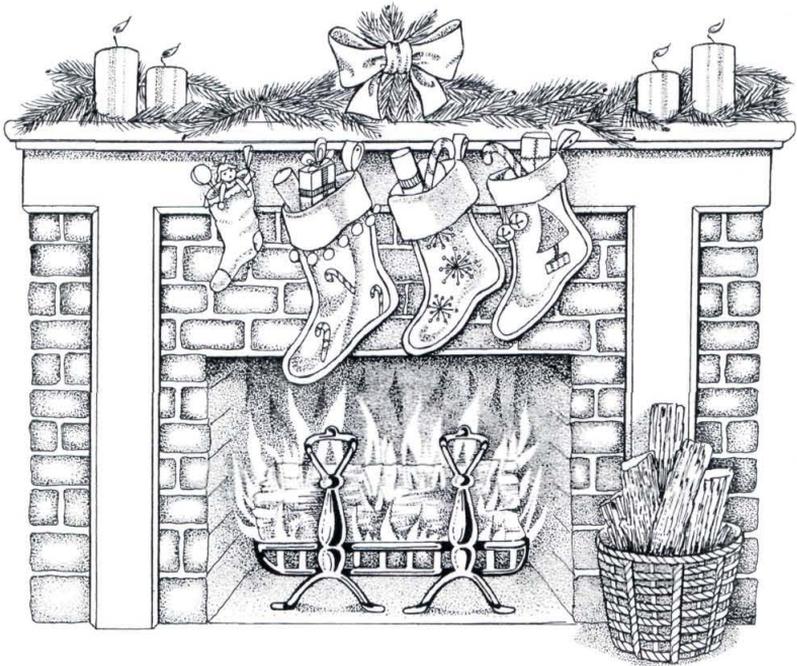
*WISHING YOU JOY!*

**THE STAFF OF THE BEGONIAN**

B. 'MERRY CHRISTMAS'  
&  
B. 'HAPPY NEW YEAR'

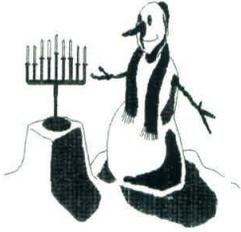
**TAMSIN & BRUCE C. BOARDMAN**

***MERRY CHRISTMAS***



***WISHING YOU A HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON  
FILLED WITH  
BEAUTIFUL MOMENTS AND MANY  
CHERISHED MEMORIES.***

***GENE AND ANN SALISBURY***



The Miami Begonia Society,  
The Ft.Lauderdale Begonia Society and  
The Begonia Society of the Palm Beaches

Wish you a Joyous Holiday Season!



Your Southern Florida Begonia Societys,  
Site of the 1996 American Begonia  
Society Convention and Show  
April 25th - 28th, 1996

*FRED A. BARKLEY BRANCH*  
OF THE  
*AMERICAN BEGONIA SOCIETY*



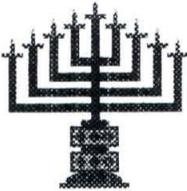
Happy Holidays  
Merry Christmas



may the light of CHRISTMAS  
fill your HOME...  
with HOPE...  
AND OF COURSE BEGONIAS



Season's Greetings  
from  
**Texas**



---

**Alamo Branch A.B.S.**

---

Marcelina Cerda  
Lucille Dyess  
Leora Fuentes  
Ray Fuentes  
Maria Gonzalez  
Russ Hammer  
John Howell

Clarice James  
Mary Ellen McCormick  
Imogene Mosley  
Elizabeth Muth  
Ken Muth  
Jim Rihn

Melba Schultz  
June Shawver  
Lillian Transue  
Kay Tucker  
Hazel Wyatt  
Tom Zoellner  
Florence Zwirn



May all the special sights  
and pleasures of Christmas  
live on in your memories

**Astro Branch  
Houston**

*PALOMAR BRANCH*

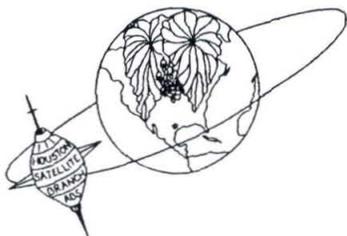
*May Peace and Joy  
Be Yours at  
Christmastime  
and throughout  
the New Year*



Robert Ammerman  
Albert & Katherine Belz  
Eileen M. Clause  
Juana Curtis  
Ingeborg Foo  
Ramona Greb  
Michael Kartuz  
Mike Ludwig  
Tim & Thelma O'Reilly  
Doris Schatzmann  
Dean Turney

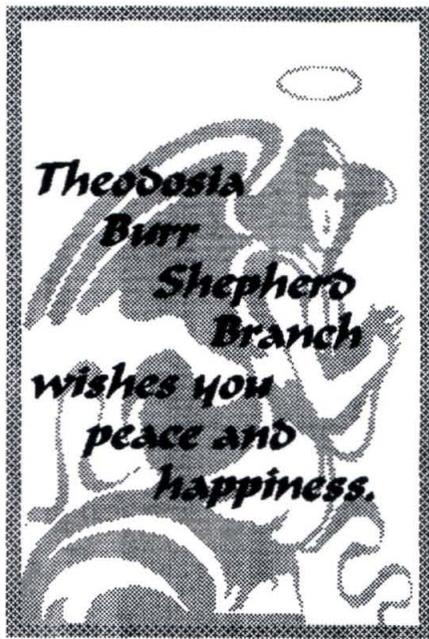
Toni Baker  
Kathleen Blumling  
Ralph & Mabel Corwin  
Rumi Dover  
Jeannette Gilbertson  
Edalee Harweil  
Mary & Robert Knight  
Billie Mahaffey  
Mrs. J. E. Passmore  
Raymond Sodomka  
Peggy Wisler  
Crystal Zook

Edgar & Phyllis Bates  
Eleanor Calkins  
Margaret R. Curtin  
Maureen Egan  
Michael Golub  
Richard & Camille  
Horak  
Margaret Lee  
Pauline Mueller  
Patricia Roubidoux  
Pearl Swatsek  
Mary Zemcik



**The Houston Satellite  
Branch**

Beams Rays  
of  
Peace, Joy, Love  
to ALL  
for the Holiday Season  
and  
New Year



**Theodosia  
Burr  
Shepherd  
Branch  
wishes you  
peace and  
happiness.**

"BEGONIAS ARE RED  
BEGONIAS AREN'T BLUE  
BUT HERE'S A MERRY CHRISTMAS  
WE'RE WISHING TO YOU"

**ORANGE COUNTY BRANCH,  
AMERICAN BEGONIA SOCIETY**

# Bewitching Begonias: Species

by Thelma O'Reilly

Bewitching begonia species are a special select group of the veritable jewels of nature that captured my attention about thirty-two years ago when my family moved from New England's Rhode Island to Southern California's San Diego.

One month later I joined the American Begonia Society. As my friendship with Carrie Karegeannes and Rudy Ziesenhenne developed, so did my fascination with begonia research. The bewitching species cast a mystic spell that still holds me under its influence as I continue to seek answers to old and new begonia puzzles.

I have chosen a few species to highlight and several to touch upon in this presentation. I have consolidated a brief resume of each species by researching important information in Begonia literature, files and correspondence.

*Begonia octopetala* L'Heritier is a tuberous species. In 1938 French botanist Charles Chevalier wrote in Les Begonias: "in 1777 *B. nitida* Aiton was the first begonia to appear in European gardens. A little later, 1780, *B. octopetala* appeared."

In Die Begonien, 1939, Karl Albert Fotsch published the following description from the florists Haage & Schmidt: "This beautiful species was discovered by Dombey in the mountains near Lima, Peru and brought by him to the Botanical Gardens in Paris. However, it never blossomed. In 1835 the Englishman, John MacLean, sent tubers of this species to the Botanical Gardens in Glasgow where they bloomed for the first time in 1836. It was of great impor-

tance in the development of our tuber-hybrid forms."

In 1837 Curtis Botanical Magazine published Plate 3559 which illustrated and described *Begonia octopetala* - Eight petaled begonias with flowers like those of an anemone.

Research reveals conflicting information about this species in regard to lobing of leafblades, number of tepals and relationship to other species. It has been collected many times since 1777, including an Ecuadorian collection in 1942. An interesting article, "The Habitat of *Begonia octopetala*" by Clayton M. Kelly, appeared in the **Begonian** April 1942.

Are you wondering why this species is on my "Bewitching Begonias" list? Let me share some of the puzzling clues I am pursuing.

Scott Hoover made an expedition to Ecuador in 1988. B. U237 was assigned to one of his seed collections. Collection notes describe a tuberous begonia with huge tubers up to 10 cm. across exposed on a rocky cliff above highway at 3900 feet. Flowers few and pink.

I have described and photographed two plants of this species over the past four years. Dormancy usually ends in the summer. Inflorescences frequently appear before leafblades. Peduncles are long. 14-18 inches. Flowers are few, white to pale pink, 2-3 inches across, glabrous, staminate tepals 4-6 (rarely 7), pistillate tepals 6-8 (rarely 9). Outstanding trait is the strong, sweet, rose-like fragrance.



Note leaf margin differences in botanical prints of *B. octopetala*

Harry E. Luther, Director of the Mulford B. Foster Bromeliad Identification Center in Sarasota, Florida, shared with me one of two large tubers collected during a trip to Ecuador. I assigned B. U320 to this tuberous species in 1993. My tuber has remained dormant. Luther gave the remaining tuber, which was in active growth, to me in June, 1994 while attending the World Bromeliad Conference in San Diego. It flowered in my garden in October. Similarities between B. U320 and B. U237 include the rose-like fragrance.



1991 slide of male flowers on B. U237, with four tepals. The petals are quite deeply indented at margin tip and this is accentuated by single line - as if it intended to be 2 tepals and changed its mind. Another slide of B. U320 shows the same occurrence

L.B. Smith & D. C. Wasshausen, in *Begoniaceae* from [Flora of Ecuador](#) 1985 commented following the description of *Begonia octopetala*: "The great variation by small steps suggests a species in flux or a hybrid swarm."

Yes, I am bewitched by the possible relationship between these three species. I suspect that B. U237 and B. U320 could be varieties of the over two-hundred-year old *B. octopetala*. My search continues.



Slide of female flower of *B. U237* forming fruit following hybridization - selfing. Both of these species drop or close tepals in pendulous positions which remains - tepals never drop. This occurs on all female flowers whether forming fruit or not.

*Thelma O'Reilly is Director of the Unidentified Species (U#) Project for the ABS Nomenclature Committee. This article is the first part of a seminar she presented at the 1995 Convention of the Association of Australian Begonia Societies in Brisbane, Queensland. Her address is 10942 Sunray Place, La Mesa CA 91941.*

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## Variation in *Begonia*

by W. Scott Hoover

In May of this year Thelma O'Reilly asked me about variation in the Ecuadorian tuberous begonia species assigned *Begonia U237*.

Recalling a number of populations of this species, I can attest to there being considerable variation between populations. At times it was difficult to distinguish whether or not there were separate species involved.

Having collected over seven hundred fifty begonias in the wild, I can attest that this taxonomic complexity is rather typical of *Begonia*, one reason why the genus is difficult.

Whether one deals with *Begonia octopetala*, *B. urticae*, *B. heracleifolia*, or any number of other species in the genus, the variation between populations of the same species is considerable.

These variations are the driving force of evolution. When a particular species population has characteristics (or in some instances a single character) clearly distinct from the known species, then a new taxa may be assigned by a taxonomist.

Clearly, variation within species of *Begonia* is most intriguing from an evolutionary standpoint and deserves scientific analysis.

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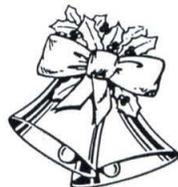
*Scott Hoover, a former ABS Conservation Chair and 1984 winner of the Herbert P. Dyckman Award, recently returned from a collecting trip to Sumatra. Seed of *B. U320* and several of the Sumatra collection are currently available (in limited amounts) from the ABS Seed Fund. Scott's address is Metamorphosis Unlimited, P.O. Box 93, Williamstown MA 01267.*

---

## The Long Beach Parent Chapter

sends Christmas Greetings:  
Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas  
and a Joyous New Year.  
Happy Begonia growing.

*1996 will be our 64th Birthday*



## FLORIDA WEST COAST BRANCH

*wishes all of you*

*Peace and Happiness for the coming year.*

While visiting the Tampa Bay Area come  
visit our meetings, 7:30 P.M. - Third Tuesday -

Fellowship Hall, Church of Christ  
6045 Park Blvd., Pinellas Park, Florida  
*for more information, call 347-1472*



## Whittier Branch

*sends Season's Greetings  
and  
Best Wishes for a Happy 1996*

*Celebrating our 55th Anniversary*



## GREETINGS FROM THE SAN MIGUEL BRANCH



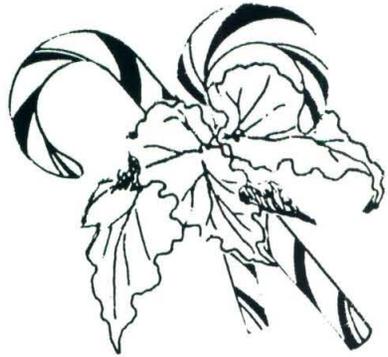
We could be very fancy  
And say it many ways  
But a plain old  
MERRY CHRISTMAS  
means more:  
HAPPY HOLIDAYS



**Santa Barbara  
Branch**

*Wishes All of You  
Peace and Happiness  
for the Coming Year*

**San Francisco Branch**  
*Wishes You a  
Happy Holiday Season*



*We Ho Ho Ho  
As our Begonia's Grow!*



*Winter, Spring,  
Summer or Fall  
May 1996 be  
your best growing  
season of all!  
Warm Holiday  
Wishes from the  
Doug Frost  
Branch, Garden  
Grove, CA*

# BULLETIN BOARD

## ABS News

### BOARD MEETING

The Board of the American Begonia Society will meet at 1 p.m. on January 20, 1996 at Best Western DeAnza Motel in Monterey, California.

For overnight reservations, call 1-800-858-8775 or (local) 408-646-8300; please tell the motel you are with ABS, as we have rooms blocked for the meeting.

### CORRECTIONS

In the September-October issue, page 148 had it right: the **1996 ABS Convention** will be held in Florida.

On page 163, however, Florida was given the **1997** Convention also. Not so! The 1997 ABS Convention will be in Houston, Texas, hosted by Astro Branch, Houston Satellite Branch, and Southwest Region. The Houston branches have been working on the 1997 Convention for two years, and were surely shocked to read it would be in Florida - and Floridians were no doubt appalled at reading they would be hosting two conventions in two years.

The editor apologizes to both groups for a slip on the computer keyboard that went undetected through proof-reading.

Correct Zip code for **Horticultural Correspondent Greg Sytch** is **34653**.

*BEGONIAS, GERANIUMS, EXOTICS  
FERNS, OXALIS, CACTI, HERBS*  
new Full Color Catalog...\$3.00

**LOGEE'S GREENHOUSES**  
(Est. 1892)

**Dept. B, 55 North Street, Danielson,  
CT 06239**

### DIRECTORY UPDATE

#### Officer Changes

**Tom Zoellner** is President of **Alamo Branch**. Tom's address is 10819 Dreamland, San Antonio, TX 78230

President of **Doug Frost Branch** is **Herb Wilkinson**, 16281 Mercier Lane, Huntington Beach, CA 92647. The Branch meets the 1st Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at 12860 Euclid St. in Garden Grove.

**Maxine Zinman** is new President of **Potomac Branch**. Her address is Rt. 1, Box 73, Boyce VA 22620.

New President of **Houston Satellite Branch** is **Alice O'Donnell**, 323 Whitecap Dr., Seabrook, TX 77586.

#### Directory Changes

**Pinellas County Branch** has changed its name to: **Florida West Coast Branch**.

We regret to report the closing of **Tampa Bay Branch** in Florida and **East Bay Branch** in California.

Several Branches have not been heard from in a long time. **Elsa Fort Branch** (NJ), **Edna Stewart Pittsburgh Branch** (PA), **William Penn Branch** (PA), and **Connecticut Branch** will be removed from the Directory of Affiliated Branches.

**Please note:** Beginning with the March-April Directory, National Directors will be listed for each Branch instead of the Presidents. This will, we hope, result in better communication between the Branches and the Board.

## Coming Events

1996

**March 9-17: New England Flower Show.** The **Buxton Branch** booth is traditionally a gold-medal winner - don't miss it!

**April 25-28:**

### **ABS Convention '96 "Begonias in Paradise"**

Clarion Resort Hotel  
Hollywood Beach, Florida  
Hosted by **Fort Lauderdale, Miami,  
and Palm Beaches  
Branches**

**May 24-26:**

(Memorial Day weekend)  
**1996 Southwest Region  
Get-Together**  
Dallas, Texas  
Harvey House Downtown  
Hosted by the **Dallas Area Branch**  
*Y'all come!*

## ABOUT THE MINI-ADS

The Mini-Ads feature has been suspended temporarily. Recent regulation changes within the US Postal Service have been brought to our attention concerning the percentage of space in the **Begonian** that may be devoted to advertising. We are consequently reviewing all our advertising methods, measuring their effectiveness, and revising our ad rates to help us produce a magazine that serves our members better. Please bear with us: we think you'll appreciate the results.

*odd things begonias do...*

## **B. U168 Does It Again - in Florida**

After seeing the article on B. U168 sporting all green leaves in Australia, I realized I had to write and let you know that this summer my plant of B. U168 sent up a branch of these solid green, differently shaped leaves also.

I had seen Don Miller's article, and re-read it when my plant produced these green leaves. I was very excited when this happened and had to show the plant to everyone I could find! Therefore, I am happy to report that this begonia phenomenon has also occurred in South Florida!

My plant has now produced leaves that are a mixture of the green leaves and the regular brown-and-silver B. U168 leaves, and the regular brown-and-silver ones as well, all on the same branch! I'll keep you posted on any further occurrence of this weird plant behavior, and will try to take some photographs as well.

*Janice Koza is newsletter editor for Fort Lauderdale Branch. Her address is 6841 NW 6th St., Margate, FL 33063. Maybe we'll get to see her B. U168 at the Florida Convention in April - is there a show category for unusual behavior?*

### **LAURAY of SALISBURY**

Begonias, Gesneriads, Orchids  
Cacti & Succulents  
432 Undermountain Road, Rt. 41  
Salisbury, CT 06068  
(860) 435-2263  
Usually open daily, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.  
1996-7 Catalog \$2.00

## NOTES:

For a discussion of B. U320, please see pages 207-209. All other seeds listed are from Scott Hoover's Sumatra collecting expedition; we have no information about them, except that testers report good germination.

### 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 to:

Ann Salisbury  
P.O. Box 452  
Tonkawa, OK 74653-0452  
USA

**Species Seed**

\$1 per packet

B. U320  
B. U335  
B. U336  
B. U340  
B. U341  
B. U342  
B. U343  
B. U345  
B. U346  
B. U347  
B. U348  
B. U352  
B. U353  
B. U354  
B. U355

# From the Mailbox

Greg Sytch, Horticultural Correspondent

---

**Q:** I have been growing African Violets and Gesneriads for years, but recently I picked up several Rex Begonias and have enjoyed growing them for a few months. After joining ABS, I am more interested in growing begonias now because there are so many varieties to choose from. What do you recommend I start growing? Maryland

**A:** You have had success with Rexes - then why not continue to grow more? There are hundreds of Rexes to choose from. So keep accumulating these beautiful hybrids and you can begin nibbling with some other groups.

I have always recommended beginners grow canes, because canes can withstand the most neglect yet are so rewarding. Some beautiful and easy varieties to start with include:

B. 'Black Jack' - a low-growing spreading cane with dark chocolate serrated and ruffled leaves having the distinction of everblooming fragrant rose flowers.

B. 'Irene Nuss' - a tall Superba with wavy deep dark leaves heavily cut and huge, constant umbels of fragrant pink blossoms.

B. 'Di-Anna' - a medium grower with wavy dark green leaves heavily spotted, with everblooming fragrant deep pink flowers. This variety looks wonderful in a hanging basket.

Once you have mastered canes, continue on with rhizomatous, thick-stems, trailers, and tuberous - just have a ball growing begonias!

**Q.** I have been having problems with my rhizomatous begonias. Most of them seem to melt away in the pot, and after checking the pots I notice a buildup of salts on the sides, on the soil, and within the pot itself. I have asked other members of my branch if they had experienced the same problem, and most of them said they had never heard of it. Yet when I checked some of the show plants at a recent showing, I did notice some salts - but the plants looked fine.

I have reduced my fertilizer to almost nothing trying to correct the problem, have started using rain water where applicable, but I do use Nutricote incorporated into the soil as a constant release fertilizer.

What is the problem? I have been losing rhizomatous types quickly, and love to grow them. South Florida

**A:** The problem sounds as though it stems from the water. The very first thing I would suggest is to have your water checked by the county for chemicals. City water systems now have so many chemicals to purify the water, and these chemicals can build up rapidly in the soil. Try to flush out your pots frequently, but be careful not to overwater and cause rot. Since you live in south Florida, see if you cannot grow them in a shady, outdoors situation where natural rainwater would flush the pots for you. If that is not possible, perhaps periodically set the plants out when you anticipate heavy rains.

Always remember to keep your soil light, with good drainage. This is easily accomplished by using extra perlite. A good mixture is as follows:

- 1 part peat moss
- 3 parts perlite
- 1 part vermiculite

Continue to fertilize, as plants need nutrients to grow properly. Just use 1/2 to 1/4 strength occasionally. The Nutricote probably is not a cause for concern.

NOTE: Several readers have asked about adding vinegar to water for their plants. Be advised that vinegar will acidify your soil rapidly, and I recommend only using it after having the soil pH checked. If the soil is alkaline, 1/2 teaspoon per quart of water (2 teaspoons per gallon) once a month for two months will correct the problem. Too much vinegar can lead to sour soil, which can lead to problems. Be careful.

Remember, anyone with a question, comment, or problem feel free to drop me a line at:

P.O. Box 1033  
 Port Richey, FL 34653  
*or call (813) 841-9618 - evenings are best*

**Join the NATIONAL**

**FUCHSIA SOCIETY**

MEMBERSHIP \$15 per year includes bi-monthly FUCHSIA FAN. The new A to Z on Fuchsias abridged version \$6.95 plus \$1 shipping (CA residents add 42c tax). Mail to: National Fuchsia Society, 11507 E. 187 St., Artesia, CA 90701.

**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.

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**LOS ANGELES FERN SOCIETY**

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**Hobby Greenhouse Association** (non-profit)

8 Glen Terrace, Bedford MA 01730-2048

# ROUND ROBIN NOTES

Virginia Hamann, Round Robin Director

## #14, *Semperflorens*:

Madeline Thomas (CA) is using Miracle-Gro on her semps and canes. She is seeing good results.

Bill Voss (VA) has a mini-semp display at US Botanic Gardens. Begonias 'Ernest K' and 'Goldilocks' are in full bloom. Bill would like to add B. 'Pistachio' to the display if he can get a plant of it.

## #3, *Rhizomatous/Rex*

Copper spray helps keep mildew down for Loretha McIntyre (MI). She sprays once a month as a preventive measure.

Marilyn Dubé (OR) has put together a list of the rhizomatous begonias grown in this Robin. It is an impressive list.

Greg Sytch (FL) has a favorite soil recipe: 2 parts perlite, 1 part vermiculite, 2 parts finely chopped pine bark. This is a fast-draining soil for rhizomatous and rex begonias.

## #2, *Kusler and other Canes*:

Allowing canes to grow in small pots was one of the topics. Canes shifted to larger pots months later were not found to be pot-bound; the roots were growing only in the top half of the pot. Root pruning is one way of keeping canes in smaller pots, saving room on trays.

Greg Sytch (FL) has a method for making canes grow attractively in baskets. Take two 4" pots of plants, put them into an 8" basket. When the plants begin to shoot up large thick stems, cut them back hard to force side growth. Do this until the plants are moved into a 10" basket, then allow new shoots to grow upwards.

## #25, *Midwest Growers II*:

Marie Hollinger (IA) keeps a spray bottle of disinfectant on hand to spray plant cuttings. Lysol, Clorox, or Pine Sol can be used. Marie sprays the cut ends to prevent rotting.

Members have been cleaning their greenhouses while plants summer outdoors.

## #8, *Tuberous Begonias*:

To protect a 12' x 12' display bed, Howard Siebold (WA) put up 45% shade cloth.

## #30, *Rex*:

During a heat wave, rex begonias fared better in John Howell's (TX) garden than in his greenhouse. John says rex roots do not survive soil temperatures over 80°. When a good rain came along and temperatures dropped into the 50's, John had to throw 200 plants on the compost heap. Later he was able to rescue four plants from the compost area - while there they had grown 4" stems.

## #1, *General Culture*:

Mabel Corwin (CA) sent pictures of her rex begonias - a rainbow of color - beautiful!

Greg Sytch (FL) has his "Florida Series" hybrids about ready to release.

## #22, *Propagation*:

Each member has a favorite way to start begonias. Mary Simon (OH) grows from seed. Her suggestions for success are:

1. viable seed
2. sufficient moisture for germination
3. bottom heat - container set on top of light fixtures is sufficient. Grow mats are great, but expensive.

Russ Richardson (GA) has this method: using a clean sweater box, put 1 1/2" to 2" potting mix in the bottom, with dampened chopped New Zealand moss over the mix. Leaves, cane cuttings, and shrub-type stem cuttings are stuck in the soil and covered. When they are rooted, take out with the moss still attached and pot in regular mix using a small pot. Keep watered and in closed container until the plant is established. Other members like to root stem cuttings in water and pot them into soil when roots are just starting.

### **#9, Growing Under Lights:**

Members put most plants outdoors for summer and shut down lights because they heat up the growing space.

### **#43, Terrariums:**

Mae Blanton (TX) had to repot *B. rajah* from a 12" terrarium to a 15" terrarium. Mae planted *rajah* in a 15" shallow bowl, which she placed on a layer of perlite in the terrarium. This way the roots are controlled and do not grow up the sides of the container. It is simple to groom, as she can lift the plant out of the terrarium.

In the heat of summer terrariums can be overwatered, and mildew is a problem. It is wise to move them into a shaded area of growing space. Direct sunlight can cook plants in a few minutes.

### **#20, Photography:**

Each member sent 5 photos of plants in a different lighting and background. Mary McClelland (NE) had a picture of *B. 'Silvermist'* blossoms on a totally dark background, with a hint of foliage and pink buds in the background. The deep pink blossoms and orange centers were very dramatic.

Tamsin Boardman (TX) sent pictures of *semperflorens* blossoms, the double blooms from the Logee's "nursery rhyme"

series, against darker backgrounds. These too were lovely.

Members give one another advice on how to improve photos, or get ideas they can use themselves.

### **#52, Rhizomatous Terrariums:**

Nancy Hagerman (LA) cautions members on the use of insecticidal systemics and sprays. The active ingredient that kills insects breaks down and is no longer toxic to them, but becomes more toxic to humans and other mammals, remaining in their systems for an undetermined length of time, becoming more toxic with each new change. Nancy has been poisoned with these chemicals and knows what she is talking about. Safers Insecticidal Soap is not toxic to humans, the fatty acid in the soap is what kills the insects.

### **#4, Windowsill Growing:**

Rhodora Buss (IA) says "Just say NO to Mealy Bugs!" Ridding plants of the adult mealy bug is just half of it: getting the eggs before they hatch is important too. Rhodora scrubs pots, stands, and trays with a good all-purpose cleanser and repots with fresh soil. Isolating new plants is a must also, and isolating buggy plants helps too, even if it means putting them in plastic garbage bags.

## **Tired of bills and ads? Perk up your mail!**

Join in the Round Robin Flights by writing to Virginia Hamann, 1169 Lincoln Ave., Chester, IA 52134-8508. Just tell her what your special begonia interests are, and she'll fix you up with instant friends who are intrigued by the same topics.

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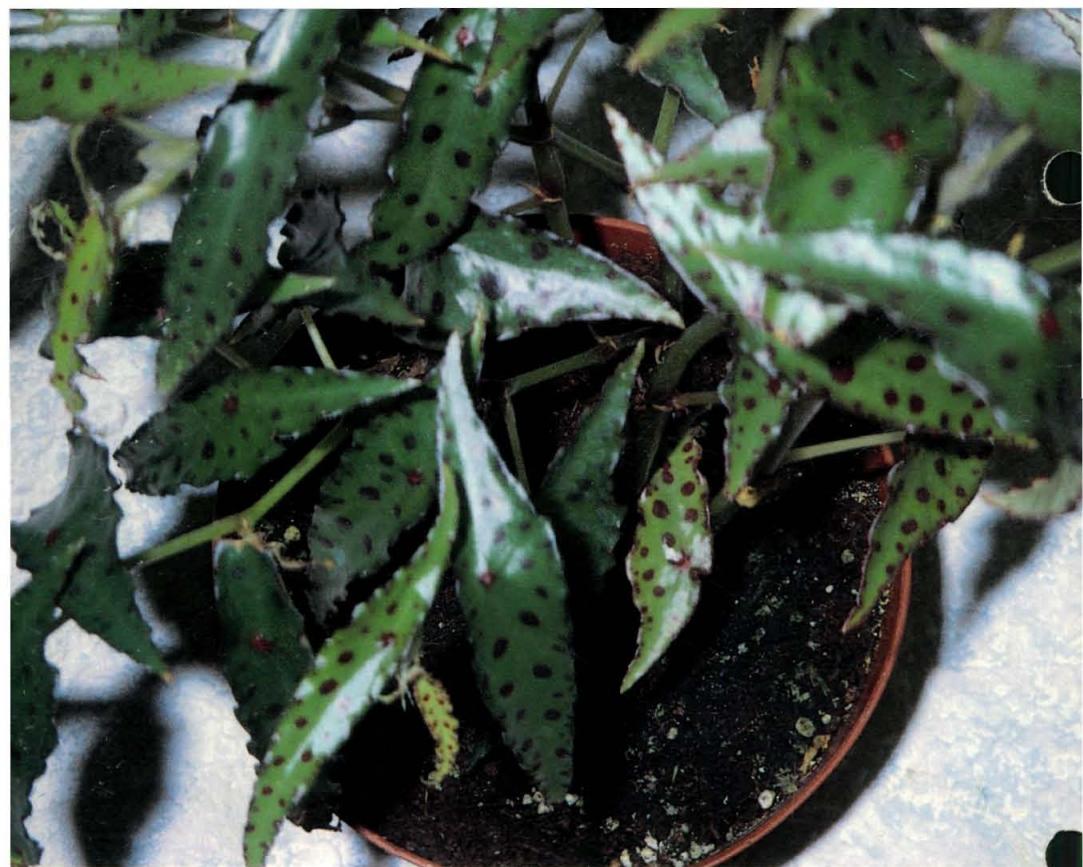
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